

Effects of the Proliferation of SALWs on Terrorism in Nigeria: a Case Study of Boko Haram Activities

Ejiroghene Augustine Oghuvbu

Abstract

This study investigates the nexus between the proliferation of Small Arms & Light Weapons (SALWs) and terrorism with focus on Boko Haram's activities in Nigeria. SALWs are prominent classes of weapons due to their portability and capacity to ensure defence. As such they are in high demand and are also produced in large numbers. However, these weapons are also illicitly trafficked and transported across state borders. Africa is not excluded as 100 million SALWs are trafficked in the continent. The Boko Haram terrorist sect has managed to use this to its advantage as it embarks on campaign of violence and terror in the North East. This paper adopts the failed state theory to explain the proliferation of weapons and its effects. The study employs the qualitative research method and utilises the case study research design. The study draws data from secondary sources which include already published books, book chapters, academic journals, newspapers and internet sources. As its method of data analysis, the study adopts thematic analysis, segmenting data retrieved into themes in accordance with the objectives of the study. Findings indicate that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is an enabler of terrorism in Nigeria as perpetrated by the Boko Haram terrorist sect. The study also identified that the actions of the Boko Haram sect have resulted in various effects including deaths, loss of businesses, properties and livelihood, etc. The study recommends that strict monitoring and surveillance be instituted at the borders and illegal access routes to the country be blocked to discourage the transportation of illegal arms.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Effects, SALWs, Terrorism, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Small Arms and Light Weapons otherwise known as SALWs are prominent weapons in society due to their portability and capacity to ensure defence of both civilian and military bearers and the fact that they are easy to procure (Ford, 2017). Invariably, possession of such grades of weapons presents individuals with the opportunity of taking control of their own security. On this premise, the International Peace Institute (2009) asserts that SALWs are cheap and easy to procure, thus, their wide availability. Despite this, the availability of such grade of weapons create a challenge. These class of weapons create opportunities for individuals to embark on illegal and illicit activities. As a result,

the proliferation of SALWs is a security risk for any state (Moses & Ngomba, 2017). Such weapons become widely available when they are trafficked through unguarded and unmonitored borders and access points and/ or locally produced without effective regulation. According to Malam (2014), Small Arms and Light Weapons kill between 500,000 to 700,000 people globally, further buttressing the security risk posed by such classes of weapons. Despite numerous deaths arising from the use of such weapons, it is also alarming that these weapons are produced every day and transferred across borders into states with tensions. About 640 million SALWs are in circulation globally, with 100 million in the African continent (Religions for Peace, 2006:6).

1.1. Statement of Problem

African countries are not immune to the constant circulation of SALWs. Being theatres of civil and ethno-religious wars, etc. Most African countries suffer from the proliferation of Small Arms which has not only intensified conflicts but ensured the destruction of lives and properties. These weapons also fuel other forms of violence including terrorism which has ravaged most African countries till date (Malam, 2014). Nigeria is not excluded from the plague of terrorism on the continent. The Boko Haram sect has continually perturbed the North Eastern part of the state through armed violence. Poised as a radical Islamic fundamentalist organization, the Boko Haram stands at the fore-front of the campaign against western or formal education in Nigeria. The terrorist sect has challenged institutions of government and of learning in the North East. These actions have most times resulted in large numbers of deaths and destruction of properties (Imhonopi & Urim, 2016).

Scholars have drawn a nexus between the proliferation of SALWs and terrorism. Ehiane & Uwizeyimana (2018) asserts that many of these weapons are employed in many forms of armed violence including terrorism. Soetan (2017) points out that the proliferation of SALWs has a destabilizing effect as it has continually fuelled the Boko Haram terrorist activities in Northern Nigeria. While this is so, adequate attention has not been paid to the effects of the proliferation of SALWs and Terrorism in Nigeria. This study therefore is set to investigate the nexus between proliferation of SALWs and terrorism in Nigeria.

1.2. Research Objectives

This research seeks to explain the linkages between the proliferation of SALWs and terrorism in Nigeria with focus on the activities of the Boko Haram Sect. The study also seeks to outline and explain the effects of SALWs proliferation and terrorism in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of Small Arms and Light Weapons

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) are subject of discourse in academic circles, among governments and international organisations. These discussions especially border on their implications for security. With respect to clarifying its meaning, a plethora of definitions exist. SALWs refer to portable weapons either a barrelled weapon or an explosive device, capable of expelling a bullet of projectile through an explosive force and/ or capable of causing significant damage by its explosion (Beeck, et al 2012). The Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (2008) attempts a dichotomization of the concept and explains each term individually. Small Arms refer to weapons that are designed for individual use or use by a single person. This is due to their size and design and include all barrelled weapons. Light weapons on the other hand refer to weapons that can be used by two to three people. Such weapons include heavy machine guns, hand-held under barrel and mounted grenade launchers, and portable anti-aircraft guns.

Significant to note is the fact that SALWs are not the only category of weapons available in the world today. However, in the plethora of weapons and armaments available, they are the most preferred (Ford, 2017). Moses & Ngomba (2017) explain that in comparison to Big Arms and Heavy Weapons, SALWs are preferred due to their size and cheap nature. Big Arms and Heavy Weapons are expensive and weigh heavily on the purchasing actor (either state or individual). SALWs on the other hand “are cheaper, simple, durable, easy to control, lighter and equally lethal” (Moses & Ngomba, 2017:1642). Mogire (2017:7) corroborates this by adding that SALWs are the choice of military and police organisations as well as civilians due to the fact that they are highly lethal, simple to use, and durable. SALWs include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, light machine-guns, heavy machine-guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank guns, rocket systems, and anti-aircraft missiles systems (Moses & Ngomba, 2017:1940).

Be this as it may, security risks are extant due to the wide availability of these weapons. In congruence, Malam (2014) asserts that the significant implication of small arms accumulation and circulation is its capacity to increase the risk of armed conflict. The wide availability and/or the proliferation of SALWs is examined in the next segment.

2.1.1. Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Conflict in Africa

The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) describes a situation of wide availability of weapons of this grade. Malam (2014) explains the proliferation of SALWs as the accumulation and circulation of Small Arms and Weapons. Vines (2005) from another perspective describes the proliferation of SALWs as the illicit transfer of such weapons. The world is awash with these weapons for reasons ranging from mass production to illicit sales and transfer. Specifically, the proliferation of these weapons around the world is due to the fact that some state actors provide non-state militias and insurgent actors with SALWs (The attempts by the United States of America (U.S.A) to arm rebels in Syria solidifies this claim), government stockpiles are not effectively managed and monitored, as such significant amounts of these weapons are stolen (Mazzetti, Goldman & Schmidt, 2017). Between 700,000 to 900,000 SALWs are manufactured yearly, with more than 100,000 people killed by these weapons all over the world, every year (Ashkenazi, Kosling and Kogler, 2013:19). Globally, about 640 million Small Arms and Light Weapons are in circulation, 100 million of which are in Africa (Abiodun et al, 2018).

African countries have in one form or the other suffered from the proliferation of these weapons. This is evident through the frequent eruption of ethno-religious conflicts and crisis in the continent. These conflicts have and still find expression in civil wars, insurgency, etc., (Junadu, 2007). There is however a nexus between the proliferation of SALWs and conflicts on the continent. Small Arms and Light Weapons in their abundance fuel the eruption of these conflicts and other forms of armed violence. Malam (2014) in agreement asserts that the wide circulation of weapons leads to armed violence among other issues. Among the nations with prominent issues of conflict and arms flows in Africa is Somalia.

Somalia a state in the horn of Africa has endured perpetual conflicts since the 1980s. The roots of the conflict lay in political, socio-cultural and economic factors, chief of which is the competition for scarce resources among the unemployed of the society (Elmi&Barise, 2006). The numerous conflicts the state has faced has generated a significant number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP). More probing is the malnutrition of children in Somalia and the many lives lost through the conflict directly or indirectly (Moller, 2009). Atalay (2019:3) estimates that more than 500,000 people have been killed since the inception of the conflict in the 1980s. In addition to the mass loss of lives, so many have been displaced within the country. As at February 2018, more than 2.6 million people are displaced in the country (CCCM Cluster Somalia, 2018). The effects of the conflict are not felt alone by the war-torn state. Somalia's war generated a situation of insecurity in East Africa which has given rise to terrorist organisations notably al-Shabaab. The al-

Shabaab is responsible for a number of activities including the December 2010 attacks in Uganda and Kampala which culminated in the deaths of more than 75 people (Gumbi, 2015:117).

2.1.2. Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria

Since the re-introduction of democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed an upsurge in the availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs). This is deemed responsible for the prevalence of violence and crimes in the country (Chuma-Okoro, 2011). Affirming this, Moses and Ngomba (2017) point out that the level of insecurity in Nigeria is as a result of the availability of Small Arms of Weapons which are used to perpetrate robberies, murders/assassinations and other crimes. In congruence, Abdullahi (2016) notes that the illicit trafficking of small arms and weapons has proven problematic for security within the Nigerian state. While the immediate consequences of the proliferation of these weapons remain robberies, murders and other forms of armed violence, certain indirect outcomes abound. These include but not limited to discouragement of foreign direct investments, negative perception of security in the country, lack of or no confidence in security apparatus and so on (Moses & Ngomba, 2017).

Despite itemizing its effects, scholars have also pointed out the reasons and rationale behind the proliferation of this grade of weapons in Nigeria. Abiodun, et al. (2018) attribute the abundance of SALWs in Nigeria to the porous nature of the country's borders. Abiodun et al (2018) further point out that the border security agencies witness difficulty in securing the country's borders due to inadequate resources and poor border demarcation between Nigeria and other neighbouring countries. Compounding the existing problem of porous borders is the fact that there are numerous illegal entry points to Nigeria. According to Babatola (2015) there are more than 1,400 illegal routes into Nigeria. These points serve as pathways and channels for conveying illegal goods including SAWLs. Another factor responsible for the proliferation of SALWs is the provision of weapons in the Cold War era. During the Cold War, western and eastern power blocs represented by the United States and USSR made provisions of arms into certain states to serve for use in conflict. However, the end of that era marked a problem of insecurity as these weapons were collected by illegal arms dealers, local smugglers and so on (Jacob et al, 2019). Corroborating this argument, Malam (2014) establishes that the supply of weapons during the cold war, inevitably laid the foundations for the current crisis of weapons proliferation witnessed in modern day Nigeria.

2.1.3. Methods of Small Arms and Light Weapons Acquisition

There are numerous means and methods of acquiring SALWs in Nigeria. However, the following are observed:

- a. **Local manufacture of SALWs:** Nigeria is endowed with industries and craftsmen capable of manufacturing small and light weapons and ammunitions. The country possesses a broad base of weapons manufacturers, who specialise in the manufacture of SAWLs. Weapons such as these are manufactured at either the local level or the industrial level (Moses & Ngomba, 2017). Be this as it may, the most reported level of SAWLs manufacturing in Nigeria are from local manufacturers who produce weapons including Dane guns, handguns, shotguns, assault rifles, muzzle loaders, etc. Notable states in Nigeria that witness the manufacture of these weapons include Adamawa, Anambra, Benue, and Plateau (Nowak & Gsell, 2018:6). The manufacture of these weapons in itself is not problematic. However, the illicit trade and movement of these weapons repudiates the positive gains (such as indigenous manufacture of arms and ammunitions and by implication, reduction in the importation of SALWs) of local weapons manufacture in Nigeria as they lead to issues of organised arms violence and other forms of criminality (Chuma-Okoro, 2011).
- b. **Porous Borders and Illegal Access Routes:** The porous nature of Nigeria's borders generates adverse effects for security within the country. Put differently, the risk of insecurity in Nigeria is heightened by the permeability of its borders. To this end, Babatola (2015) asserts that the prominence of porous borders has aided crimes and security challenges across the country. Chief among the reasons of Nigeria's porous borders is the inability of border agencies to adequately monitor and halt illegal activities in and around the country's access points. A major fall out of this is the unabated movement of people and commodities in and out of the country (Olomu et al, 2019). These commodities include Small Arms and Light Weapons. Other points of entry for SALWs include illegal access and entry routes. These routes prove problematic and challenging for security in Nigeria. Babatola (2015:8) points out that over 1,400 access routes exist around Nigeria. These give access to smugglers of these weapons.

2.1.4. The concept of Terrorism

With regard to the concept of terrorism, no definition is central. A direct consequence of this is the availability of numerous definitions accompanied by their varying perspectives. For Schinkel (2009), terrorism centres on the premeditated and systematic use of violence against citizens by a group of individuals to instil fear. Kydd & Walter (2006:4) defines terrorism as the use of

violence against civilian targets by non-state actors in achievement of a defined goal. Terrorism is usually construed as a crime. However, this perspective does not present a holistic perspective of the concept as it does not only involve violence, but the selective use of the same. In congruence, Fletcher (2006) points out that there is a better way to think of terrorism than just crime. This perspective points to terrorism as a social movement. Beck (2008) employs the tripartite approach of the social movement theory to explain terrorism. Terrorism and terrorist organisations mobilize resources both human and otherwise to carry out their activities. The second approach is political opportunities. Terrorism is enabled by certain external factors. Chief among these is external political climates. Beck (2008) argues that certain political climates give room for terrorist activities. In failed states, terrorism is enabled through the weakness of the central authority. The third perspective is framing. Terrorists frame their activities and justify them in line with the prevalent social and political narratives. This at times is aimed at granting them wide social acceptance and sympathy (Beck, 2008).

Numerous variants and forms of terrorism subsist. These forms include the “new terrorism, state terrorism, dissident terrorism, religious terrorism, ideological terrorism, international terrorism, criminal terrorism and gender selective terrorism” (Dawson, et al, 2017:2). Another notable form of terrorism is cyber-terrorism which is now a vivid threat for governments and states in the international system (Gunaratna, et al, 2017).

While terrorism is a prominent issue of the 21st century, it is not a recent development. Chailand&Blin (2016) cites the zealots as the first sect that employed the systematic use of violence to instil fear. There were also manifestations of organised terror groups in the Middle East, particularly in Palestine. Terrorism like all other concepts and entities in the international system has witnessed an interesting evolution from primordial activities to modern sophisticated actions carried out by non-state actors and allegedly sponsored by state actors. A modern strand of terrorism is that which has afflicted states in the 21st century. The first expression of this is the 9/11 attacks which occurred on the 11th of September, 2001 in the United States particularly in New York and Washington (Ilardi, 2009). This form of terrorism as perpetrated by the al Qaeda involved attacks to ensure mass destruction and deaths. As Hoffman (2011) asserts that the enormity of the coordinated attacks eclipsed what had been seen before. The attacks targeted and destroyed the World Trade Centre in New York, the Pentagon in Washington (Rose et al, 2009; CNN Editorial Research, 2019). According to Engel (2019:2), a total of 2,977 people were killed in the attack. Numerous resultant effects ensued in the aftermath of this attack. One of such effects was a change in the way and means

by which terrorist activities are embarked on. The period after 9/11 witnessed a change not only in the trajectory of terrorism but the methods it is carried out, to increase the possibilities of greater damage. Corroborating this stance, Sandler, Arce & Enders, (2008) points out that the 9/11 attacks ushered in an era of transnational terrorism where by attacks are launched from one region of the world into another.

Following this event, other terrorist groups began to develop and employ means to cause mass deaths and destruction. Such groups include the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIL), the Taliban, Boko Haram, Ansar Al-Din Front, Al-Shabaab, Houthi Extremists, etc (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016). The attacks of these terrorist groups are characterized as spontaneous with the targets being civilians. Paying allusions to this argument, Smith, Damp House & Roberts (2006) explains that terrorist attacks manifest a high degree of spontaneity and indiscrimination in many ways. To ensure maximum damage, the terrorist employ the use of explosives (Smith et al, 2006). These characteristics are evident in the November 2015 terrorist attacks in France in which 131 people were killed and other attacks around the world (CNN Editorial Research, 2019).

2.1.5. Terrorism: The Nigerian Experience

Nigeria has not been excluded from the list of countries confronting terrorist groups. It has been confronting the scourge of terrorism since 2009 as perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect. As such it will be difficult to describe the Nigerian experience of terrorism without referring to the Boko Haram Sect. The Boko Haram is an Islamic fundamentalist group which was founded in 2009 by Mohammed Yusuf. In its early days, the group was not a terrorist sect but rather marked a disagreement with the Islamic and political doctrines and configurations of Nigeria. As a result, Yusuf as the leader and his followers withdrew to found and operate their own religious beliefs in radical Islam. The group however began violent activities when it assassinated Shekh Ja'afar Mahmood Adam (a representation of the established Islamic beliefs), a popular teacher and preacher at the Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri and declared war against the state. This forced the government of the day to crackdown on the group which summarily resulted in the death of the group's leader Mohammed Yusuf (Walker, 2012).

With the death of Yusuf and arrest of some of its members, the group became violent and began a series of assassinations and killings in Maiduguri, targeting police checkpoints, traditional leaders who aided police with information leading to the arrest of its members, etc. By December 2010, the group had

employed the use of bombs and explosives which increased the number of people killed per time. Many attacks as perpetrated by the sect during this period employed bombs and targeted soft spots, especially areas with dense civilian population. Notable attacks among these include the Christmas Eve 2010 attacks in Jos where churches and markets were bombed, the bombing of the market inside the grounds of the Mogadishu barracks which killed ten and a host of numerous attacks (Walker, 2012). Over the years, the Boko Haram became more aggressive and violent, holding public executions, embarking on sporadic shootings in communities. Notable among their attacks is the kidnap of 329 girls from a boarding school in Chibok (Guitta&Simcox, 2014). Also due to the attacks of the Boko Haram sect, over 100,000 people have been killed since May of 2011, along with more than 244,000 Nigerians seeking refuge in Neighbouring countries(CFR, 2020). This caused outcry and protests from international organisations and notable figures in the world. The Boko Haram sect also spread its activities to other regions and states of West African.Countries of the Lake Chad Basin, Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon have suffered from the pervasive attacks of the terrorist sect (International Crisis Group, 2017).

In response, the Nigerian government, through its Armed Forces has embarked on a protracted war in the Northern part of the country. The Nigerian military has been deployed in the North Eastern part of the country to battle terrorist sect. A series of operations have been embarked on by the country's armed forces notable among which is Operation Lafiya Dole (Ibrahim &Bala, 2018). Operation Lafiya Dole was put in place by the Nigerian military following the failure of Operation ZamanLafiya. The operation was enacted to confront and weaken the Boko Haram. The operation had its command centre in Maiduguri under the leadership of Lt. Gen. TukurButatai, the current Chief of Army Staff (Ewa, 2018). Other efforts by countries in the Lake Chad Basin includes the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) which is a militia set up to protect civilian communities against the terrorist sect (Ibrahim &Bala, 2018).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the failed state theory as its theoretical framework. The failed state theory describes a situation of failure by a state in its performance of certain duties. Put differently, the theory explains a state that has failed in the performance of its duties (Abiodun et al, 2018). Central to the failed state theory is the definition of a state as a service provider. In this sense, a state provides protection of the lives and properties of its citizens, creates allowance for political participation, health, education and maintains security of the rule of law (Eriksen, 2011). On this premise, state failure refers to the inability of a state to

provide essential services. In line with this, Englehart (2009) submits that state failure occurs when states are unable to fulfil their obligations which in this case reflects the failure to provide essential services. Also, Helman & Ratner (1993) explain failed states as states that are no longer capable of performing their obligations.

The following are the assumptions of the failed state theory:

1. Failed states are embroiled in conflicts
2. Failed states are incapable of maintaining peace, order, security within their borders
3. Failed states can be viewed in terms of the absence of governmental functions and operations
4. Failed states suffer a restriction of free flow of information, the subjugation of women, the inability to accept responsibility for failure and domination by a restrictive religion

Within the scope of this work, the precepts of the failed state theory explain the proliferation of SALWs as a result of the inability of the Nigerian government to secure state borders and also seal off illicit access points. In agreement Mark & Iwebi (2019) affirm that the lack of effective control over the borders creates room for smuggling of arms and by implication, the proliferation of SALWs in the country. These arms inevitably end up in unauthorized and criminal hands notable is the Boko Haram terrorists and are used to perpetrate indiscriminate acts of violence.

3. Research methodology

This study adopts the qualitative approach and utilises the case study research design. The study retrieves data from secondary sources including books, book chapters, journal articles, newspapers and so on. To analyse this data retrieved, the study adopts thematic analysis to segment the data retrieved into themes in accordance with the objectives of the study.

4. Discussion of Findings

4.1. Effect of the Proliferation of SALWs on Boko Haram's Activities in Nigeria

Nigeria, among other African nations, suffers from the consistent proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) in Nigeria. At numerous instances, security operatives in the country have recovered and confiscated weapons even as they are transported in bulk. In October 2017, the Nigerian Police Force

recovered a total of 6,527 arms from the Niger Delta region (Mutum, 2018). This is one instance of recovered weapons amidst more not tracked by the Police. While there is no data to depict the number of weapons that are flowing into the country, Nigeria continuously suffers from this due to the fact it possesses numerous illegal borders along its boundaries with Niger and Benin. A number of scholars draw a nexus between the proliferation of SALWs and terrorism in Nigeria (Ayuba&Okafor, 2015; Soetan, 2017; Jacob, Ishaya& Ado, 2019). As the Boko Haram sect embarks on numerous episodes of killings, maiming and destruction in the North Eastern part of the country, the sect takes advantage of the free flow of weapons in the country (Soetan, 2017).

In mapping out the flow of weapons into Nigeria, De Tessieres (2017) asserts that illicit weapons flow from Libya into Mali and Niger. Libya has been a source of illicit arms in Nigeria since the 2011 revolution which turned it into a failing state. Niger is closely located to Nigeria and both countries share boundaries and borders. Aside these legal entries exist also illegal entries. Abiodun et al (2018) establishes that the boundaries shared between Nigeria and Niger possess close to 1,500 illegal entry points. These access points serve as channels the Boko Haram sect receive their weapons and ammunitions. Asides the illicit transfer of these weapons, Boko Haram is also able to add stolen weapons to its arsenal. The Boko Haram sect steals weapons from military bases. In November of 2018, Boko Haram militants raided an army base in Metele, Borno State of Nigeria. The raid culminated in the deaths of a large number of soldiers (Rein, 2019).

The effects of the Boko Haram terrorist activities as fuelled by the proliferation of SALWs in Nigeria are far reaching. Abiodun et al (2018) cites that the Boko Haram insurgency, through its illegal acquisition of weapons has embarked on varying degrees of violent crimes. These have not only put lives and properties at risk but also served as an impediment to the Nigeria's national security. The terrorist acts of the Islamic fundamentalist sects have also taken a tole on the economic stability of the country. In Maiduguri, commerce is affected as the Monday market has been shut down due to the spate of insecurity. In addition to this, many businesses have crumbled due to the persistent and uninhibited attacks of the sect (Awojobi, 2014; Iheanacho&Eme, 2017). While these exist, they do not adequately represent the lives of peoples altered negatively by the activities of the terror group. In line with the scope of this study, this section outlines the human impact of Boko Haram's terrorist activities.

Undoubtedly, the campaign of violence in form of terrorism by the terror sect has resulted in the deaths of a number of people. The RFI (2019) posits that more than 27,000 people have died as a result of Boko Haram's violence and

more continue to die on daily basis either by suicide bombing attempts of the group's militants or sporadic shootings. Within the Lake Chad Basin, the death toll tops 150,000 (CFR, 2020). An indirect implication of this is that many have lost loved ones, families have lost bread winners. According to Mercy Corps (2016), many women have lost their husbands and bread winners to the menace that is Boko Haram. This has plunged some into despair and also forced other women to fill roles they would rather have not occupied. The unabated killings of the sect has also created an atmosphere of fear for many in the North East. Akinyetun (2017) Points out that many stay indoors due to the fear of being killed by the terrorists. Invariably, in such an environment, little or no economic development will take place. Civilian deaths are not the only ones recorded. The lives of numerous soldiers have been spent in the fight against insurgency in the North East. On the 23rd of March 2020, between 50 and 75 soldiers were killed by the terrorist sect. This massacre occurred when troops tried to launch an offensive. Additional 92 Chadian soldiers were killed in the ambush which lasted for several hours (Al Jazeera & News Agencies, 2020; AFP in N'Djamena, 2020). While this constitutes a loss of human resource in the fight against terrorism, many families have lost their loved ones in the conflict thereby altering the destinies of those left behind. The governor of Borno State, the epicentre of Boko Haram's activities, pointed out that the military must recruit 100,000 soldiers to bring an end to the decade long fight against terrorism (Olukayode&Clowes, 2020). Ultimately this may culminate in more deaths and injuries for military men.

Many in North Eastern Nigeria have been unable to continue their educational pursuits due to the endemic activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group in line with its central ideology; western education is sin, the sect's campaign of violence has kept many away from educational institutions in the region and has also caused many schools and institutions to halt activities (Uzodike&Maiangwa, 2012). The Chibok female students who have been rescued from the clutches of the sect, following their kidnap in April of 2014 have not been able to go back to school. In February of 2018, 119 girls from a boarding school in the small town of Dapchi, Yobe state were also kidnapped. The girls were abducted while preparing for breakfast in their boarding school (Abraak& Maclean, 2018). While the Nigerian government was able to achieve the release of some of the girls kidnapped, they have not been able to go back to school. Adebayo and Busari (2018) record that the girls were warned by the Boko Haram sect not to go back to school. Many parents embraced this warning due to the lack of protection while the girls are in school. While many of the girls returned, one of them was held back for refusing to renounce her faith as a Christian. This led to outcry from different quarters of the world on the persistent captivity of the Leah due to her strong ties to the Christian faith (Agekameh, 2019). Herrmann

(2019) points out that some parents of the returned girls are afraid of and reluctant to send their daughters back to school for the fear of being kidnapped or killed.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The study identified that the wide availability of Small Arms and Light Ammunitions is an enabler of the Boko Haram's terrorist activities. In its campaign of violence and terror has caused harm to the lives of victims which this study represents. In line with this truism the study makes workable recommendations. In resolving the constant proliferation of arms in Nigeria, the study suggests that stricter levels of monitoring and surveillance are instituted at the country's borders. The study also recommends that the illegal access points into Nigeria be blocked by security operatives, to discourage the illicit transfer of weapons into the country. Such an action will in turn, limit the access to Boko Haram's weapons. The study also calls for tighter regulations on the manufacture and production of SALWs in Nigeria. The activities of the Boko Haram have been inimical to development in the North East. Moreover, the group's activities have adversely affected the lives, livelihoods and properties of people in the region. Resolving this however calls for the defeat of the terrorist sect after which the government can begin rebuilding and contributing to the lives of the affected persons.

This study examined the effects of the proliferation of SALWs on Boko Haram activities in Nigeria. African countries are victims of arms proliferation. Nigeria is not excluded from this reality as SALWs are smuggled through its porous borders. The wide availability of these weapons contributes to the ongoing terrorist activities in the North Eastern Part of the country, which has culminated into deaths and traumatizing experiences for the victims.

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