

## **A REFLECTION OF SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS PROLIFERATION IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The security implications of small arms and light weapons proliferation is one of the greatest threats to human and resources the North Central Nigeria is confronted with in recent times. The phenomenon has become the basis for incessant crises and killings in North Central Nigeria. In this discourse, attempt is made to understand the security implications of small arms and light weapons proliferation in the zone using the conflict theoretical framework. The paper identified the causative factors of small arms and light weapons in North Central Nigeria. The implications of the trend revolve around killings and destruction of both economic and social activities in North Central Nigeria. The paper concludes that the security implication of small arms and light weapons in this zone should be vigorously investigated to identify the perpetrators of this heinous crime. The paper recommends that, federal government in collaboration with national assembly and non-governmental organizations should strengthen legislation and control for the possession, use and transfer of small arms and light weapons in North Central Nigeria. The government should ensure that all the culprits involved in this heinous crime should be punished.*

**Keywords: Reflection, Security Implications, Small Arms, Weapons Proliferation, North Central Nigeria.**

### **Introduction**

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has become one of the major security problems confronting the whole world today especially in especially in the developing countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. The wide availability of these weapons influences political instability, communal conflict as such posing a great threat to not only lives and property but also sustainable development (Ngboawaji, 2011). The widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons is contributing greatly to high levels of armed crime, and militancy although there are no reliable and accurate data on the number of arms and weapons in the world (Aver, Nnorom & Ilim, 2014). For instance, countries like Yemen, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan and Syria among others have suffered from the menace of small arms and light weapons proliferation.

In Africa the availability of small arms have direct influence on the escalation security implications. It is on record that many African countries have experienced their test of small arms and light weapons from 1980s, 1990s, 2000 to date (Eloma, Ugwumba & Abang 2014). For instance, the genocide in Rwanda, the almost decade long conflict in Liberia (1989-1997), the Sierra Leone crisis, the bloody crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Burundi, Ghana, South Africa, Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria and Guinea these violent conflicts were as a result

of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Politicians for their selfish interest acquire these illegal small arms and light weapons. The availability and widespread use of these small arms and light weapons brings about serious security implications. The proliferation of these arms and weapons have reached an alarming proportion Africa undermines the stability of the continent.

Nigerian security has deteriorated in the last decade. Nigeria is ranked third in the list of countries with highest gun deaths and injuries globally after the United States and South Africa (Okeke 2015). Onyechere, (2019) maintained that over 40 different cult groups, with a total of over 12,000 chapters, operate in school campuses across Nigeria and no fewer than 10,000 people have been killed in cult-related violence within and outside school campuses between 1996 and 2019. It has been estimated that there are about five million small arms and light weapons are in the hands of terrorists, militants and armed robbers in the country illegally (Okeke 2015). According to the source, 80% of the weapons in civilian possession had been obtained illegally, while 10 due to strict laws on civilian possession. Some arms and weapons are used for armed robbery, ethno-religious conflicts, militancy, assassinations, cultism, human trafficking, terrorism and kidnapping (Osimen, & Akintunde, 2015). The emergence of bomb blasts in the country has assumed a worrisome dimension for instance the twin bomb blasts in Abuja during the 50th independence anniversary celebration on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of October 2010 in which 12 people were killed. In addition the April 14, 2014 Nyanya Motor Park bomb blast that killed more than 75 people and injured severely several others. More so, the abduction of over 200 girls of Government Girls Secondary School Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria are some of the security implications of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. The Nigeria Watch database (2014) recorded 615 violent deaths related to cattle grazing, out of 61,314 violent fatalities between 2006 and 2014, in Nigeria. This report showed that about 111 relevant cases, which did the press report across the 36 states of Nigeria from June 2006 to May 2014.

According to a recent report by Johnson (2016), state and non-state actors were responsible for about 102,000 unlawful deaths between 1999 and 2016. Nearly a decade of Boko Haram insurgency alone has claimed at least 20,000 lives, displaced more than 2.6 million people, created over 75, 000 orphans and cost about \$9 billion in damage (Onuoha, 2016). Nigeria is the only country in the world with a speculated number of close to thirteen (13) million children of school without any obvious plan as to how to stem the frightening trend (Adedokun, 2018). This trend is attributed to small arms and light weapons. Nigeria is a country without an ambitious educational curriculum, capable of arming its teeming young population for the future of the world due to the menace of small arms and light weapons proliferation. Adedokun (2018) further asserted Nigeria is only the only country whose increasingly swelling poor population see child rearing as sport, without any obvious population control plan certainly there will be cases of small arms and weapons proliferation. Many analysts associate the phenomenon of arms and weapons proliferation with the failure of the state to protect its citizens (Ibrahim, 2014).

North Central Nigeria has witnessed various forms of security implications informed of violent conflicts such as communal, identity, political, farmers-herdsmen, cultism among others because of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. .All these had serious security

implications on the lives and property in the region. The deaths and displacements arising from this zone are unevenly distributed in terms of its consequences. It is against this backdrop that this paper is designed to reflect on the security implications of the proliferation of small arms and weapons proliferation in North Central Nigeria. To achieve the set objective that paper is segmented into seven sections. The first section centres on the introduction, second is examines on the definition of terms, third discusses the theoretical framework, fourth section focuses on the methodology. The fifth section dwells on the security implications of small arms and light weapons proliferation in North Central Nigeria, while the sixth delineates on the conclusion and the seventh, which is the last segment, devotes to the recommendations of the study.

### **Definition of Terms**

This section of the paper covers the review of the following concepts:

#### **Security Implications**

The security implications denotes the activities involving the ability to protect lives and properties of individuals in a given geographical location (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Sociology 2005). Gbanite (2001) also defines security implications as the inability to provide safety, confidence, anything that gives or assures safety, free from danger, fear or doubt, not likely to fail or give way, stable, assured and certain. Security implications here refers to anything that treated the safety, confidence, free danger, fear or doubt. The security implications denote a deteriorated situation were heavily arm and well-organized gangs or groups carried out nefarious activities by killing people and destroying property worth millions of naira in a particular area like North Central Nigeria.

#### **Small Arms**

The United Nations (UN) Panel of Government Experts on small arms define small arms as ranging from knives, clubs and machetes to weapons particularly below the caliber of 100mm. It conceives of Small Arms as those weapons manufactured to military specifications and designed for use by one person. The Economic Community of West African States, (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms conceived small arms as weapons used by one person. Small Arms refers to those non-manufactured instruments like sticks, stones, knives, machetes, conventional weaponry to United Nations (UN) Register of Conventional Arms (Ochogwu and Aku, 2011). Wezeman (2003) also identify small arms to include Dane guns, revolvers, self-loading pistols, rifles, assault rifles, sub-machine guns, carbines, light machine guns, hand grenades, local pistols, among others. According to Best Practice Guidelines for the Implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol on Small Arms and Light Weapons, small arms are weapons designed for personal use and shall include light machine guns, including machine pistols, fully automatic rifles and assault rifles and semi-automatic rifles (Best Practices, 2005). They include firearms of any portable barreled and lethal weapon that expels, is designed to expel or may be readily converted to expel a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of burning propellant, excluding antique firearms or their replicas. In the course of this subject matter small refers to any material that is use in killing such cater port, revolvers, self-loading pistols, rifles, carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and locally made pistols, Dane guns, hand grenades among others which to cause security implications in the North Central Nigeria.

### **Light Weapons**

Light Weapons is defined as those used by several persons working as a crew. Wezeman (2003) define light weapons as those used by several members of the armed or security forces servicing as a crew. Light weapons are those portable weapons designed for use by several persons serving as a crew, heavy machine guns, automatic cannons, howitzers, mortars of less than 100 mm caliber, grenade launchers, anti-tank weapons and launchers, recoilless guns, shoulder fired rockets, anti-aircraft weapons and launchers, and air defense weapons (SADC: Saeafrafrica and saferworld, 2003). The Economic Community of West African States, (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms looks at light weapons as portable arms designed to be used by several persons working together in a team. Ngang, (2007) identify light weapons as those heavy machine guns, recoilless rifles, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems and mortars of caliber less than 100 mm. Light weapon in the context of the paper refers to any device, instrument or tool capable of inflicting injury and death on a person or group of persons. They sometimes refer to small firearms and gadgets designed to kill and destroy.

### **Proliferation**

The production, distribution availability and accessibility for use-misuse of those objects in large and uncontrollable manner such as large shipment of arms or guns. Proliferation is defined as a sudden increase in the number of arms and weapons beyond that need for legitimate national security. This means when the state supplier recipient, does not exercise restraint in the production, transfer and acquisition of such arms and weapons beyond those needed. Unidentified groups do this act either for economic or political purposes. This arms and weapons get easily in the hands of private individuals especially politicians.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This section of this paper explores the theoretical framework of the phenomenon

#### **Conflict Theory**

The proponents of conflict theory include Karl Marx (1818-1883), Georg Simmel (1858-1918), Max Weber (1864-1920), C. Wright Mills (1916-1962), David Lockwood (1929-2014) and Ralf Dahrendorf (1929-2009). The starting point of the conflict theory states that the society is a dynamic entity constantly undergoing change driven by class conflict. As it is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. The theory maintains what is produced, and how the produce is distributed and consumed within the society. It holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. According to conflict theorists, those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any means possible, chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless.

This is mainly the source of security implications in North Central Nigeria, which may come from herdsmen, ethnic, political, religion, economic among others. A basic premise of conflict theory is that individuals and groups within society will work to maximize their own benefits at the expenses of others as resulting from the contradiction inherent in human activities in the course of material production (Dahrendorf, 1980).

The theory argued further that competition within society over limited resources tools of the struggle between groups or classes, which used to bring about inequality and the dominance of the ruling class leads to security implications and the small arms and light weapons proliferations. Mills (1961) believes that social structures are created because of conflict between differing interests. People are impacted by the creation of social structures, and the usual result is a differential of power between the elite and the others.

Marx (1999) posits that the society is divided along lines of economic class between the proletarian working class and the bourgeois ruling class. The competition with these two groups is constant and at times, overwhelming factor in nearly every human relationship and interaction. This competition exists because of the scarcity of resources, including material resources like money, property, commodities among others. To Marx this impotent factor gave rise to security implications. Aside the material resources, individuals and groups within society also compete for intangible resources as well, which may cause security implications. Other factors like leisure time, dominance, social status, sexual partners, and many other factors will also lead to security implications and the small arms and light weapons proliferations. Conflict theorists assume that competition is the default, rather than cooperation cum security implications and the small arms and light weapons proliferations in the society.

It is the contention of the conflict theoretical framework that security implications and the small arms and light weapons proliferations should be examined and analyzed from the perspective of political and historical materialism. Political formation is a historical entity, which encompasses and penetrates all social formations including class structures. It is misleading to assume those security implications operate independently. They operate alongside such social variables as economic, political, religious, and ethnic among other factors. It therefore follows that particular security implications inform unique variables as distinct from others. For instance, while the security implications in Adamawa, Kaduna and Plateau States assume a political dimension that of Benue, Nasarawa, Kogi, Niger States are religiously motivated. However, whether religious, economic, political, ethnic among others, security implications are gear towards achieving and enhancing economic domination in Nigeria by their sponsors.

It is important to note that, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is used as a mask for class privileges to perpetrate insecurity by the political elites in furtherance of their own economic and political selfish interest in the North Central Nigeria Region. Attempt therefore to understand this phenomenon in this region must be situated in the socio-economic, political, religious and ethnic structures in Nigeria. To accomplish the target, one needs to vigorously investigate the nature of socio-political, political, religious and ethnic structures in North Central Nigeria. The emergence of persistence security implications in North Central Nigeria and other parts of the country.

The strength of the theory lies in its recognition to identify the major source of security implications in the North Central Nigeria. Another strength of the theory is it exposed how the bourgeoisie class goes to the extent of acquiring small arms and light weapons to keep dominating in power, so that they will retain their aims social, economic and political selfish interest in the society.

The pitfall of the conflict theory lies in its ability to focus on mainly on the change and neglect of social stability is fallacious. Another drawback is the ability that societies are now in constant state of change, which is instrumental, and not by forced or revolutionary. Critics argued that modern capitalist states have voided the communist revolution and adopted social service programmes, which gradually lead to change rather than confrontations. In spite of the shortcoming of the conflict theory, this paper therefore adopts the conflict theoretical framework in examining the security implications small arms and light weapons proliferation in North Central Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The paper relied on secondary data and sources of information, which were getting from data compiled by other organizations and documented information including journals, books, conference papers, government reports and official State documents as well as reports from the media. All of these sources are imperative in the course of this study because they provided the basis for assessing and comparing the ideal information already compiled by others in order to achieve conducive results from the study. The paper dwells on descriptive based on observation and secondary data as it stated above

### **The Study Area North Central Nigeria**

The North Central Nigeria also known as the Middle-belt as a region consist of all political units that fall within central Nigeria (Gbenro, 2008). It is the lower half of the northern region (Coleman 1958). Thus, the whole of Ilorin, Kabba, Benue and Plateau provinces, the Southern parts of Bauchi and Zaria provinces, the whole of Niger Province except for the area north of Kontangora town and the Numan Division of Adamawa province together with the Districts of Muri and Wurukum in the Muri Division of the same Province. Politically, the North Central Nigeria is described as consisting of the areas with the highest concentration of minority ethnic groups in the North in particular and Nigeria as a whole in terms of the culture, population, religious beliefs, language, territorial claims and land ownership. Currently, the North Central Nigeria comprises areas such as Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Kogi, Kwara and Niger States. The area is bedeviled with security implications occasion by the small arms and light weapons proliferation. It is based on their different identities that there are higher security implications in this geo-political zone.

### **Brief Historical Account of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation in Nigeria**

Small arms and light weapons proliferation in Nigeria is traceable to the Cold War era, that is between the West and East raged from 1945 to 1989, during the 30 months of Nigerian civil war of (1967-1970) largely account menace small arms and light weapons proliferation in many communities in Nigeria. However, government ability to curtail the act resulted in the promulgation of the Robbery and Firearms (Special Provisions) Decree no. 47 of 1970. Although many analysts argued that, the Nigerian civil war alone is no longer accountable for small arms and light weapons proliferation (Ochogwu & Aku, 2011). They noted that the civil war stockpiles have been obsolete by now outdated being out of stock, thus, associated the menace population explosion over four decades after the war (Ochogwu & Aku, 2011). Ochogwu & Aku, (2011) further established the link between criminality and politics especially with the return to democratic government in 1999 some disgruntled politicians use some criminal elements to perpetuate violence like ballot box snatching, election rigging, arson, kidnapping, murder among others. The turmoil in some African countries in recent

times have also fueled small arms and light weapons immensely in Nigeria. In addition the Libyan crisis contributed a lot in small arms and light weapons proliferation (Adetiba, 2012). President Mohammed Buhari confirmed this that the killer herdsmen who have been responsible for the wanton killings in Nigeria were trained and armed by the late Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi (Nda-Isaiah 2018). Thus, the killer herdsmen who wield guns escaped from Libya with their arms as a result of poor boundary delineation found their way in Nigeria. In the northern part of the country, the boundaries are so porous that migrants enter without proper documentation. These foreign migrants are the ones bringing about small arms and light weapons in the country. Similarly, small arms and light weapons are smuggled into the country from borders. These weapons are further used to cause security implications in various dimensions. The influx foreign herdsmen who wield arms moved from the Sahel region into different parts of the country smudged them into the country. These small arms and light weapons proliferation is therefore traceable to civil war, crisis-ridden African Countries, smuggling through porous borders, local manufacturers like those manufactured by the defense industry corporation of Nigeria (DICON) and local manufactures. Others include security agents, the porosity of Nigeria borders, purchased by ethnic affiliations and insurgency.

### **Security Implications of Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation in North Central Nigeria**

Security implications arising from small arms and light weapons proliferation posed severe challenge to human rights everywhere in the world (Ero, and Ndinga-Muvumba, 2004). Small arms and light weapons proliferation is adjudged as the most immediate security problem to individuals, societies, and states worldwide, fueling civil wars, organized criminal violence, insurgency and terrorist activities posing great obstacles to sustainable security and development.

Since independence, Nigeria is bedeviled with a plethora of crises because of small arms and light weapons proliferation. These problems include ethno-religious crises, indigene-settler conflicts, sea pirates, armed robbery, kidnapping and of recently insurgency and terrorism (Aver 2014). The availability of small arms and light weapons in the hands of non-states actors has led Nigeria as a country into multiple security problems. From armed robbery to kidnappings, from ethno-religious motivated violent conflicts to outright terrorism and insurgencies. It has manifested in increasing rates of kidnappings, armed robbery, pipelines vandalization, crude oil theft and principal. Other include suicide bombing and reckless killings by the Islamic sect Boko Haram. Small arms and light weapons proliferation has given rise to security implications that it has is taking a dangerous dimension because even religious institutions are not spared (Akuso 2012).

Nigeria has recorded bitter experiences of small arms and light weapons proliferation in various forms of ethno-religious violent conflicts especially in the north. Since the 1980s, ethno-religious violent conflicts have become a daily occurrence mostly in northern Nigeria due to small arms and light weapons proliferation. Northern Nigeria consist of 19 states, which have virtually witnessed one form of violent conflict or another as result of small arms and light weapons proliferation. The spate of this conflict has been on a steady increase in the country. These security implications include Maitatsine crisis in Kano, 1980, Zuru 1980, Maiduguri 1982, Yola 1984, Ilorin 1984, Bauchi 1984 and Kano 1984 (Sule 2015). Other security

implications include Kafanchan 1987, Gure Kahugu 1987, Birnin Kebbi 1990, Katsina 1991, Tafawa Balewa 1991, Kano 1991, Jalingo 1992, Kaduna Polytechnic 1992, Kasuwar Magani (Kaduna) 1994, Kaduna 2000, Jos 2001, Kano 2001, Tafawa Balewa (since 2000) and Nasarawa 2001, Jos 2004, 2008 and 2010 among others (Sule 2015). There have also been the Chamba-Kuteb crises in Taraba State 2013, Tiv-Jukun crisis 2001, BassaIgbira crisis in Toto 2012 and a host of others (Sule 2015).

Rather than natural, the disasters as is experienced in the past violent conflict have become the major source of people fleeing their homes in Nigeria, especially in the North-Central Nigeria axis in particular. These small arms and light weapons proliferation has affected every part of north central Nigeria. Since the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, North Central Nigeria, security implication has become a recurring decimal with the increasing number of cases of casualties and corresponding negative effects on the social and economic life of the inhabitants. The high rate of violent conflict and its intensity in many states owe to the small arms and light weapons proliferation. Apart from the problem of the indigene-settler in Plateau State, in recent times, farmer/herder violent conflicts have been daily occurrence. The small arms and light weapons have created a surge of violence concentrating in Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa States in the North Central geopolitical zone and in the adjoining Kaduna, Adamawa and Taraba States in the North East and North East respectively. There are constant security threats in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Niger, Kogi and Kwara States as a result of small arms and light weapons proliferations. Best (2006) asserts that north central Nigeria had a large share of these violent conflicts in Nigeria. The area has continued to battle with violent conflicts especially political, ethno-religious indigenes-settlers and farmers versus herdsmen conflict. All these civil unrest emanates because of small arms and light weapons.

Below is the picture of 105 kidnappers, armed robbers and gun manufacturers arrested in the North Central Nigeria by IGP Intelligence Response Team (IRT), Special Tactical Squad (STS) and Terrorism Intelligence Unit (TIU).paraded in the Force Headquarters Abuja.



Source: google image 11/3/2020



The security implications of north central Nigeria has resulted in serious humanitarian tragedy in terms of loss of lives and property in series of violent conflicts. For instance violent conflict Plateau State, has taken a worrisome and disturbing dimension as more than four thousand (4,000) and seven thousand (7,000) persons have been killed since late 2001 in the outbreak in Jos (Sule, 2015). Small arms and light weapons have led to killing of thousands of people and destruction of property. Large population of Plateau State exposed to risks of different nature (Krause, 2010). The security implications of these small arms and light weapons proliferation has led to mass killing and destruction property from 2001-2018 (Ukwayi, Okpa, & Dike, 2018). International Crisis Group (ICG2018) reported that from September 2017 through June 2018, farmer-herder violence left at least 1,500 people dead, many more wounded and about 300,000 displaced an estimated 176,000 in Benue, about 100,000 in Nasarawa, over 100,000 in Plateau, about 19,000 in Taraba and an unknown number in Adamawa States. This farmer-herdsmen violent conflict occurs as a result of small arms and light weapons proliferation in the society.

This menace has increased on the proportional level in the North Central Nigeria as Olaniyi, Opara, & Akubo (2018) reported that Fulani herdsmen have killed 32 people in communities in Dekina and Omala Local Government Areas of Kogi State. The herdsmen, who wore military fatigue and wielded AK 47 assault rifles numbering over five hundred (500), burnt down over 20 houses, killed anyone in sight and shot at those who tried to escape into the bushes (Olaniyi, Opara, & Akubo, 2018). More so, (The Daily Trust 3 January 2020) reported that gunmen have killed no fewer than 19 people in Tawari community in the Kogi Local Government Area of Kogi State, burning buildings, including the palace of the king of the community. It is also on record that small arms and light weapons proliferations have given rise to banditry and kidnapping in Niger State. Ahmad, (2020) posted that more than fifty (50) armed bandits have abducted the Chief Imam of Beni Central Mosque, Mallam Umar Mohammed and kidnapped twenty other members of the community in the process in Beni, Munya and Kudami in Paikoro Local Government Areas of Niger State.

It was a gory sight as heavily equipped dastardly-armed robbery stormed Offa city on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and robbed four commercials in Offa Local Government Area of Kwara State Nigeria, living thirty three (33) people died (Adedokun, 2018). For this axis that was known for peace and development have become like in Samaria were people abandon their home, farms, market, schools and other social activities to run for their safety. The area, which has no experience of drought before it, is at verge of experiencing drought because of armed violence, which is occasioned by small arms and light weapons proliferation. Without these small arms and light weapons proliferation, these killer entrepreneurs would not muster the audacity of killing people at night and sacking them in their ancestral home. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons have throwing the north central Nigeria in a vicious cycle where citizens owing to frustration and deprivation, where criminal activities such as armed herdsmen, bandits, armed robbery, kidnapping, cult groups and militancy among others raiding of communities in the north central Nigeria unchallenged. This raise will increase these affected communities' demand for small arms and light weapons proliferation leading to more security implications in future, which often hamper on social and economic development of the region.

Today north central Nigeria is grappling with the problem of internally displaced persons (IDPs) all over the region obviously due to small arms and light weapons proliferation. These IDPs are victims of various Boko Haram insurgency, herdsmen attacks, bandits, kidnappers, ethno-religious crises, sectarian crises and communal conflicts. Exposing these group people to assorted manner of dangers and risks. The women becoming victims of sexual assault such as rape, which often leads to contracting of infectious diseases like STDs and HIV/AIDS. Adedokun (2018) maintained that there are many arguments about how violent attacks on the innocent lives have become a manifest global occurrence lately and there may be some credence. Nevertheless, in Nigeria will do well to inform herself that there is no other country in the world, not under a state of war, where life is as devalued as Nigeria. A telltale sign of the level of our nation's frightening descent into anarchy and loss of humanity is the ineffectiveness of the policing system (Adedokun, 2018). Most often than not, the average Nigeria police officer is poorly equipped with obsolete weapons that do not match the power of the criminals, what is required of him is to run for cover in the face of the criminal's superior weapons. For instance, there are cases where members of cults groups, Odua People's congress and other militants have reportedly killed police officers across the country (Adedokun, 2018). All this are the manifestation of small arms and light weapons proliferation in Nigeria. Small arms and light weapons proliferation have given birth to where Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen bandits, kidnappers, ethnic militants, separatists' agitations and armed robbery among others are now tormenting the people as a result the collective irresponsibility as a people. Nigeria has sown the wild and can only reap the whirlwind, especially as there is no significant change in governmental disposition to the welfare of the people.

Anytime there are sad events in this country, the Federal government responds to these issues only by feeble clichéd statements about how it was committed to securing lives and property of Nigerians. The concerned State Governors will visit and shed tears making promises to turn all stones in this world for the quest to arrest perpetrators of the heinous crime. The minister of information and culture Lai Mohammed will pay a powerful condolence visit and use the opportunity of the innocent citizen's death to make political statements concerning looters project in the country. The police on their part will make promises of ransom for people that volunteer information concerning the criminals. Although sometimes, the police would truly do more, especially when their personnel are among the victims of small arms and light weapons proliferation.

### **Conclusion**

Small arms and light weapons proliferation remain one of the biggest challenges in the north central Nigeria. In most cases, this situation compelled the government to channel resources that would have been used to provide social services and amenities in rural areas to curtail this menace. Small arms and light weapons proliferation have led to aggravated armed violence, which have increased on the proportional level with poverty thereby inhibiting access to social services effort that would have improved human conditions in the north central Nigeria.

The police who are the symbol of law and order in every appearance are mostly abject, susceptible to the manipulations by the very criminals. They are supposed to protect the people from the usefulness of small arms and light weapons proliferation. They are however,

grappling currently with careless treatment of people, which they are sworn to protect. Their negligence currently manifests every part of the country as we keep recording high levels of armed violence facilitated by the small arms and light weapons proliferation.

The incident was most gruesome and called on the law enforcement agents to bring the culprits of the heinous crime to justice. In an atmosphere of security implications, business investments that would have provided jobs to the citizens remain targets of attacks. The north central Nigeria is plagued into armed violence due to small arms and light weapons proliferation if conscious efforts are not done to retrieve these small arms and light weapons in the hands different groups' security implications will remain endless. The paper concludes that the security implication of small arms and light weapons in this zone should be vigorously investigated to identify the perpetrators of this heinous crime.

### **Recommendations**

- i. The efforts so far made in curbing this ugly menace in some parts of region and other parts of the federation are commendable. However, there should be more and stronger collaborative initiatives, efforts and support from all well-meaning individuals, private organizations and peace ambassadors in putting an end to the incessant cases of security implications in the north central region.
- ii. There should be a maximum cooperation, support and collaboration among the six states governors to achieve peace and stability in north central Nigeria. There is need for security agents to improve their surveillance at boundaries and the country's borderlands as a way of curtailing smuggling of small arms and light weapons in the country. The federal government should stop the influx of foreign mercenaries, armed herdsmen in north central region, and the country as a whole.
- iii. The six state governors in north central Nigeria should start fashioning ways of emulating a security outfit in the region like the southwest region that initiated the Amotekun to safeguard their region. In addition state government should also key into the federal government community policing policy to set up their security outfits.
- iv. The deliberate killings of humans by whoever and for whatever reason is unacceptable. It is completely against human rights of the individual as shined in the constitution of federal republic of Nigeria. There should be renewed concerted efforts by all critical stakeholders at the Federal and state governments regardless of party affiliations, religious backgrounds and ethnic alignments to avert these perennial herdsmen attacks, cultism, kidnapping, banditry and other forms of criminalities in north central Nigeria.
- v. The paper recommends that, federal government in collaboration with national assembly and non-governmental organizations should strengthen legislation and control for the possession, use and transfer of small arms and light weapons in North Central Nigeria.
- vi. The government should ensure that all the culprits involved in this heinous crime should be punished.

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