

ABSTRACT

Security challenges are the major issues largely explaining Africa's underdevelopment. The nature of insecurity is by and large precipitated by armed conflicts and civil wars. For example, in the early 1990s West African countries had witnessed succession of political crisis, genocides, massacres, civil wars and insurgencies that resulted into loss of countless lives and properties. These security crises led to proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) across West Africa with devastating consequences thereby compounding the crisis. In particular, Nigeria's domestic security challenges were also connected to the accessibility of SALW in the country. For instance, apart from major conflicts in the South-south and the North-east of Nigeria, there are a number of conflicts that are attributed to SALW. The paper, therefore, examined the role of SALWA in the complication and devastating escalation of conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria. The paper argues that the fight against insurgency and terrorism across the breadth and length of Nigeria must be addressed along the line of controlling the spread of illegal small arms and light weapons and all west African countries must cooperate and collaborate together to address this huge and complex challenge.

Key Words: Small Arms, Light Weapons, National Security,