



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE POROUS KENYA-UGANDA BORDER ON THE
PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN EAST AFRICAN
REGION**

A CASE STUDY OF KENYA UGANDA KARAMOJA CLUSTER REGION

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**A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE
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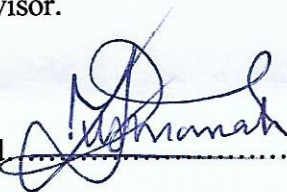
DECLARATION

This research paper is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signed.......... Date.....19/1/2024.....

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This research paper has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Gid for blessing and mercies during this expedition. Special dedication goes to my parents, wife, siblings and children.

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Special thanks to Almighty God for he has bought me this far and as well for strengthening me during the project writing period. Thanks to Nairobi University for giving me room to partake my graduate studies.

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ABSTRACT

This study paper focused on porous country borders and the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) using the case of Karamoja region in the Kenya-Uganda border. The main research objectives included examining the impact of the porous Kenya-Uganda border on national security, interrogating the strategies employed solve proliferation of SALW, and to highlight challenges faced in solving issue of proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Kenya Uganda Karamoja cluster region. This research is grounded on securitization theory as found in the works of Buzan, Weaver and Wilde who viewed national security as a product of careful designation by government decision makers and politicians. The Theory provided sectorial approach, allowing existential threats to be discovered and presenting an opportunity to be specific on security requirements. This research used both qualitative and archival research methods and previewed textual data gathered from current studies and interviewed participants linked to the research. Study participants comprised of media houses, security agencies from the government, community elders, and youth and women groups that have lived or interacted with the life in Kenya-Uganda Karamoja region. Data collected from interviews and from secondary sources was analyzed thematically using descriptive statistics. Based on first objective, its revealed that porosity varied from region to the other, with the main drivers being vast and rugged nature of borders, loose controls, and border administration structures, and corruption of officers charged with managing the borders. Porous country borders allowed the movement and trade of weapons ranging from knives, homemade weapons, ropes, strangling devices, military grade explosives, chemical agents, mortars, rifles, and pistols. The increasing numbers of illicit SALW led to more deaths through combats and intercommunity fights, kidnappings, and destruction of infrastructure. Based on second objective, existence of several strategies like stockpile management of weapons, licensing of guns, gun marking and record keeping, enactment of legislative measures and awareness creation, and social and economic empowerment. The enlisted measures and others still being implemented on lower scales had achieved relatable success judging from the number of individuals transformed away from raiding activities. In line with third objective, findings of the study identified corruption, resource constraints, socio-cultural factors, and geographical-related factors as the key challenges in combating proliferation of illicit SALW. The study concluded that in as much as several challenges exist as enlisted in this study, all was not lost as critical measures could be employed with time to help salvage the situation. Key on the list, as discovered in the study findings included aggressive economic and social empowerment in the Karamoja region, institutional reforms, and organizational cooperation in combating illicit spread of SALW.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Proliferation and illicit spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW) continues to concern processes of national security and humanity around the world, with the current global estimate of illicit SALW standing at over 1 billion.¹ By the end of 2021, a report by the Economic, Social and Cultural commission of the African Union estimated that at least 120,000 illegal SALW circulated daily in the African region. Kenya had the highest number (740,000) of illegal firearms in Africa in 2017², and this number is believed to have increased by the end 2021. This widespread circulation of firearms happens despite the realization of some of grievous consequences such as increased violence, deaths, and displacement from homes. The UN Security Council noted that unchecked spread of illegal SALW has greatly hampered their peace keeping in asymmetric conflicts causing more than half of the fatalities of their peace-keepers other than enhancing transnational organized crime and terrorism. Kenya is no different with recent cases of banditry and conflicts in the Kenya-Uganda Karamoja cluster region, Baringo, Marakwet and Laikipia claiming several lives of civilians and those in security service.³

One of the commonest reasons cited for the spread of SALW especially in the Middle East, Caribbean and parts of Africa include continued conflicts over the past two decades which require arms as tools of violence.⁴ Political instability in countries like Yemen, Syria, Somali and Sudan

¹ UN Security Council, “*Rapid Spread of Small Arms, Light Weapons Still Threatening World Peace, Exacerbating Plight of Civilians in Conflict Zones, Disarmament Chief Tells Security Council*”, UNSC Publication (2021), Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/rapid-spread-small-arms-light-weapons-still-threatening-world-peace-exacerbating-plight> accessed on March 5th 2021

² Small Arms Survey, *Global Firearms Holding*, Small Arms Survey publication (2018), available at <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/database/global-firearms-holdings>, accessed on 8th March 2022

³ Koech, F, *Mystery of ‘white helicopter’ in Baringo banditry attacks*, Nation Media Group pub (2022), available at <https://nation.africa/kenya/news/mystery-white-helicopter-baringo-banditry-attacks-3742648>, accessed on 11th March 2022

⁴ Florquin, N., *Gun violence: insights from international research*, Global Crime (2021), 22:4, 288-311

over the last decade coupled with factors like poor governance and corruption have also ensured that the number of illegal SALW keeps rising, spreading the effects to neighboring countries. Weak management of state weapons, especially in African countries also continues to provide conducive ground for proliferation of illegal firearms despite the support of international and regional community in reducing the trade of the weapons. Communities caught up in economic marginalization and those living in ungoverned places have also been fueling demand for illegal weapons with specific reasons such as need to guard themselves other than the reason of youth radicalization.⁵

With the realization of the adverse effects of the spread of SALW and especially on the peace keeping process, the UN Security Council for instance brings together 15 global member states to discuss disarmament processes and craft future best strategies.⁶ The African Union pushes for its “silencing the guns” strategy, other than meeting specific countries and enforcing policies of preventing the trade and spread of illegal firearms. Governments in affected areas have also been enhancing their capability in monitoring trends in proliferation, necessitating security sector reforms, and implementing arm reduction, demobilization, and reconstruct programs to curb the disaster. In June 2021, the president of Kenya supervised 5,144 fire arms being burned, light weapons, and superseded small arms public ownership in Kajiado County⁷ - one of the several initiatives of dealing with the problem. Judging from the increasing numbers of SALW in circulation however and the continued threats that they pose to societies, current and

⁵ Kirui, K, B, *Conceptualizing small arms control in the Horn of Africa Region: An epistemological debate*, African Journal of Education and Social Sciences (2020); 7(2)

⁶ UN Security Council, “*Rapid Spread of Small Arms, Light Weapons Still Threatening World Peace, Exacerbating Plight of Civilians in Conflict Zones, Disarmament Chief Tells Security Council*”, UNSC Publication (2021), Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/rapid-spread-small-arms-light-weapons-still-threatening-world-peace-exacerbating-plight> accessed on March 5th 2021

⁷ Oduor, M, Kenya burns over 5,000 illegal firearms to curb crime, Africa News (2021), available at <https://www.africanews.com/2021/06/10/kenya-burns-over-5-000-illegal-firearms-to-curb-crime/>, accessed on 11th March 2022

comprehensive analysis of the spread of illegal firearms could be the only hope towards achieving minimized circulation of illegal firearms and declined negative consequences.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

International security agencies, regional bodies, several governments and academicians in peace and security sector are more resilient in fighting against the spread of illicit SALW.⁸ This comes especially with the continued realization of subsequent adverse effects such as deaths, increased insecurity in neighborhoods and disruption of economies. The problem of proliferation of illegal SALW has however been evolving with time, caused by unique researchable factors ranging from unstable political systems to problems of corrupt systems. Porosity of country borders and their subsequent effect on the spread of SALW still remains a notable point though it has attracted minimal attention. One of the regions on the spotlight for the longest time globally with small arms death rate of about 60 in every 100,000 of the populace has been the Kenya-Uganda Karamoja cluster region. This region whose cycles of livestock raiding involving inter-communal armed violence dating back to 1944, seems to be witnessing increased intensity of violence with continued availability of automatic weapons and commercialization of livestock trading. Unless the issue of the spread of illegal SALW is covered comprehensively and immediate solutions of curbing the spread through porous borders are employed, disarmament and peace building efforts employed in the region will remain fruitless. Conflict aftermaths such as death and others yet to be discovered will also keep recurring in the region and in other parts of the world. This study will therefore focus on the proliferation of SALW in the Kenya-Uganda Karamoja cluster region, with the aim of assessing effect of porous country borders on the proliferation of SALW and insecurity and assessing strategies employed to deal with the problem.

⁸ Florquin, N, *Gun violence: insights from international research*, Global Crime (2021), 22:4, 288-311

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the impact of the porous Kenya-Uganda border on the Kenya national security?
2. What are the strategies used to address the issue of proliferation of arms along the Kenya Uganda border?
3. What are challenges faced in addressing the issue of proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Kenya Uganda Karamoja cluster region?

1.4 Objectives of the Research

Research objectives for this study include; -

1. To examine the impact of the porous Kenya-Uganda border on the Kenya national security
2. To interrogate the strategies used to address the issue of proliferation of arms along the Kenya Uganda border
3. To highlight the challenges faced in addressing the issue of proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Kenya Uganda Karamoja cluster region

1.5 Rationale

Proliferation of illicit SALW is a developing modern-day subject that have continued to distress human life globally.⁹ Therefore a research on reasons for the spread of SALW and influence of porous borders on the spread of illicit SALW will be critical in specific country internal security departments in improving strategies of sealing loopholes. Policy makers in other intergovernmental positions involved in peace keeping will also be able to effect critical decisions on monitoring the flow of firearms within their regions. Affected communities with increased understanding on the consequences of the spread of SALW will also benefit from study findings and help in suggesting better strategies of curbing the spread.

⁹ Idris I, *Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism Programming on Men, Women, Boys and Girls*, UKAID Publication (2019), pp 7 – 19

1.5.1 Academic Rationale

This research will be of importance to scholars in the arena of international peace studies and conflict management. with the main aim of the research being Kenya-Uganda Karamoja cluster region, the outcome of the research will add to the current literature on effect of porous borders on the proliferation. Suggestions on curbing the spread of illicit SALW will enable improve research locally, internationally and regionally on how to prevent extreme violence and its effect on humanity.

1.5.2 Policy Justification

the outcome from the research will offer a good ground for peacekeeping bodies internationally for instance the United Nations, United States Agency for International Development, UK Aid Direct and other government agencies globally on the state of porosity of country and regional borders and spread of illicit SALW. Since the spread of illicit SALW and its effect are mutual worldwide, as confirmed historically, comprehending causes of the spread, impact of the problem on humanity and success rate of programs used to curb the spread can help registered agencies to come up with policies that are effective on how to handle spread of illicit SAWL in the best manner so as to minimize death and extreme effect on innocent citizens.

Apart from its effect on human life, spread of illicit SALW leading to violent extremism and terrorism has affected different countries environment and economy.¹⁰ Tourists panic when it comes to visiting embattled regions and countries and as well affected nations spend a lot of finances in fixing ruined infrastructure. Hatred is also spewed amongst states in some of the regions prolonging conflict that could have otherwise been eliminated. From the research findings,

¹⁰ Condra L, N, *Ethnic Group Rebellion against the State: Perils of the Periphery*, (San Diego: Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, 2010a), pp. 107 - 115

government agencies and internal peace agencies globally will be able to comprehend the widespread effect of porous country borders on spread of illicit SALW and further on the state of humanity. Nevertheless, it will enable them to advocate for policies aimed at protecting the environment and stimulate economic growth and help nations in dealing extreme incidences of violence during crises.

1.6 Literature Review

This sector provides reviewed literature on porous country borders and the proliferation of illicit SALW from global, regional, and Kenyan perspective. Researcher has evaluated study papers, articles, conference papers, journal and other relevant literature in order to conclude on the findings pertaining to the research topic.

1.6.1 Impact of Porous Country Borders on National Security

There is debate among scholars on the link between national security issues associated with proliferation of SALW and porosity of country borders; with some scholars arguing that porous country borders are the main cause of proliferation of SALW, while others viewing porous borders as a minor factor in the contribution of SALW spread which is caused by far more diverse macro-economic factors. Both dimensions of the argument however conceptually recognize the implication of porous country borders on the spread of SALW and subsequent effect on country security.¹¹ Factors leading to porosity of country borders and the impact on security however varied from region to the other as presented in studies globally, regionally and locally in this section. Cragin and Hoffman with a focus in Central America identified that;

¹¹Small Arms Survey, *Global Firearms Holding*, Small Arms Survey publication (2018), available at <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/database/global-firearms-holdings>, accessed on 8th March 2022

“Small arms easily spread through the countries of Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia and Costa Rica through isolated sea routes, river routes and ground routes with traffickers purchasing from disparate sources like internal legal markets, raiding of military stockpiles, criminal bodies, and bribery of private security forces. Geopolitical characteristics were behind the countries’ vulnerability to proliferation of arms. Venezuela’s Southwestern border for instance had easily penetrated marsh borders while the Northwestern border allowed arm traders proximity to the Caribbean arm market through the Gulf of Venezuela. Ruggedness of the borders of Peru, Ecuador and Panama made it difficult for specific country authorities to monitor and control the borders. For Brazil, the sparsely populated Amazon Jungle as a natural border in northwestern region allowed for easy flow of arms. The situation was even worse for specific countries like Colombia that have employed combined forces of police, military and customs”¹²

In the Middle Eastern region, causes behind porous country borders included weak systems of administration introduced by Arab spring uprising, constant country conflicts and minimal cooperation amongst states. A study by Raffaella covering Middle Eastern countries of Syria, Libya and Yemen revealed that the Arab uprisings from 2010 adversely affected many territorial borders in the region, an aspect that increased flow of illicit SALW.¹³ According to Raffaella,

“Continued conflict after the Arab spring uprising compromised with the integrity of country border management authorities in the region, further leading to disintegration. This porosity of borders increased arms trafficking along the borders to aid fighting groups in engaging in combat and to help some individuals

¹²Cragin, K., and Hoffman, B., *Arms Trafficking and Colombia*, Rand

National Defense Research Institute, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data (2016), pp. 11 – 25

¹³ Raffaella A. D, *Contentious borders in the Middle East and North Africa: context and concepts*, International Affairs, 2017, (19), 4; pp. 767–787

protect themselves. Cases like the collapse of central authority of Libya after the fall of Gaddafi for instance, precarious security situation in Egypt and Syria's civil war left country borders open to the flow of arms. Emergence of distinct political entities like self-declared Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Rojava in Northern Syria and Kurdistan in Iraq could have escalated the issue of spreading illicit SALW”¹⁴

Oinam noted that the porosity of the Northeastern border of India is the reason behind proliferation of illicit SALW in India. This was evidenced by increased cases of arrests of top drug lords, an increase of 65% of drug related cases and increase in illicit trade of arms.¹⁵ Pushpita agreed with the findings by Oinam, citing that porosity of borders as witnessed in states such as Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland that share an international border with Myanmar had increased the flow of arms and drugs resulting to increased cross border crimes. Reasons behind porous border included free movement regime (FMR) existing at the border between India and Myanmar, lack of strict fencing across the Indo-Myanmar border and existence of many insurgent groups. FMR for instance, allowing movement freely with 16km of the Indo-Myanmar border without any restrictions such as visa allowed individuals to carry around and trade in illicit arms. According to Pushpita,

“The border region is a trouble hotspot and fragile with arms and ammunition being smuggled through the Indo-Myanmar border (IMB). Other than the arms, drugs from Myanmar and Chinese products were smuggled through Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur in India before being sold to different parts of India”¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid, 770

¹⁵ Oinam, A. (2021). *India Must Regulate its North East Porous Border to Check Potential Golden Triangle Formation*, The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) Publication, available at <https://www.claws.in/india-must-regulate-its-north-east-porous-border-to-check-potential-golden-triangle-formation/> accessed on 28th June 2022

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 4

In the African region, Porosity of country borders is also a broad aspect caused by several factors that vary from one country to the other. In Nigeria for instance, border porosity has been linked to poor administration by government regimes post-independence which have failed to meet the original intention of the carving of borders by colonialists.¹⁷ According to Adetorise and Okoro, the intention of colonialists in creating borders was to create sphere of influence driven by economic and political motives rather than creation of boundaries. Subsequent post-independence governments have neglected border communities which split communities, providing fewer security personnel and limited security cover, leading to illicit trade of firearms. Other reasons for porosity of borders in the West include ECOWAS protocol pertaining to free movement of people, services and goods which has given room for criminals to conduct SAWL trafficking across border.¹⁸ Traffickers make the most of loopholes among nations when it comes too monitoring trade across borders in the region and relaxed personal within border gives room to for wicked expeditions.

Based on the fact that in Nigeria corruption is prevalent and systematic arms trafficking across borders is caused by security personnel. Omitola and Awotayo noted that,

“Security personnel deployed in border towns with fewer than expected equipment, are of either weak and of age or very few with no experience and are sometimes poorly remunerated making it difficult for them to combat illicit trade of firearms.”

Boko Haram, the lead terrorist group in the Western region used both transnational and national trafficking of SALW due to porosity of borders.¹⁹ In transnational trafficking, arms and weapons

¹⁷ Adetoritse, D. T., and Okoro, E. R., *Border porosity, small arms proliferation and the challenge of insecurity in Nigeria*. Sokoto Journal of the Social Sciences (2018), 8(2)

¹⁸ Omitola, B., & Awotayo, G., *Arms proliferation and challenges of national security and sustainable development in Nigeria*, Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa (2016); 18,

¹⁹ Ibid, pp. 12 – 14

moved across borders of sovereign states with a case in time pointing to the Libyan uprising where terrorist groups like AQIM acquired weapons and sold them to other groups in the Sahel region. While national trafficking was within in state, methods of smuggling arms were the same including loading arms in specially adapted vehicles, stocking them in goods, tunneling and hiding under cloths while on transit.

Sierra Leone, another country affected by porous borders in Africa experienced tremendous spread of illicit SALW in the period 1991 to 2004 that saw one of the most grievous civil wars in the continent.²⁰ The country is bounded by three countries in the Mano River Union (MRU) enlisted as Liberia, Ivory Coast and Guinea. Out of the enlisted countries in the basin, Sierra Leone has the highest number of porous entry points and has recorded three of the most devastating incidences arising from the borders. The events include the 1991-2002 civil war where Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels easily crossed borders of Liberia to the Eastern part of Sierra Leone,²¹ violation of Sierra Leone's airspace by an aircraft carrying 1,540 pound of cocaine in 2008 and spread of Ebola in the country from neighboring Guinea in 2014.²²

In Tunisia, porosity of its borders has mainly been caused by collapse of strict security measures in the aftermath of the Arab uprising and internal government conflicts.²³ According to the international Crisis Group,

“Cross border arm trafficking is largely due to security vacuum that was created after the uprising of 2010 against Ben Ali's regime and chaos generated by its neighbor Libya.

²⁰ Catignani, S., *Socio-economic Consequences of Border Porosity for Sierra Leone's National Security*, Unpublished Master's Thesis (2020)

²¹ Massaquoi, M., *Sierra Leone: Abandoned Drug Plan – Nine Foreigners Arrested*. Concord Times, Freetown (2008), available at <https://allafrica.com/stories/200807150565.html>

²² Wauquier, N. (2015). *Understanding the Emergence of Ebola Virus Disease in Sierra Leone: Stalking the Virus in the threatening Wake of Emergence*, (2015) Available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4423925/> (accessed, 16th June 2022)

²³ International Crisis Group, *Tunisia's borders: Jihadism and Contraband*, 2013. ICG Publication, available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/tunisia/tunisia-s-borders-jihadism-and-contraband>, accessed on 24th June 2022

Increased corruption of border authority in the last decade has also been a reason for the growth of illicit SALW trade.”

The border of Sudan also forms a critical part of this study, with the lack of government authority along the Sudan-DRC border limiting monitoring and control of the flow of illicit SALW. People easily travel undetected, carrying illicit SALW along. Many armed groups exist in this ungoverned space, which provide a crucial market for the arms business and facilitate the exchange processes. Such groups include the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), poachers and *Mbororo* nomads amongst other small armed groups.²⁴ The groups have not only facilitated transnational trafficking of illicit weapons but also been part of inter-community conflicts in the Central region of Africa.

Kenya which is part of the East African region has also been on the spotlight for spread of illicit SALW. In as much as several studies point at the porosity of Kenyan borders as the reason behind the spread of illicit SALW, others have considered the issue as historical dating back to pre-colonial days. Kirui with a focus in the horn of Africa pointed at the long-lived instability in Somali with Al-shabaab group diversifying operations as one of the main reasons for the increased availability of SALW in the region and in Kenya.²⁵ In the study, weapons spread to Somali and Djibouti through sea from the Middle East before finding their way through armed groups and other traffickers into countries like Kenya. Fewer security personnel and extensive Kenya-Somali border leading to inefficiencies in border controls allowed traffickers to smuggle arms into the country via forest routes, trucks carrying stocks and by hiding under clothes. Corrupt systems of administration along the border also allowed the flow of illicit arms into the country, and its

²⁴ Marks, J., *Border in Name Only: Arms Trafficking and Armed Groups at the DRC–Sudan Border*, Small Arms Survey HSBA Working Paper 4 (2007)

²⁵ Kirui, K, B, *Conceptualizing small arms control in the Horn of Africa Region: An epistemological debate*, African Journal of Education and Social Sciences (2020); 7(2)

subsequent spread to armed groups in towns like Nairobi and conflicting nomadic communities of the Rift valley areas.²⁶

Some scholars like Wepundi, Ndung'u, Kabuu and Rynn however view the issue of illicit SALW as historical dating back to periods before colonialism in the 19th century where communities raided each other for livestock, slaves, ivory and other animal products.²⁷ In their review, gun markets existed in Maji in Southwestern Ethiopia and these facilitated trade between Arab merchants and Ethiopian traders. Despite colonialists' effort to thwart the trade and conquer the region, the business continued providing resources used in the struggle for independence. Mau Mau fighters in Kenya for example, are believed to have traded in illicit arms in Central province and Nairobi area.²⁸ Vandalism of armory at the collapse of Iddi Amin's Ugandan rule in 1979 could also have increased the availability of weapons in Kenya, and especially in the Kenya-Uganda borders. The overthrowing of Ethiopian leader Haile Mariam Mengistu, conflict in Sudan and the northern parts of Uganda similarly increased the availability of SALW along the line of history.

Other studies point at a similarity of channels of distribution of illicit SALW to that of legal international channels like ports. Gakuo noted that arm smugglers use Mombasa port to divert arms destined for other countries, combining the trade with drug trafficking. Border town centers such as Moyale, Mandera, Lokichoggio, El Wak and Isiolo are then used as dispersion points for the traders engaged in the business. The northern regions of Kenya have recorded highest level of small arms prevalence propagated by inter-ethnic resource-based conflicts, underdevelopment, and

²⁶ Kyalo, M. L., *Factors influencing proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in Makadara and Embakasi divisions, Nairobi east district, Kenya*, Unpublished Master's degree Thesis, University of Nairobi

²⁷ Wepundi, M., Nthiga, E., Kabuu, E., Murray, R., and Alvazzi, A., *Availability of Small Arms and Perceptions of Security in Kenya: An Assessment*, Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva 2012

²⁸ Katumanga, M., and Lionel C., *Nairobi – A City Besieged: The Impact of Armed Violence on Poverty and Development*. Bradford: Centre for International Cooperation and Security (2005)

closeness to war-prone neighboring countries. In the Great lakes' region, SALW moved disguised as humanitarian supplies, hidden in vehicles, clothes and kitchen supplies by bribing security personnel who by chance notice the flow. A study by Kirui pointed at porous borders such as the main road connecting Kenya and Sudan as the main route for the flow of SALW from Sudan to Kenya.²⁹

1.6.2 Strategies Employed to Address Proliferation of SALW across Country Borders

With the increasing realization of the adverse effects of proliferation of SALW on country security and humanity, several strategies have been put in place to address the disaster from global, regional and even local levels. These strategies as reviewed in studies help to identify success rates and gaps to help define even more effective strategies. In Colombia for instance, the government has employed combined forces of the military, police, and customs to help watch over the country's borders. Checkpoints defined by the combined forces work together with communities living along the borders to help identify and track illegal traders of the firearms. Ambushes by the forces have also been organized to help curb the spread of SALW across the border. The strategy has however not been out rightly successful as suggested by studies conducted in the region. In fact,

“The situation is even worse for specific countries like Colombia that have employed combined forces of police, military and customs”³⁰

The UN Security Council has set in place Disarmament affairs committee and conflict Armament Research teams to review, trace, and provide data on illicit SALW. The Security Council started

²⁹ Kirui, K, B, *Conceptualizing small arms control in the Horn of Africa Region: An epistemological debate*, African Journal of Education and Social Sciences (2020); 7(2)

³⁰Cragin, K., and Hoffman, B., *Arms Trafficking and Colombia*, Rand

National Defense Research Institute, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data (2016), pp. 11 – 25

its biennial discussion of illicit SALW in 2010 by issuing a presidential statement of the adverse effects of the uncontrolled illegal spread of SALW. In their report;

*“the Council recognized that illicit flows and excessive accumulation of such weapons compromise its effectiveness in discharging its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council has also given nine peace keeping operations with the responsibility of addressing issues relating to conventional weapons such as control and management of small arms, light weapons and their ammunitions.”*³¹

The conflict armament Research teams on the other end work with governments and weapon exporters to determine origins of diverted weapons, and light arms. The teams then trace each SALW’s transfer history using sales and supplies records from manufacturer’s place to points of diversion. The teams’ then aggregate data, identifying problems such as failure by governments to secure weapons, poor work coordination from national security and defense forces, and falsification of export-control documents.³² One instance of actions done by conflict Armament Research teams in Iraq in 2016 involved the tracing of a weapon that had been diverted to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) less than two months after its manufacture in Europe. Utilizing technologically advanced tools like “iTrace”, the team has supported European Union and other partners in the enforcement of sanctions and embargoes to help control the problem of proliferation of illicit SALW.³³

Idler agreed with Craig and Hoffman that the strategy of *“employing tough regulations to control the proliferation of illegal arms such as closure of borders and employment of military and police*

³¹ UN Security Council, *“Rapid Spread of Small Arms, Light Weapons Still Threatening World Peace, Exacerbating Plight of Civilians in Conflict Zones, Disarmament Chief Tells Security Council”*, UNSC Publication (2021), Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/rapid-spread-small-arms-light-weapons-still-threatening-world-peace-exacerbating-plaint> accessed on March 5th 2021

³² Ibid, p2

³³ Ibid, p3

forces to watch” was the most applied in Venezuela and Brazil. This required the forces to cover the rough terrain of the Venezuelan-Columbian border covering 1,378 miles, and monitoring the activities of armed groups constantly fighting in the region.

In Africa, regional bodies other than the AU have been at the forefront in employing strategies to curb the spread of illicit small arms and light weapons. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for example has a moratorium on the manufacture or import of small arms in the region. In fact, a legally binding version of the moratorium was approved by ECOWAS Secretariat in June 2006 after the West African Action Network on Small Arms together with Oxfam developed an acceptable treaty language.³⁴ The Southern African Development Community (SADC) developed a protocol on Firearms, Ammunition and Related Materials in 2001. Parties to the SADC protocol continue developing regional standards for the marking of small arms to facilitate tracing of weapons to uncover illicit trade and have been crafting and implementing national action plans according to the standards.³⁵ The East African Community, which was formed in 1999, developed sub regional initiatives to help alleviate the problems of proliferation of SALW. Part of the plan has been utilizing police cooperation to combat illegal trade of SALW in conflict regions and the use of DDR programs.

The AU has also been at the forefront in preventing the spread of illicit SALW, using programs like “Silencing the guns” initiative and seeking cooperation with member countries.³⁶ 34 out of 44 countries in the sub-Saharan African region have come up with internal controls to help deal with the problem of illicit spread of SALW. These countries have legislation regulating portions of the

³⁴ Mehra, et al., *Cashing in on Guns: Identifying the Nexus between Small Arms, Light Weapons and Terrorist Financing*, ICCT Report (2021)

³⁵ Lenengwezi, S, G, *Impact of small arms and light Weapons on the state of Insecurity in the Horn of Africa Region: Case of Laikipia County*, Unpublished Thesis, UoN (2017)

³⁶ UN Security Council, “*Rapid Spread of Small Arms, Light Weapons Still Threatening World Peace, Exacerbating Plight of Civilians in Conflict Zones, Disarmament Chief Tells Security Council*”, UNSC Publication (2021), Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/rapid-spread-small-arms-light-weapons-still-threatening-world-peace-exacerbating-plight> accessed on March 5th 2021

small arms trade, with two requiring an assessment of risk for diversion before authorizing a small arms transfer. Demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) has also worked in several countries such as Mali, Sierra Leone and DRC. In Mali for instance, Tuareg rebels participated in high profile destruction events sponsored by UN and the government, burning 3,000 weapons.

In Kenya, the government has coined a number of tactics to address the challenge of proliferation of SALW. The establishment of the Kenya National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons (KNFP) in 2000 as directorate in the presidents offices one of the initiatives in enhancing multistakeholder and disciplinary mechanism in managing small arms..³⁷ The KNFP carries out stockpile management, capacity building among agencies enforcing law and other actors in small arms, raising awareness on risks of arm proliferation and strengthening institutions in order to mitigate setbacks emerging as a results of illicit small arms. The Nairobi Protocol, another plan towards curbing illicit SALW developed in 2004, legally bound countries on transparency, information exchange, and harmonization other than guaranteeing Government–civil society cooperation.

Renown programs undertaken by KNFP have included disarmament processes such as “Dumisha Amani” and “Okoa Maisha”. These programs which run over the years, are supervised by independent supply chains and have been at the forefront in destroying recovered SALW publicly.³⁸ By 2015, KNFP had coordinated the destruction of over 50,000 illicit arms and 100,000 round of ammunition, acquired five firearms marking machines and marked over 90,000 firearms.

³⁷ Gakuo, N, R. *Promoting Peace and Security in Africa: Impact of Small and Light Weapons in Kenya*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Nairobi (2020)

³⁸ Wepundi, M., Nthiga, E., Kabuu, E., Murray, R., and Alvazzi, A., *Availability of Small Arms and Perceptions of Security in Kenya: An Assessment*, Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva 2012

The body has also strengthened identification and traceability, using improved data records and through the installation of software for tracing arms business.³⁹

1.6.3 Challenges Faced in Addressing Proliferation of SALW across Country Borders

Despite the efforts put in place to address the problem of proliferation of SALW, challenges have continued dogging the process, almost leading to the collapse of strategies employed. According to the UN Security Council, the main challenge affecting the processes has been the lack of detailed reporting process on the manufacture and movement of the SALW.⁴⁰ Most reports on illicit trade of SALW provide limited information on the provenance of the weapons, other than failing to record unique weapon identifying information, aspects that have hampered effective investigation on the topic. Ungrounded reports have also resulted in the development of opaque policies that fail to understand the dynamics of the problem being covered.⁴¹

Globally still, according to Craig and Hoffman, the challenge to the initiatives of curbing spread of illegal arms has been the failure of most governments to secure their weapons against theft and looting. In the Middle East for instance, with the ongoing conflict in countries like Syria and Yemen, insurgent groups defeat national defense forces and grab as many weapons as they wish. This has also been common amongst rebel groups in South America which make way into military store houses and make away with weapons and ammunitions. The end effect of theft and looting is the wholesale loss of arms, falsification of export control documents. Weak systems of

³⁹ Ibid, Pp 34 – 36

⁴⁰ UN Security Council, “*Rapid Spread of Small Arms, Light Weapons Still Threatening World Peace, Exacerbating Plight of Civilians in Conflict Zones, Disarmament Chief Tells Security Council*”, UNSC Publication (2021), Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/rapid-spread-small-arms-light-weapons-still-threatening-world-peace-exacerbating-plight> accessed on March 5th 2021

⁴¹ Ibid, p3

administration also imply that countries fail to address proper due diligence when issuing export licenses while state led initiatives supply weapons to terrorist groups, insurgents and rebels.

In the African region, and especially on the efforts made by regional bodies, the challenge in place has been the lack of ownership in the anti-SALW by security personnel and the communities involved. Most of the initiatives have been considered boardroom strategies forced on the people and as such the process has not been implemented with the seriousness defined. A report by ICCT indicates that;

“Security officers in much of the Southern Africa don’t recognize themselves as having a significant role in combating the spread of illicit SALW as defined by SADC. Well defined policies are thus not being properly implemented, an aspect that allows traffickers the opportunity to further their trade.”⁴²

In Nigeria, arm traffickers take advantage of the setbacks in monitoring regional trade across border and relaxed security personnel to conduct evil activities since in Nigeria corruption is prevalent and systematic arms trafficking across borders is caused by security personnel. Omitola and Awotayo noted that

Based on the fact that

“Security personnel deployed in border towns with fewer than expected equipment, are of either weak and of age or very few with no experience, and are sometimes poorly remunerated making it difficult for them to combat illicit trade of firearms.”

In Northern Kenya, weak and corrupt security agencies are as a result of lack of effective border control strategies and reduced number of police presence which create a good environment for

⁴² Mehra, et al., *Cashing in on Guns: Identifying the Nexus between Small Arms, Light Weapons and Terrorist Financing*, ICCT Report (2021)

small arms proliferation, use and ownership.⁴³ In Kenya, poor policing has enhanced infusion of gun most amidst the pastoral communities. The impact is that gun has stopped to become a firearm but a powerful conflict, violence and power symbol. In the Rift valley and Northern region of Kenya, the value of guns is an important property among armed and ethnic groups this has been deep rooted in the population minds that processing small arms is a right resulting to arm races among ethnic groups.⁴⁴

The Kenya-Uganda Karamoja cluster region is an area that seems to have been on the receiving end of the illicit spread of SALW, dating back to 1944. This region is characterized by dry conditions and erratic rainfall, supporting livestock keeping as the main economic activity. It is inhabited by nomadic Pokot, Jie and Karamajong groups who practice intercommunity reciprocal livestock raids, compensating the animals lost to theft, drought and disease. With this culture of livestock raids that is regulated by community customs, the increasing availability of modern weapons could just be intensifying violence in the region.⁴⁵ In as much as porosity of Kenya-Uganda border has been enlisted as a key reason to the spread of arms in this region, several other factors both local and international need to be investigated. Stack and Powell viewed frequent droughts and floods in the region leading to cattle loss as factors aggravating the situation in the area. Increased intensity and frequency of droughts for instance motivated weapon acquisitions to take part in raids as a way of replenishing cattle stock. Floods which damage key infrastructure and degrade soils leading to loss of livestock further accelerate need for guns and livestock raids.⁴⁶

⁴³ Kyalo, M, L., *Factors influencing proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in Makadara and Embakasi divisions, Nairobi east district, Kenya*, Unpublished Master's degree Thesis, University of Nairobi

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 35 – 39

⁴⁵ Meier, P., Bond, D. & Bond, J., *Environmental influences on pastoral conflict in the Horn of Africa*, UCDP Publication (2014)

⁴⁶ Stark, J. (2011). *Climate change and conflict in Uganda: The cattle corridor and Karamoja*. FessGlobal publications

1.6.4 Research Gap

This section has reviewed studies on the topic of porous country borders and the proliferation of SALW from global, regional, and local perspectives. Porosity of country borders in Central American states for instance as contributed by rugged terrain, inefficiencies of systems of administration and push from armed groups has been a reason for the spread of illicit SALW. In the Middle Eastern region; weak systems of administration introduced by Arab spring uprising and constant country conflicts and corrupt lack of cooperation amongst states leading to porous borders have also been critical in the proliferation of illicit SALW. In India, aspects such as free movement regime (FMR) existing at the border between India and Myanmar, lack of strict fencing across the Indo-Myanmar border and existence of many insurgent groups had weakened increased porosity of country borders and increased illicit arms business. Similar findings on the implication of porous borders on spread of arms have been noted in studies in Africa, with causes of porosity varying from state to the other. Based on the studies reviewed, the problem of porous country borders and spread of SALW seems to be varying from country to the other and from region to region. Strategies undertaken to combat the process and challenges faced also seem to be specific to regions and localities. The case of Kenya-Uganda Karamoja region presents a unique place that is yet to be fully addressed in studies despite its existence for a long time. Existing studies in the region presents findings of periods before Covid-19 pandemic and Ukraine-Russia war, aspects that could have impacted on porosity of borders and general spread of illicit SALW.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on securitization theory, that is founded in the works of Barry, Weaver, and Wilde. The theory suggests that national security is a product of careful designation by

government decision makers and politicians.⁴⁷ In the theory, political issues are labelled security issues when considered menacing, unsafe or disturbing by persons providing security and has strong social and institutional powers more than in politics. Five sectors enlisted as societal, economic, military, environmental and political help to determine securitization. In the military sector for instance, the referent object is that state while within the environment referent object is endangered species. Through this sectorial approach, existential threats are discovered to relate to different characteristics of each referent object, allowing the universe to be specific on security requirements.

Further, the collective agreement by a given audience and the leaders on the nature of threats and the subsequent support in taking extra-ordinary measures contributes to the securitization process. This however has elicited criticism, with opposers arguing that securitization process is long and entail social structure and negotiations among audiences and speakers. The securitization theory there is relevant in elaborating grievous issue of porosity of country borders and proliferation of SALW. The theory will help in understanding the views of leaders and several audiences across the world on the concept of the spread of illegal firearms and possible securitization strategies needed to curb the issue. The Securitization theory will further help to build a case from the Karamoja area of the Kenya-Uganda border, assessing the impact of the spread of illicit SALW on security and humanity, analyzing strategies employed to counter the problem, challenges hindering the success of deployed processes and suggestions for bettering security situation in the region at large.

⁴⁷ Buzan, B, Weaver,O, & Wilde, J, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, p. 25

1.8 Methodology

This section explain the approach used by the research when conducting the study. It is composed of the research design, targeted population, data gathering techniques and analysis pertaining to the research on porosity of country borders, implication on spread of SALW and their effect on humanity.

1.8.1 Research Design

This research was conducted using both qualitative and archival methods. This was important to the researcher since he was able to gather textual data gathered from current literature and interview from key informants. The research investigates the impact of porous Kenyan borders on the proliferation of SALW and insecurity and to draw explanatory inferences on the strategies employed to curb the problem and challenges to the processes. In this study the researcher was seeking to establish the impact of porous country borders on the proliferation of SALW and insecurity from local, international and regional scope; using Kenya as a case study. The research used archival research. This methods entails the use of records and documents available.⁴⁸ This gives room to study ancient relations among people and how they have evolved over time up to date. This provided empirical information which is required to give answers to queries which cannot be answered using any other method. It also helped the researcher to compare studies. Researcher used qualitative research design to help in establishing the link between attributes and other types of data from individual responses.⁴⁹ This research design was important since it helped in gathering and analyzing data from respondents who forms the targeted population.

⁴⁸ Mohr, J W & Ventresca M, *Archival Research Methods*, Blackwell companion to organizations (2002), pp.805 – 828

⁴⁹ Kothari, C.R, *Research Methodology, Methods and Techniques*, (New Delhi New Age Inter- national (P) Limited. 2nd ed, 2008) pp. 109 – 110

1.8.2 Target Population

Targeted population for this research comprise of security agencies from the government, media houses, community elders, and youth and women groups that have lived or interacted with the life in Kenya-Uganda Karamoja region. The researcher targeted members of the enlisted organizations who resided in the border region and had interacted with the spread of SALW. To obtain 100 participants, the researcher used purposive sampling when it comes to choosing from the targeted population. According to Kothari, this method is a non probabilistic thus the research only relied on their judgment when selecting research participant from the survey.⁵⁰ Participants for the research was selected provided they are citizens residing in the border region for more than five years and had interacted with SALW. Purposive sampling helped to choose accurate number of respondents who are going to be engaged in this research for purposes of gathering data in order to achieve study objectives. A small number of respondents eased data collection and thus took short duration to cover the needed items under investigation and capture of concepts needed during data collection.

1.8.3 Methods of Data Collection

Research used primary and secondary data collection tool to collect data. The primary data collection tool was interview. Interview entailed meeting participants from the targeted population and involving them in the study. As much as some of the interview was virtual as a result of Covid 19, others needed physical interaction with participants. Interview was adopted since it helped to guide participants on information needed, it helped in predicting respondents' mood and to elucidates on queries that might arise during the data collection process. Secondary data from

⁵⁰ Kothari, C. R., & Garg, G, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers (2014).

academic, media reports, journals, regional and local reports was used. Secondary data provided wide framework through which one can analyze and allow for scrutiny and evaluate data gathered in the past and compare then with hypothesis in the study.⁵¹

1.8.4 Methods of Data Analysis

Data gathered will be cleaned, edited and analyzed through descriptive analysis. Kothari asserts that descriptive analysis aids in summarizing data in a constructive manner in trends and patterns that can be identified.⁵² In testing research hypothesis, data analyzed will be thematically presented and divided in accordance to research objectives. nevertheless, the research will review, categorize, tabulate and combine the facts and establish meaning based on the research main objective, hypothesis and research queries. Qualitative data will be analyzed via secondary sources. Research will use content analysis to present meaning, quantify and analyses themes and relation between concepts within the qualitative data.

1.8.5 Legal and Ethical Considerations

The researcher will take care of respondent's personal information with privacy. Data gathered from the interview will be used for research and disposed thereafter. Researcher will gather data from participants who are willing to participant in the research without issuing tokens to enhance participants to answer research question or force them.

⁵¹ Zikmund, W.G., Babin, B.J and Griffin, M, *Business Research Methods*, (Australia : South-Western engage publishers, 9th Edition, 2013) pp. 56 – 88

⁵² Kothari, C. R., & Garg, G, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers (2014)

1.9 Study Layout

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter will introduce the concepts of porous country borders and their impact on proliferation of SALW. The chapter entails of the study background, research problem, literature review, hypothesis, justification of the study, theoretical framework and research design.

Chapter Two: Impact of Porous Country Borders on the Proliferation of SALW and insecurity: A Global, regional, and local Appraisal

This chapter provides a deep analysis of research findings on impact of porous country borders on the proliferation of SALW from an international perspective. It will firstly cover porosity of country borders and proliferation of SALW from global, regional and local level. The chapter will then address impact of porous country borders on the proliferation of SALW, consequences of these on insecurity and assesses programs of reducing the spread of SALW from global, African region and Local perspectives. The study will rely on secondary data.

Chapter Three: Strategies employed to address the issue of proliferation of arms along the Kenya Uganda border

This chapter will seek to provide an in-depth analysis and findings of the strategies employed in addressing proliferation of SALW. It will firstly cover strategies at the global level, address strategies in the African region and narrow down to Kenya-Uganda Karamoja cluster region. Both secondary and primary data will be used in the chapter.

Chapter Four: Challenges faced in Addressing the issue of Porous Country borders and the Spread of illicit SALW: A Critical Analysis

This chapter will seek to provide deep analysis of research findings on the challenges faced in addressing the issue of porous country borders and proliferation of SALW using the Kenya-

Uganda Karamoja cluster region. It will firstly cover challenges faced in dealing with porosity of country borders. The chapter will then address challenges faced in addressing the issue of the proliferation of SALW, consequences of these on insecurity and assesses programs of reducing the spread of SALW. The study will rely on primary and secondary sources.

Chapter five: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will provide a summary of the findings; the conclusion of the study and give recommendations. The chapter will also provide suggestions on areas of further studies based on the literature review and findings from the study.

CHAPTER TWO

IMPACT OF POROUS BORDERS ON THE PROLIFERATION OF SALW AND INSECURITY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and findings of the analysis of the impact of porous country borders on the proliferation of SALW and insecurity. The study relied on secondary data collected from journals, articles, and other research papers on the topic from international, regional, and local perspectives. The study also used primary data collected using interviews and questionnaires from civil society groups, personnel in media and locals in the Karamoja region found along the Kenya-Uganda border. This chapter first covers findings around the concept of porosity of borders, then addresses the issue of proliferation of SALW and then assesses the impact of porous country borders on proliferation of illicit SALW.

2.2 Porous Nature of Country Borders

The study first evaluated the nature of country borders, and especially those that had mentioned serious problems of proliferation of arms through their borders. Findings of the study revealed that most countries that experienced the problem of spread of SALW through their borders had weak border administration which allowed easy movement of weapons. Weaker border administration as revealed in the study was an attribute of geopolitical reasons, limited resource capacity in specific country governments and corrupt officials in the border regions. In a review of studies from South America for instance, evidence of marsh borders in Venezuela, and ruggedness of the borders of Ecuador, Peru and Panama were the specific reasons that created difficulty in

administering the borders.⁵³ As such, individuals and gangs participating in arms trafficking take advantage and conduct their trade through the borders. In Brazil, sparse population along the Amazon border made it uneconomical to deploy forces to monitor the border, allowing for easy penetration of any form of trade into the country.⁵⁴

In Columbia, the study findings revealed that the vast nature of the border line made it relatively difficult to fully monitor cross border activities, even with the advent of technology and the combination of both police and military forces.⁵⁵ In most African countries like Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali and even Tunisia, the governments deployed fewer resources to man the border line which spanned from thousands to ten thousand miles.⁵⁶ This loose system of administration makes it easy for armed groups and other traffickers in the region to carry arms across borders and to conduct their trade with ease. In specific interviews conducted in the Kenya-Uganda border, respondents revealed that very few police officers were deployed to man the North-Western and Western borders of Uganda. In fact, one of the respondents attested that:

“I’ve interacted with less than 20 police officers over the past 20 years of my stay in the area. And even the few that come and go, often dine with local influencers who allow us to access guns and other SALW. Constant migrations into Kenya, Uganda and sometimes to Sudan also make it hard for the officers to track our movements, and to trace the arms in our possession. Other officers also get intimidated of the boldness of the bandits, setting free those arrested in the process of trafficking weapons”⁵⁷

⁵³ Idler, A. Venezuela: a humanitarian and security crisis on the border with Colombia. University of Oxford Publication (2029), Available at <https://theconversation.com/venezuela-a-humanitarian-and-security-crisis-on-the-border-with-colombia-112240>, accessed on 27th Dec 2022

⁵⁴ Florquin, N., *Gun violence: insights from international research*, Global Crime (2021), 22:4, pp. 296 – 297

⁵⁵ Cragin, K., and Hoffman, B., *Arms Trafficking and Colombia*, Rand

National Defense Research Institute, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data (2016), pp. 24 – 28

⁵⁶ Adetoritse, D, T., and Okoro, E, R., *Border porosity, small arms proliferation, and the challenge of insecurity in Nigeria*. Sokoto Journal of the Social Sciences (2018), 8(2)

⁵⁷ Interview Schedule with locals in Uganda, conducted on the 20th of December 2022

Further findings showed that porosity of the Kenya-Ugandan border was partly contributed by the harsh climatic conditions in the regions with constant intercommunity conflicts that scared away even the few officers deployed in the areas. The problem was further exacerbated by corrupt systems that allowed gangs operating in the area to move freely and conduct their businesses with less worry of getting convicted as revealed through interactions with local communities and Peace keeping groups. Police and military exchanged small arms illegal for personal gains. Reasons cited for the exchange of weapons by security forces included poor remuneration and low living standards. One of the respondents sourced amongst security personnel in the area admitted that:

“Engaging in the sale of arms with bandits and armed groups in the area allows us to make huge one-off money receipts, enough to support our families back at home. Therefore, I look for such opportunities as my normal salary cannot allow me to pursue my desired kind of lifestyle”⁵⁸

Substandard procedures, lack of facilities and oversight mechanism that are ineffective to monitor and control countries arm acted as a cause of illegal firearms that renders military and police offers to rent for financial gains. The police officers in the Karamoja area admitted to being sheltered in poor conditions, relying on weapons which were less superior than some of those used by armed groups in the area.⁵⁹ Lack of clear control structures and planning from top leadership levels in the country also meant that security personnel relied on renown modes of operations. Minimal auditing in the departments further complicated the processes, allowing fraud and errors in the prevention of the spread of SALW in the Karamoja region.

⁵⁸ Interview Schedule with security Personnel in Karamoja area, conducted on 22nd Nov 2022

⁵⁹ Ibid, 22nd Nov 2022

2.3 Review of Common SALW Spread and their Impact

Findings of the study revealed that weapons of various kinds moved across borders, ranging from low range weapons such as knives, homemade weapons, ropes, and strangling devices to medium range devices like military grade explosives and to high range weapons such as chemical agents. Since the study covered SALW, findings showed that other common types under the category included short guns, grenades, and pistols. In Western European countries for instance, common SALW that moved across borders included mortars, rifles, and pistols.⁶⁰ A majority of the weapons were manufactured in licensed weapon agencies while other were improvised in camps run by military and armed groups. Latin America and Africa have reported continued proliferation of AK-47, American made M16, and explosives such as hand grenades.⁶¹

A study conducted in the Middle East confirmed that insurgent groups and terrorists trafficked and used hand grenades due to the ease and simplicity of carrying around, use and concealing. Hamas and Taliban forces for instance, with intensified attacks between 2011 and 2014 in Iran and Syria commonly used improvised grenades, other than heavy Rocket propelled grenades.⁶² Similarly, evidence from African countries of Uganda, DRC and CAR indicate the proliferation and use of C-4, a nitroimine powerful explosive that was originally developed in United States by the armed Forces.⁶³

In the Kenya-Uganda Karamoja region, common weapons included the AK-47, knives, machetes, M16, and short guns. Though rare, an interview in the area revealed that chemical weapons were used by some militants in the region during cattle raids.⁶⁴ Arrows and spears were also commonly

⁶⁰ Mehra, T., Demuyne, M., Clarke, C & Duquet, N, *Cashing in on Guns: Identifying the Nexus between Small Arms, Light Weapons and Terrorist Financing*, ICCT Report (2021), pp. 2 – 3

⁶¹ Ibid, pp. 3 – 4

⁶² Small Arms Survey, *Global Firearms Holding*, Small Arms Survey publication (2018), available at <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/database/global-firearms-holdings>, accessed on 8th March 2022

⁶³ Ibid, accessed on 9th March 2022

⁶⁴ Interview schedule with locals in Karamoja area, conducted from 17th to 24th Dec 2022

used, causing deaths on close range while the communities warred against each other. Most of the illicit SALW in the region are a result of vicious cycle of conflicts starting from 1971's military coup, collapse of Iddi Amin's regime in 1979, 1985's military coup by Junta, and the removal of Junta in 1986 by National Resistance Army.⁶⁵ Most scholars in Uganda agree that SALW were abandoned during the enlisted conflicts. An interview with the local community revealed that arms were possessed by previous soldiers when the regime fell and during the military coups in the country.⁶⁶

2.4 Impact of Porous Country borders on Proliferation of SALW

Findings of the study revealed that porous country borders allowed criminal organizations and terrorist groups to transport money, equipment and even people with ease. Porous borders with undefined historical borders and which were treacherous provided an opportunity for the criminal bodies to traffic arms and explosives from one place to another. In Bangladesh, evidence from media reports reveals that corruption in the border region propagated by corrupt border officials resulted to increased number of illicit SALW in the country.⁶⁷ In fact, an increase in political violence was recorded in the period 2016 and 2019, as orchestrated by Jihadist groups who purchased weapons from across India-Bangladeshi border. Most of the weapons were produced in factories in India, and limited evidence showed legal purchases by individuals in Bangladesh.⁶⁸

Many fighters have also immigrated to Turkey from Syria following the prolonged period of turmoil in the country, spanning for over two decades. The fighters often move around with their

⁶⁵ Stark, J. *Climate change and conflict in Uganda: The cattle corridor and Karamoja*. FessGlobal publications (2011)

⁶⁶ Interview schedule with locals in Karamoja area, conducted from 17th to 24th Dec 2022

⁶⁷ Pushpita D, Security Challenges and the Management of the Indo-Myanmar Border", *Strategic Analysis*, (2018), 42 (6);, pp 578-594, available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09700161.2018.1557932?needAccess=true> [ivi], accessed on 26th June 2022

⁶⁸ Ibid, accessed on 26th June 2022

weapons and cross over at the borders that have low levels of security cover. The reverse has also been true, with thousands of ISIS members fighting in Syria and Iran using weapons manufactured in Turkey. As confirmed by several studies focusing in the region, Turkey has for a long time served as the center when it comes to producing and improvising ISIS devices.⁶⁹ Turkey's neglect of its Eastern borders has served to increase porosity and lead to the flow of weapons between the countries.

In Africa for example and specifically in Nigeria, the lack of effective administration and control across borders allowed Boko Haram to cross into neighboring Chad and Cameroon. A report by Star Newspaper 2019 showed that Police seized many weapons ranging from AK-47s, missiles, and RPGs smuggled by Boko Haram from Libya and Mali. In East Africa, the porous border between Somali and Kenya allows Al-Shabaab to sneak in and out of the country while delivering and purchasing SALW. The group's members also decide on storehouses of their weapons, either in Kenya or Somali. In one incident in 2016, three guards linked to the Al-Shabaab terrorist group pay off guards within the Kenyan border and moved 50kgs of ammunition from Kenya to Somalia⁷⁰ This has always increased the number of SALW, spreading to areas as far as Nairobi and to bandits in Baringo and caused an upsurge in the state of insecurity in the country.

2.5 Impact of Proliferation of SALW on Insecurity

The increased number of illegal arms has always found their way in the possession of armed groups and criminals within and outside the countries of their operation. The access of and control of illicit SALW by armed groups in Colombia for instance has allowed them to continue operating their hard drugs business, killing, and maiming security personnel who try interfering with their modes

⁶⁹ Raffaella A. D, *Contentious borders in the Middle East and North Africa: context and concepts*, International Affairs, 2017, (19), 4; pp. 767–787

⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 767–772

of operations. Cragin and Hoffman in their review of Colombia, point at armed groups of Bogota which terrorize both civilians and security officials in the country through their kidnapping activities, maiming and killings.⁷¹ Women and small children have often been caught at the center of the violence, causing the school going children to drop out and reducing women to slaves in the camps of the armed groups.

In the Middle East, the spread and possession of SALW, as partly contributed by porous country borders has continued reinforcing the power of insurgent groups. This has increased the intensity of conflicts amongst insurgent groups and with government officials, especially in countries like Syria, Iran and Yemen. Houthi insurgents in Yemen for example, strengthen their attacking ability by checking the quantity of weapons in their possession.⁷² Other than destroying health facilities, schools, and other infrastructure to intimidate the government, the Houthi insurgents kidnap civilians and government officials. The groups also commit series of murders and other crimes to support their operations, increasing the state of insecurity in the Country. In fact, the UN estimates a death toll of 233,000 since 2015, with 50% of the deaths being a result of indirect causes like food insecurity and limited access to healthcare facilities.

In the Northern African region, continued proliferation of SALW has helped the terrorist Al-Shabaab group to destabilize the government even more with their constant attacks. Other than those designed in the camps, most weapons being sneaked from the Middle East through the Northern border form a critical stock for attacks by the terrorist group not only within the Country but also in the larger East African region.⁷³ Cases of kidnappings of foreigners working in the

⁷¹Cragin, K., and Hoffman, B., *Arms Trafficking and Colombia*, Rand

National Defense Research Institute, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data (2016), pp. 36 – 40

⁷² Global Conflict Tracker, *War in Yemen*, Publication of Center for Preventive Action (2023). Available at <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>, accessed on 21st Jan 2023

⁷³ Lenengwezi, S, G, *Impact of small arms and light Weapons on the state of Insecurity in the Horn of Africa Region: Case of Laikipia County*, Unpublished Thesis, UoN (2017)

country, and top government leaders while on the same note destroying government facilities just point at the effects of possession SALW. In Nigeria, Boko Haram has gotten part of their power through accumulating and using superior quality weapons than their security counter parts. With such power, the group terrorizes the region, carrying out series of murders, raping women and school going children and trafficking human parts around.⁷⁴ This state of insecurity, especially in the northern region of Nigeria and in parts of Niger has led to migration of people away from the areas and induced fear in those living in the areas.

In Kenya, bandits operating with illicit SALW have compounded the problem of insecurity in the North Rift region, killing civilians, security personnel and creating fear in the residents. In 2014 22 GSU officers were killed in Kapedo while in 2021, another eight GSU officers were ambushed and killed in Riet village in Kapedo.⁷⁵ In Baringo County, the bandits killed a KDF officer in 2022 while at the same time destabilizing normal operations like school going in the area. In Karamoja, common instances of retrieval of dead bodies of journalists, security personnel and close to 900 civilians has been recorded over the past two years.⁷⁶ The scare of losing life in the area has also led to migration of people out of the area, other than scaring developers of infrastructure away from the area. Findings of interviews conducted in the area confirmed that the scare of death by interacting with individuals carrying around guns and other weapons is what meets them in their everyday life. In addition, the idea that conflicts may erupt from any place and lead to shootings and lose of lives kept people in the area worried. Support from the government and other willing

⁷⁴ Adetoritse, D, T., and Okoro, E, R., *Border porosity, small arms proliferation, and the challenge of insecurity in Nigeria*. Sokoto Journal of the Social Sciences (2018), 8(2)

⁷⁵ Nation Newspaper, Operation launched after bandits kill eight police officers in Turkana, Nation Publication, (2022). Available at <https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/turkana/operation-launched-after-bandits-kill-eight-police-officers-in-turkana-3961702>, accessed on 22nd Dec 2022

⁷⁶ Gakuo, N, R. *Promoting Peace and Security in Africa: Impact of Small and Light Weapons in Kenya*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Nairobi (2020)

foreigners was also curtailed by the fear of destruction of infrastructure, leading to the death of many people to hunger and curable illnesses.⁷⁷

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has covered the impact of porous country borders on the proliferation of SALW and insecurity from a global, regional, and local perspectives. The chapter first covered porosity of country borders, exploring the aspects behind porosity and attributes increasing the porous nature of the borders. Findings of the study revealed that porosity varied from region to the other, with the main drivers being vast and rugged nature of borders, loose controls, and border administration structures, and corruption of officers charged with managing the borders. Harsh climatic and financial conditions coupled with constant migrations of civilians, especially in Karamoja region of the Kenya-Uganda border made it difficult for security personnel to keep track of arms in possession and the numbers of people. Findings as presented in the chapter also showed that weapons ranging from knives, homemade weapons, ropes, strangling devices, military grade explosives, chemical agents, mortars, rifles, and pistols were moved into countries due to the porous nature of their borders. The proliferation also involved that of expertise to make weapons within countries. With the increasing numbers of illicit SALW, aftereffects such as deaths, kidnappings and destruction of infrastructure were commonly recorded in the affected areas. In South America for instance, as covered in the study, the spread of illicit SALW helped armed groups and criminal gangs to drive their businesses, creating scare and panic amongst civilians, other than robbing and killing some of them. In the Middle Eastern countries like Syria and Yemen, insurgent groups with the aid of quality weapons have continued terrorizing governments, kidnapping top officials, raping women, killing both civilians and security personnel while at the

⁷⁷ Interview schedule with locals in Karamoja area, conducted from 17th to 24th Dec 2022

same time scaring away foreign aid. In the Horn of Africa, Al-Shabaab group has continued with their series of murders, kidnappings, and abductions with the aid of weapons sourced from the Middle East. The Karamoja area under study and bandit known regions like Turkana and Baringo in Kenya have continued to suffer from insecurity with the continued spread of illicit SALW as covered in the chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF PROLIFERATION OF ARMS ALONG THE KENYA-UGANDA BORDER

3.1 Introduction

International and country systems of administration have been building bridges towards the management of the spread of SALW. Though some of the roads have not outrightly led to immediate success, there is hope in the fight against the menace. This chapter covers findings and analysis of findings on the strategies employed to combat proliferation of SALW along Kenya-Uganda border. The chapter first covers strategies employed and then assesses the performance of the strategies in line with the objective of containing the proliferation of SALW through country borders.

3.2 Strategies employed to address Proliferation of SALW along Kenya-Uganda Border

3.2.1 Legislative Measures

Findings of the study revealed that the governments of Uganda, Kenya, other regional bodies like EAC and AU, and the UN have been proactive in crafting and implementing measures of reducing the spread of illegal SALW through borders. The first of its kind, which dates to 1970, was the adoption of the Firearms Act and which was amended in 2005. The Act covers restrictions on purchasing of firearms and ammunitions, issuance/revocation of firearms certificates, fees/refusal in respect of firearms certificates, production/prohibition of manufacture of firearms and ammunition, registration of dealers of firearms, storage of firearms, penalties, and powers of courts in the event of wrong use of ammunitions and firearms.⁷⁸ Channels responsible for operationalizing

⁷⁸ Laws.Africa Legislation Commons, *Uganda Firearms Act, Chapter 299*, Laws. Africa Publication, accessed on 28th April 2023, available at <https://commons.laws.africa/akn/ug/act/1970/23/eng@2006-08-04.pdf>, pp 4 – 8

the Act include the Uganda’s ministry of internal affairs’ National Focal Point, National Action Plan and the National Action Plan on Management and Disarmament. This legislative strategy of Uganda is closely supported by Kenya Firearms Act chapter 114 that was most recently revised in 2015. The Act outlines similar provisions to that of Uganda and further outlines measures to check firearms in transit into and out of the country.⁷⁹ The East African Community, through East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA) in partnership with International Committee on the Red Cross (ICRC) implemented the Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolutions on the Oversight Activity committee reports on Proliferation of SALW in the region in August 2019. The report aimed at prioritizing the process of marking and registration of SALW.⁸⁰

Ugandan government has also placed further legislative policies like the UPDF Act of 2005 and 2002 Anti-Terrorism Statute to supplement the Uganda Firearms Act of 1970. Through the combined implementation of the enlisted legislative actions, the magnitude of the threat of increased illegal use of SALW in urban terrorism and crimes in Kampala and other parts of the country was to be curtailed. The provisions allowed for the creation of a task force that would share intelligence, and which comprised of Uganda’s People Defense Forces, Uganda’s Police, Internal Security Organizations and External Security Organizations. Further, the government flag as security operation called ‘*Operation Wembley*’, that aimed at reducing flow of illegal guns by searching and cordoning operations, snapping checkpoints, and operationalizing some of the provisions of the Amnesty Law. As revealed in one of the interview sessions with top government correspondent.,

⁷⁹ National Council for Law, *Firearms Act Chapter 114 Republic of Kenya*, National Council for Law Reporting with the Authority of the Attorney-General Publication (2018), accessed on 29th April 2023, Available at <http://www.sevenseas.co.ke/laws/Fire%20arms%20act.pdf>, pp 4 – 34

⁸⁰ Odiko, B, Time to mop up illegal Small Arms and Lights Weapons in region - EALA now demands, East African Legislative Assembly Publication (2019), accessed on 30th April 2023, available at <https://www.eac.int/press-releases/1573-time-to-mop-up-illegal-small-arms-and-lights-weapons-in-region-eala-now-demands>

*“The UPDF Act of 2005, Firearms Act of 1970 and Anti-Terrorism Statute of 2002 present harsh punitive measures against illegal use and ownership of firearms and ammunitions. These regulations align with the overall UN action Plan and are expected to control the spread of illicit SALW.”*⁸¹

3.2.2 Efficient Record Keeping of Firearms and Ammunitions

A second strategy of preventing the proliferation of SALW as identified in the study has been through keeping of records on arms purchased, those destroyed and those in circulation. This is done by specific clerks in the forces, where all government owned weapons are marked and input in a nationwide register. This register is then updated according to one of the interviewees on a weekly basis and the status report submitted for review to the ministry in charge. With continued digitalization of processes, records of the firearms marked and entered in the registry can now be accessed at a central repository on a click of a button. This is also conducted by members of security forces in Kenya as one of the ways of tracking the guns flowing through its borders with Uganda. Further findings revealed that the government of Uganda has been receiving additional support from the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), implemented the United nations in 2005 and which needed nationsto ascertain that weapons are marked properly and records kept.⁸² The body with the coordination of Ugandan forces follows a framework for tracing weapons, bringing to book those that have disappeared and following up to locate them and bring them back to the government’s possession. In the neighboring country, Kenya, gun marking and record keeping as also been a critical process. The activity is now increasingly being carried out along the Kenya-

⁸¹ Interview Schedule with Government Security Personnel Uganda-Kenya border, conducted on 26th August 2022

⁸² Marsh, N & Gugu D, *Preventing Diversion: The Importance of Stockpile Management. PRIO Paper*. Oslo: PRIO (2014), accessed on 16th June 2023, available at <https://www.prio.org/publications/7415>

Sudan border, Kenya-Ugandan border, and the Kenya-Sudan border which have been presenting threats to the country and region.

3.2.3 Stockpile Management

Another enlisted approach to managing the illegal spread of SALW across the Kenya-Uganda border has been through stockpile management. The process involves storage of ammunitions or weapons by building human resource capacity to record and track all the firearms within the country, new entries and those that are disposed.⁸³ Key processes in stockpile management conducted by both the Ugandan and Kenyan government separately have included measuring the size of stockpile, maintaining accurate records of arms, parts and ammunition stored in each stockpile, and those issued to personnel. According to Marsh and Gugu, stockpile management has often been expected to help states identify arms in surplus and help improve the record keeping process of firearms circulating within its borders.⁸⁴ The main aims of stockpile management center around the prevention of unplanned explosions and the diversion of arms from illegal hands. To further strengthen the process, regular trainings of personnel on stockpile management in the forces in Uganda happens from year to year. The most recent one included that by Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), Uganda National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Multinational Small Arms Group whose aim it to enhance Ugandan capacity stock pile, operational norms and infrastructure insecurity management⁸⁵ by attaching training to International Standards for Safe and secure storage of arms and ammunitions (International Small

⁸³ Marsh, N & Gugu D, *Preventing Diversion: The Importance of Stockpile Management*. PRIO Paper. Oslo: PRIO (2014), accessed on 16th June 2023, available at <https://www.prio.org/publications/7415>

⁸⁴ Ibid, P3

⁸⁵ Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies, *Training Workshop in Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM)* (2018), Accessed on 16th May 2023, available at <https://www.bicc.de/press/press-releases/press/news/training-workshop-in-physical-security-and-stockpile-management-pssm-477/>

arms Control Standards and International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, ISACS/IATG) , the training allowed participants to put in place intervention and plans for execution in order to improve on security and safety stockpiles and storage facilities.

3.2.4 Awareness Creation and Empowerment Programs

Findings further showed that awareness creation through public education and other training forums has been a common approach towards curtailing the spread of illicit weapons in border towns and in other parts of Uganda. Public education, often conducted by civil society groups, have involved gathering locals in weekly sessions and covering topics like peaceful co-existence and legal channels of conflict resolution.⁸⁶ Periodic social empowerment seminars targeting women and youths have also been carried out in Karamoja area, Dodoth, Masafu, Suam and even Teso.⁸⁷ Youths and women are being trained on Cassava growing, nuts farming, fruit farming and poultry keeping amongst other activities that can supplement family income. The trainings and seminars have not only been carried out physically but have also included defined radio programs through national language and vernacular stations. Radio *Icengelo* and *Tembo* FM for instance have had afternoon programs geared at empowering locals to adopt modern farming processes, shun away from crime, and encouraging them to return illegal firearms in their possession.⁸⁸

In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs through National Focal Point, authority to enhance public awareness and support systems has been targeting at minimizing demand and supply of SALW in the society.⁸⁹ Enlisted project urgencies have been minimized demand for small arms,

⁸⁶ Interview with Civil Rights Group heads operating in Kenya-Uganda border on “*the Roles played in preventing the spread of illegal SALW*”, conducted from 16th to 18th August 2022

⁸⁷ Ibid,

⁸⁸ Interview with Locals in Karamoja area of Uganda on the “*Prevention of spread of illegal SALW in the Country*”, conducted on 20th Sept 2022

⁸⁹ Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies, *Training Workshop in Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM)* (2018), Accessed on 16th May 2023, available at <https://www.bicc.de/press/press-releases/press/news/training-workshop-in-physical-security-and-stockpile-management-ssm-477/>

establishing a peace culture, creating a simple framework to Uganda's new firearms laws, and carrying out outreach through the media to encourage attention to small arms issue, and coverage of the progress in implementing the NAP. Other than centering debates on the topic of illicit SALW, the government and concerned civil groups have continuously covered the effects of the spread of SALW and sensitized individuals to report any cases to police stations closest to their homes.⁹⁰ Those worrying communities in possession of illegal firearms are also reached through organized seminars to try and encourage them to surrender their weapons. Citizens living near borders have also been reminded constantly on their duty to help protect the country by disclosing information that may lead to reduction in the spread of SALW.

3.2.5 Enacting Licensing Policy

Findings also showed that the Uganda government has coined an arms licensing policy in a bid to minimize number of illegal arms in existence spread through its borders. The policy requires that individuals desiring arms should declare their aim when it comes to possessing firearm and then allow the authorities to conduct background security checks. Mr. Alfred, a licensed gun owner in Uganda, has held the license for five years confirmed the study findings and asserted that it has helped track the usage of the arms in the country.⁹¹ With strict measures like revocation of the license, most individuals in possession of the license have been keen on how they use the weapons. This is also the same in Kenya, with individuals in need of guns being required to go undertake both mental and financial verifications and be cleared by police before obtaining the license. The Firearms Licensing Board oversees issuing the licenses and controls the manufacture, exportation,

⁹⁰ Interview with Civil Rights Group heads operating in Kenya-Uganda border on “*the Roles played in preventing the spread of illegal SALW*”, conducted from 16th to 18th August 2022

⁹¹ Interview with Locals in Karamoja area of Uganda on the “*Prevention of spread of illegal SALW in the Country*”, conducted on 20th Sept 2022

importation, transportation, repair, sale, storage, possession and fir arm usage, ammunition, air guns and devices that are destructive.

3.3 Performance Review of the Strategies Implemented to Prevent Proliferation of SALW

The study reviewed the performance of the strategies employed to prevent the spread of illegal SALW through porous country borders with the objective of understanding extent of success and to identify critical areas for improvement. Though a global performance metric has not been adopted to evaluate such strategies, findings reveal commendable amounts of SALW recovered in the processes, considerable success in the arrest of individuals involved in illegal trade of arms, reduced number of confrontations with SALW in the border region and increasing number of people transformed through the processes.

For instance, legislative strategies of implementing and amendment of 1970 Firearms Act in Uganda has provided an environment where many people found in possession of illegal SALW have been arrested and convicted, especially after criminalization of illegal gun ownership. The same strict enforcement of the legislation in Kenya, covering transportation of illegal firearms has led to many arrests of individuals trying to cross Kenya-Uganda border while in possession of illicit firearms.⁹² Other individuals that were in the trade of SALW have reached an agreement using peace implementation frameworks aiming at Demobilization, Disarmament, Reintegration and Rehabilitation (DDRR) to voluntarily return guns to appointed authorities. In fact, with a new wave of DDRR that started in 2021 in Uganda, the army confirmed that they had retrieved 88% of arms, plus bows and arrows with 5% found as a result of interrogation with arrested suspects.⁹³

⁹² Standard Newspaper, *Crackdown on proliferation of illicit Firearms through Border areas*, Standard Publication (12th October 2022)

⁹³ Segawa, N, *The Vicious Cycle of Guns in Karamoja*, Global Press Journal (2023), accessed on 22nd Feb 2023, available at <https://globalpressjournal.com/africa/uganda/place-guns-rule/>

From 2021, 438 guns and 3,315 bullets had been confiscated with a recovery of 4,669 livestock. Over 11,200 suspects were arrested with 50 prosecuted and sentenced. Relative calm has been attained in Karamoja as a result of construction of infrastructure leading to increase livestock trade, farming and mining among other activities aimed at income generation.

Yet other residents both in the border towns and in urban areas have taken advantage of Uganda Amnesty Act to voluntarily surrender illegally owned firearms. In an interview with a civil servant in Uganda, findings show that the number of illegal firearms in the hands of civilians has reduced significantly between early 2000s and the present times. In real terms as quoted through a study by Segawa, one operation 2001-2002 led to the collection of over 10,000 with an estimate of 30,000 to 40,000 illegal firearms in the hand of the civilians in Karamoja.⁹⁴ The below correspondence was recorded through an interview in the study,

“It is a little bit hard nowadays to find many people in Kampala and other major towns broadly carrying small arms and weapons in the present times as compared to the late 1990s and early 2000s. In fact, many incidences of arms’ surrender have continuously been reported in the country with the progression of time. This according to me, is a resultant benefit of the amendment of the Firearms Act of 1970 and joint efforts of the armed forces.”⁹⁵

Through the prioritization of Stockpile management as one of the measures of managing the spread of illegal SALW in Uganda, a large size of illegal firearms in circulation have been recovered and destroyed, especially along the border towns. In one instance in the year 2009 enhancing management of stockpile via enhancing capacity of human resources and recording arms, the governments was in a position incapacitation to confiscate and burn 75,783 SALW, 6,300

⁹⁴ Ibid,

⁹⁵ Interview with Civil Rights Group heads operating in Kenya-Uganda border on “*the Roles played in preventing the spread of illegal SALW*”, conducted from 16th to 18th August 2022

landmines, and 738 tons of ammunition. The process also created an environment of strict adherence to stock taking processes of captured arms of arms that were captured, recovered, or surrendered to ascertain they were disposed in the right manner. In 2013, Uganda's People Defense Forces (UPDF) recovered 28,000 illicit SALW, with around 5,000 being trace to the Karamojong people living in Karamoja region.

Immediately after nations in Great Lakes joined hands in 2004 to establish the Nairobi Protocol to minimise illegal proliferation of SALW, the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) was created. The US government has invested more than \$6.8m to support the efforts of RECSA to improve the security of firearms and ammunitions in the region.⁹⁶ This partnership allowed Kenya to destroy more than 23,000 excess SALW with a majority being collected from the banditry regions of Northern Kenya and border areas. The process also provided five mobile armories to keep Kenya's stockpile weapons safe from illegal cross-border proliferation. RECSA and the US government have constructed several storage facilities for ammunitions, destroyed hundreds of tons of excess ammunition and provided more than 1,500 weapons lockers. Further still, the Conventional Weapons Destruction program has built partner nation capacity to ensure national munitions stockpiles have remained safe and secure independent of sustained U.S. assistance.⁹⁷ The U.S.-RECSA partnership has trained a total of 215 Kenyan security force personnel in international stockpile management best practices since the beginning of the program. In December 2020, 48 Kenyan participants received U.S.-RECSA training to strengthen stockpile management and accountability in border areas, where munitions security was particularly important. According to one of the respondents, a trainee of the US-RECSA partnership program,

⁹⁶ Gifford, W, Strengthening Regional Security: Helping Kenya Destroy Excess Small Arms and Light Weapons Stockpiles, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (2021), accessed on 16th June 2022, available at <https://www.state.gov/dipnote-u-s-department-of-state-official-blog/strengthening-regional-security-helping-kenya-destroy-excess-small-arms-and-light-weapons-stockpiles/>

⁹⁷ Ibid,

“It has been relatively easy to conduct firearm search operations in this border region after the weapons stockpile training that we received in 2020. As part of my contribution, my small team has been able to track and successfully recover 43 firearms in Karamoja area. Over the last 5 months We have also provided training to locals on peaceful ways of surrendering their ammunitions and better ways of improving security of their families and livestock.”⁹⁸

Findings also revealed that gun marking and record keeping of government owned weapons has helped determine missing firearms and ammunitions and fastened the tracing process of stolen weapons from military and police forces. As identified earlier in the study, the government of Uganda with the support of International Tracing Instrument (ITI) had marked more than 150,000 guns by 2019. This has helped discover the weapons lost by security officers in their security missions, reduced the selling of government related weapons by around 70% and increased keenness on safe keeping amongst security personnel. The process, though involving advanced technology has ensured that close to 2,000 state-owned SALW that had disappeared in 2020 have been traced and repossessed by the government. The number of urban related crimes using stolen government weapons has also reduced tremendously as reported by UPDF Spokesperson, with the gangs fearing that they could be traced with ease.⁹⁹ The hard crack process, also followed to the later by Kenyan forces, has also influenced peaceful surrender of marked guns in the Karamoja area, with locals in possession committing to even lead forces to where they got the weapons from. Awareness programs and community empowerment programs have also recorded commendable levels of impact in preventing the spread of illicit SALW in the Kenya-Uganda border region. In

⁹⁸ Interview schedule with Security personnel in Karamoja area, Kenyan end. The Interview was conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022.

⁹⁹ Segawa, N, *The Vicious Cycle of Guns in Karamoja*, Global Press Journal (2023), accessed on 22nd Feb 2023, available at <https://globalpressjournal.com/africa/uganda/place-guns-rule/>

Uganda, through the National Focal Point's public awareness programs, the demand for SALW has reduced considerably with individuals choosing to foster peace. As quoted by Segawa in a study in Karamoja area, "even though the local chief was killed by some disturbed community members in 2021 for his strict stance on illicit arms, the community since traced the culprits and prosecuted them. Ever since the area has recorded commendable peace, and the number of arms in circulation reduced."¹⁰⁰ Ssebo in a similar study confirmed that though the public awareness campaign has not successfully achieved its goal of ending SAWL proliferation in Uganda but it has attained some outcome in areas vulnerable such as in Karamoja. The populace has been surrendering illegal guns voluntarily to authorities thus minimizing cattle raids as the people focuses on other economic activities for instance farming.

Training on peace initiatives through radio stations and religious platforms in the area has also led to many converts, people who once engaged in cattle raids and caused loss of lives in fights. Two churches in Karamoja area have recorded close to 350 converts in the area over the past two years.¹⁰¹ Other than baptism, the church has engaged the converts in a rehabilitative kind of program where they share their experiences and chat ways of living peaceful lives. The churches also run food programs, with some among the 350 participating in distributing food and preaching peace and importance of security in the area.

Through economic empowerment programs like agriculture, the once labelled unproductive arid region has witnessed increased production of sorghum, maize, cassava, and even sweet potatoes. A majority of these are the improved species that survive arid areas. Commitment in the farms has provided more food to the families, reduced movement of the pastoralists and partially tamed intercommunity raids. Youths empowered socially through sports activities and scholarship

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p2

¹⁰¹ Interview schedule with residents in Karamoja area on "Preventing the Spread of Illicit SALW", conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022

opportunities to foster their education continue transforming the community by preaching peace and the need to surrender illicit weapons. One of the respondents in the study interviews, a beneficiary of Kenyan government scholarship, and a graduate in economics agreed that the education program has helped several people from the area improve livelihood of their families. Further, enlightened individuals in the area have been able to undergo formal processes of firearm registration through relevant government authorities. Though the number recorded has been less than 100 from the region according to a survey by Segawa in the area, it is no mean feat considering that a majority in the area do not follow legal channels in obtaining their guns.¹⁰²

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has covered the strategies employed to prevent the proliferation of illicit SALW through country borders with the focus of Kenya-Uganda border region named Karamoja. Findings of the study revealed the existence of several strategies in place, most of which have been enacted by specific country governments, international bodies, the East Africa Community through ratification of Nairobi Protocol and civil society groups. Some of the notable strategies employed include stockpile management of weapons, licensing of guns, gun marking and record keeping, enactment of legislative measures and awareness creation. Both social and economic empowerment were also revealed as strong tools used in the curtailment of the spread of illicit firearms and ammunitions. The enlisted measures and others still being implemented on lower scales have achieved relatable success judging from the number of individuals transformed away from raiding activities. Church related and educational programs have for instance seen a sizeable number of residents abandon their traditional cattle raiding practices and even surrendered their

¹⁰² Segawa, N, *The Vicious Cycle of Guns in Karamoja*, Global Press Journal (2023), accessed on 22nd Feb 2023, available at <https://globalpressjournal.com/africa/uganda/place-guns-rule/>

weapons according to study findings. Legislative practices like implementation and amendments of Firearms Act in both Kenya and Uganda has also seen success in tracking illicit SALW, and collection of the firearms circulating illegally. Stockpile management, gun marking and improved record keeping have also provided for improved tracing of lost SALW, surrender of SALW and reduced cases of violence involving illegally owned weapons in the Karamoja area.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHALLENGES FACED IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF POROUS BORDERS AND THE SPREAD OF ILLICIT SALW

4.1 Introduction

Several governments globally, regional bodies, security agencies and concerned individuals have for some time now been putting in place critical measures to check their country borders and address the problem of proliferation of illicit SALW. Such measures have included legislative enactments and revisions, stockpile management of weapons, gun marking and record keeping, and awareness creation amongst others as covered in chapter three of this study paper. The situation however remains ugly in some regions across the world. This is seen in the increasing number of illicit firearms and weapons still circulating across borders as covered by media platforms, and the continued deaths and destruction caused by individuals in possession of such arms.¹⁰³ To conclusively address the issue of porous country borders and curtail the spread of illicit SALW, a comprehensive review of the challenges affecting existing strategies needs to be done. This is with the consideration of the objectives of the different programs, resources expected to be employed and performance reviews relative to the objectives set. This chapter goes ahead to identify the challenges affecting successful fight against spread of illegal SALW, presents an analysis of the challenges, and covers a way forward in the journey of curbing the spread of illicit SALW through porous country borders. Findings from the analysis focus on the Karamoja region of the Kenya-Uganda border.

¹⁰³ Florquin, N., *Gun violence: insights from international research*, Global Crime (2021), 22:4, Pp 288- 292

4.2 Challenges faced in addressing the Issue of Porous Country borders on the Spread of SALW

Research finding revealed that the existence of several factors that hampered the successful fight against proliferation of illicit SALW through porous country borders. The bar chart below presents main challenges as identified from respondents who participated in the study which included corruption, resource constraints, socio-cultural factors, and geographical-related factors,

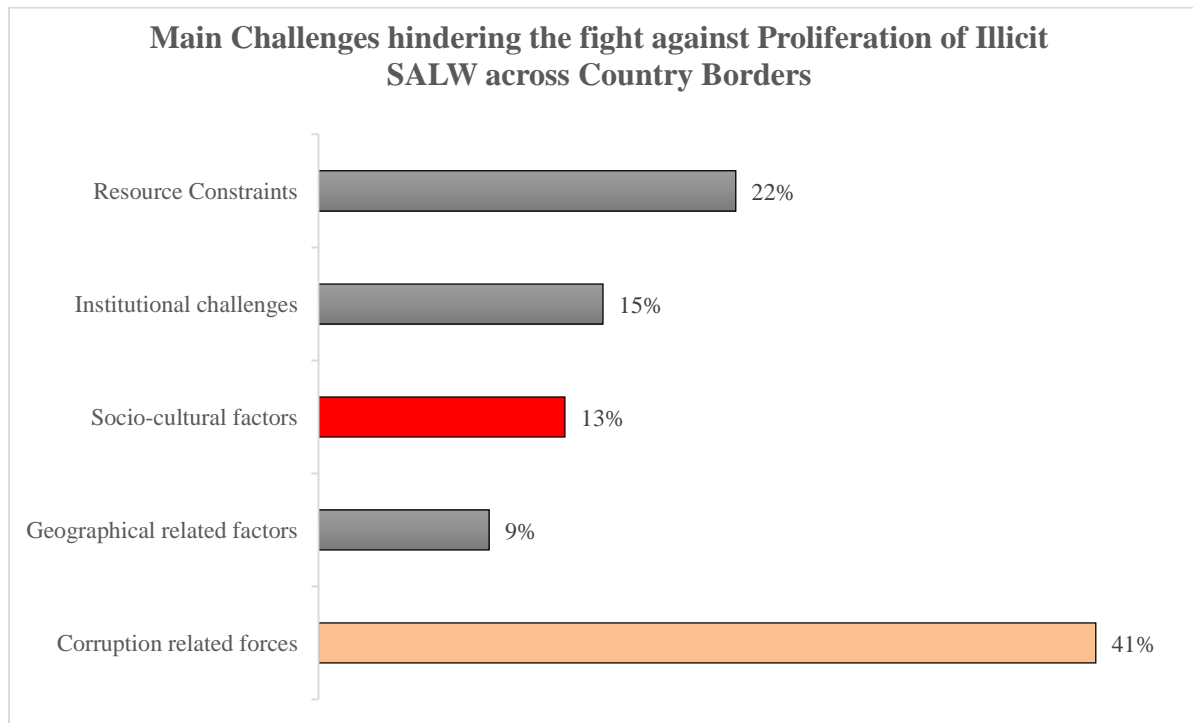


Figure 4.1: Bar graph showing the challenges affecting strategies against the Proliferation of SALW across Country borders (Research Data, 2023)

4.2.1 Corruption related Forces

Findings of the study showed that corruption was the main factor influencing porosity of country borders and affecting strategies employed to deal with proliferation of illicit arms. This was shown by 41% response rate recorded in the data collection phase from Karamoja area of the Kenya-Uganda border. The first form of corruption involved bribery of police and military forces guarding

border regions and armories. As established through interview sessions in the study, bribery would be in the form of planned cash tips by dubious businessmen in the trade of illicit firearms. When arrested at the border points with the weapons, as revealed by one of the respondents, the issue would be settled between phone calls with senior officials in the forces and part of the cargo would be allowed to pass.¹⁰⁴ Events of unauthorized transfer of arms from one storage point to the other defied legislative policies in place and stockpile management practices set by the government in conjunction with the UN. In such stances, individuals tasked with protecting the storage of the firearms, and those at the border lines were given a piece meal or promised a ransom, if not threatened on the very extreme case.¹⁰⁵ This allowed them to conceal the cases of loss of weapons. Such officers would also refuse to participate in the search of weapons lost or even divert the attention of media attention away from missing firearms.¹⁰⁶

On the Kenyan side, there have been revelations that most of the illegal dealers of firearms are ex-military personnel or great politicians still in contact with government officials in charge of manning borders.¹⁰⁷ As such, trafficking weapons into and out of the country involved combined plans between the dealers and their former colleagues in the forces in exchange for a consideration. In fact, as stated by one interviewee in the security forces on the border town, turning a ‘blind eye’ on arms trafficking is sometimes payback of favors that had once been provided by the wealthy arms dealers.¹⁰⁸ These included allowing family members of those in forces to join the forces at

¹⁰⁴ Segawa, N, *The Vicious Cycle of Guns in Karamoja*, Global Press Journal (2023), accessed on 22nd Feb 2023, available at <https://globalpressjournal.com/africa/uganda/place-guns-rule/>

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp 46 – 47

¹⁰⁶ Interview schedule with residents in Karamoja area on “Preventing the Spread of Illicit SALW”, conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022

¹⁰⁷ Kyalo, M, L., *Factors influencing proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in Makadara and Embakasi divisions, Nairobi east district, Kenya*, Unpublished Master’s degree Thesis, University of Nairobi

¹⁰⁸ Interview schedule with residents in Karamoja area on “Preventing the Spread of Illicit SALW”, conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022

recruitment levels, kind treatment while serving together in the government forces and time to time cash gifts in consideration for the flow of illegal arms.

The other most common form of corruption as identified in the study involved police officers conniving with culprits to abet crimes. Interviews with the locals revealed that some culprits found in possession of illicit SALW and in grievous crime scenes, not only in Karamoja area, but also in other parts of Uganda and who were expected to be prosecuted through courts of Law could be seen a day after the arrests, roaming around the streets freely.¹⁰⁹ And if that was not enough, the culprits would be seen engaging in criminal activities in the area, or they would move to other places to continue with the trade just a few days after encounters with police officers. This, according to majority of the respondents, could only be explained as deals settled behind closed doors between officials in charge and the suspected criminals. As disclosed by one of the interviewees,

“Owners and traders of illicit SALW in the borders are wealthy people who’ve been in the business for some time. They have the ability of paying off their freedom to senior officers in case they or their members are arrested. I believe the tips they offer to officers from time to time allows them to survive for long and to keep carrying out the trade. I’ve witnessed some bribe officers after crackdown by government forces, and they have been set free.”¹¹⁰

Findings of the study also showed that diversion of firearms was another form of corruption that greatly hindered the success of strategies put in place to fight against spread of illicit SALW. In most cases, senior officials in charge of armories agreed to distribute part of the government owned ammunitions to leaders of insurgent groups in consideration for other benefits or in support of commonly agreed ideologies. Officials in charge at times allowed breach of security to enable

¹⁰⁹ Interview schedule with residents in Karamoja area on “Preventing the Spread of Illicit SALW”, conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022

¹¹⁰ Ibid,

insurgents and other arm dealers to access weapons meant to be used by the government. This was a common case witnessed with the evolution of the Lord's Resistance army in Northern Uganda in the periods 1986 to 1990, where members of Uganda Liberation Army would divert government weapons from camps and hand over to members of the rebel group to aid in their missions.¹¹¹ Other forms of diversion occurred when the weapons were on transit towards government armories, with the individuals involved aiming at stealing the weapons before they were recorded in the government registry. This reduced suspicion and success rate at tracking the lost weapons.

As noted by some respondents from Kenya, the gun licensing process was harbored with immense cases of corruption, with some former criminal being allowed to deal in firearms and ammunitions despite their past criminal records.¹¹² The individuals, assumed to be top political figures connived with systems of administration and were allowed to own and trade in arms. With the cheapest way of maximizing returns being that of obtaining weapons from government armories at lower costs, such dubious traders would engage in any act including diversions to make gain in the trade.

4.2.2 Resource Constraints

Another huge challenge standing in the way towards prevention of the spread of illicit SALW has been inadequate resources. Inadequacy of financial resources take the lead according to study findings by the UN in the African region, making defined policies to take longer than expected in the implementation phase. For the Firearms Act of 1970 in Uganda to be fully effective across the Ugandan Republic, adequate finances have been a top requirement especially towards the hire of manpower, acquisition of appropriate technology, maintaining them and distributing them

¹¹¹ Baddorf, Z, *Uganda Ends Its Hunt for Joseph Kony Empty-Handed*, The New York Times (2017). Archived from the original on 7 January 2018. Retrieved 27 December 2017.

¹¹² Interview schedules on Porous country borders and Proliferation of illicit SALW Conducted on the Kenyan border town in the period 16th to 25th September 2022.

effectively. The objective has however not been fully met, with the implementation being conducted by Uganda's People Defense Forces, Uganda's Police, Internal Security Organizations and External Security Organizations revolving around urban areas and the densely populated Northern region. Fewer resources have been deployed in the Karamoja region that is scarcely populated as the nomadic residents shifting homes in search of water and pasture. Security personnel involved in the process are rarely remunerated for working in the hardship areas where they must endure hostile climatic conditions. Limited financial capacity has also put a strain to the process of tracking stolen firearms, with authorities not able to spend extra coins in pursuit of the weapons. Further findings also showed that low remuneration of the personnel in the forces made it easier for wealthy arm dealers to sway their interest through better cash offers in the events of diversion of weapons. Respondents from the forces who participated in the study attested to the fact that they receive lower remuneration compared to other employees of similar qualifications.¹¹³ Lucrative offers by arm dealers sometimes work to sway members guarding armories and those in border regions to compromise their integrity.

Findings also showed that lower technical capacity, especially from locals working with ministry of internal affairs, UPDF in Uganda, Kenya Border Patrol Police in Kenya hinder full success of programs like licensing, stockpile management and record keeping. Changing times with advancing technology imply that arm dealers sometimes beat local forces in the checking processes by presenting forged documents. Investment in advanced technology like use of unmanned Aerial vehicles (drones) to survey borders before sneaking illicit weapons has worked at times as discussed by Kenya Border Patrol Police in the Kenya-Uganda border. Modern vehicles with high powered engines used by arm dealers also presented a challenge to border patrol units that relied

¹¹³ Interview schedule with residents in Karamoja area on "Preventing the Spread of Illicit SALW", conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022

on older model government vehicles. The traffickers with immense knowledge of the reaction and quality of weapons of security personnel, have invested in modern weapons to fight off security personnel in case of any combat. The groups even work in cohort with insurgent groups in the Middle East, Horn of Africa, and Boko Haram to acquire better weapons with the ability of destroying numerous persons within short times.¹¹⁴ This creates a scare even amongst the personnel and reduces their will to defend stockpiles and effectively manage armories.

Human resource challenges both with regards to knowledge capacity and head count similarly affect the process of stockpile management, awareness creation, implementation of Legislative initiatives in managing the proliferation of illicit arms.¹¹⁵ With the extensive population to be covered, and the widespread nature of firearms dealers, government employees have at times found themselves in strained positions at work. The evolving global world also implies that both security personnel and communities affected need to be trained on advanced safety skills. Unfortunately, this has not been fully realized in a region where most of the residents are nomads with no permanent residence. Many community members of the older generations also carry low desire to pursue academics, leave alone the trainings offered in a different language to their vernacular.¹¹⁶

A close review of the security personnel deployed on the border regions shows that less than ten exist per station, which are widely spaced from each other. The rugged terrain in the border region has also been discouraging individuals from accepting offers in such places, discouraging even civil rights groups from adequately training locals on economic and social empowerment programs.

¹¹⁴ Interview schedule with residents in Karamoja area on “Preventing the Spread of Illicit SALW”, conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022

¹¹⁵ Laws. Africa Legislation Commons, *Uganda Firearms Act, Chapter 299*, Laws. Africa Publication (2022), accessed on 28th April 2023, available at <https://commons.laws.africa/akn/ug/act/1970/23/eng@2006-08-04.pdf>, pp 4 – 8

¹¹⁶ Oluoch, F & Mwijuke, G, *Kenya and Uganda opt for border post to stop bandits*, The East African Publication (2023), accessed on 12th April 2023, available at <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/kenya-uganda-opt-for-border-post-to-stop-bandits-4136990>

The findings on resource capacity are confirmed by presentations in the EALA meeting in 2019, where the chairman, Hon Burikukiye, pointed at the inadequate finances and human resources in numerous Member States as the main challenges to the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol on small arms.¹¹⁷ Chair pointed out that Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) depended on foreign donors and this posed as a setback in implementation protocol nationally.

4.2.3 Institutional Challenges

Institutional challenges as established in the study cover aspects like weak systems of legal administration, inadequate law harmonization with the Great Lakes region, and weak economic systems. First, institutions charged with overseeing armories, issuing licenses, and maintaining record of weapons keep falling short of expectations. State collapse and low commitment from those in charge of stockpile management has often resulted to looting of the SALW. In Uganda, this can be traced to the several times presidency had to be changed tough coups, shifting from Apollo Milton Obote, Idi Amin Dada, Yusuf Lule, Godfrey Lukongwa, Paul Muwanga, Tito Okello and Yoweri Museveni.¹¹⁸ A similar finding exists with neighboring countries of Sudan, DRC, South Sudan, and Central Africa Republic where prolonged conflict surround times of leadership changes have provided opportunities for arms to be looted from government armories and trafficked across country borders.

In addition, in adequate national security and government officials who are corrupt keep providing an opportunity of diverting arms into illicit markets and other areas of conflict like the Karamoja

¹¹⁷ Odiko, B, *Time to mop up illegal Small Arms and Lights Weapons in region - EALA now demands*, East African Legislative Assembly Publication (2019), accessed on 30th April 2023, available at <https://www.eac.int/press-releases/1573-time-to-mop-up-illegal-small-arms-and-lights-weapons-in-region-eala-now-demands>

¹¹⁸ Segawa, N, *The Vicious Cycle of Guns in Karamoja*, Global Press Journal (2023), accessed on 22nd Feb 2023, available at <https://globalpressjournal.com/africa/uganda/place-guns-rule/>

and Northern Uganda. The case of corrupt government officials has been the hardest to pursue, extending to court rooms where illegal traffickers have been presented for prosecution and set free before appropriate trials.¹¹⁹ Weak follow up systems through legal redress imply that cases relating to illegal possession of weapons and damage caused by users of the firearms overstay in courts, with excuses like lack of evidence. The individuals arrested get freed and return to their routine trafficking practices, going after security personnel who had arrested them and destroying their families.

Poor follow up by government institutions on prior conflicts like that with Lord's Resistance Army and those instigated by other rebel groups has resulted in the recycling of arms over the periods. The arms are resold with the rebel group members and in other conflict areas, and the trafficking process continues from generation to the other.¹²⁰ In this case, government processes of gun marking and record keeping fail to record these arms that have circulated in the country for decades. Tracing even becomes difficult as new weapons that were in hiding keep resurfacing even after voluntary surrender and collection of firearms by government agencies. In addition, authorized arms transfer to the Karamoja region and other conflict set ups like Baringo in Kenya, lead to the disappearance, and spread of firearms. This comes when the bandits and rebel groups stage successful attacks on government related security forces and confiscate their weapons. The rebel groups quickly transfer or trade the firearms and ammunitions across borders to avoid follow up by government forces.

Finally, as revealed through the study findings, there has been a lack of clear cooperation amongst countries in EAC on combating escalation of illicit SALW. Even with the establishment of the

¹¹⁹ Interview schedule with residents in Karamoja area on "Preventing the Spread of Illicit SALW", conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022

¹²⁰ Segawa, N, *The Vicious Cycle of Guns in Karamoja*, Global Press Journal (2023), accessed on 22nd Feb 2023, available at <https://globalpressjournal.com/africa/uganda/place-guns-rule/>

Nairobi Protocol in 2004 after joining hands and the creation of the RECSA, member countries were yet to amend legislative policies in order to embrace new firearm policy legislation as enshrined in Nairobi Protocol, rather than pledging promises.¹²¹ Still, none of the member countries of the EAC has ratified the Arms Trade Treaty which was adopted in 2014 despite committing to do so. Further, there has been fewer common practical awareness plan and other guidelines dealing with manufacture, repossession, brokerage and seizure of firearms. The realization that Kenya works a separate system to combat illicit trade of SALW from Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia means that the extent of authority ends on the border line. Swift movement by arm dealers and the continued relocation of nomadic communities residing along the borders implies that tracing guns and repossessing them will still be a problem to behold.

4.2.4 Socio-Cultural Factors

Research findings showed that socio-cultural factors of the communities residing in the border regions pose a challenge to the process of preventing illicit arms' proliferation across the borders. Kenya-Uganda's border mainly has plain Nilotes enlisted as Turkana, Karamajong and Pokot.¹²² These are nomadic communities whose main economic activity is cattle rearing, and they move with seasons in search of pasture for their animals. As such, members of one village could reside in one country in one year and relocate to the other country in the second year depending with the availability of pasture for their animals. Other than keeping arms for protecting their animals and home steads, the communities also engage in inter-community raids as part of initiation process of

¹²¹ Odiko, B, *Time to mop up illegal Small Arms and Lights Weapons in region - EALA now demands*, East African Legislative Assembly Publication (2019), accessed on 30th April 2023, available at <https://www.eac.int/press-releases/1573-time-to-mop-up-illegal-small-arms-and-lights-weapons-in-region-eala-now-demands>

¹²² Oluoch, F & Mwijuke, G, *Kenya and Uganda opt for border post to stop bandits*, The East African Publication (2023), accessed on 12th April 2023, available at <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/kenya-uganda-opt-for-border-post-to-stop-bandits-4136990>

their boys to manhood. Given the nature of social life that they lead, members of the community will always find ways of acquiring weapons, with the cheaper option being that of using illicit ones sold across the borders.¹²³ Some of the weapons are also passed along the family from the older generations, while others are snatched through combat with government forces.

The realization that most members of the Karamojong community inhabiting Karamoja still hold on to their traditional practices challenges awareness programs against illicit SALW in the region. The state of economy of the community, with high poverty levels also force youths to raid other pastoralist communities to get food. Karamoja is considered one of the poorest regions having high malnutrition rates and uneven number of inhabitants 1.3 billion (82%) living in total poverty. Inadequate food, hunger and stunted growth is experienced among estimated 100 children who are less than five years and who die weekly as a result of diseases which are preventable. Reliance on natural resources, food insecurity pose as a challenge in their livelihoods not forgetting the dynamics in climate change.¹²⁴ The communities also fight over grazing lands, and the best strategy to winning battles is through the possession of quality weapons. In as much as the program owners brag of several converts, it requires only an attack from neighboring communities or cattle raiding event and the individuals are back in arms to recover their cattle. Government stockpiling practice is also threatened as some members' storm armories, attack security personnel and make way with firearms and ammunitions. Increasing purchases from Al-Shabaab group in Somali and constant conflicts in Sudan and CAR still mean that the fight against illicit spread of SALW won't be fully thwarted any time soon.

¹²³ Interview schedule with residents in Karamoja area on "Preventing the Spread of Illicit SALW", conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022

¹²⁴ USAID, *Climate risks in food for peace geographies Karamoja region*, Uganda, USAID Publication (2020), accessed on 12th April 2023, available at https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/20170130_Karamoja_Food%20Security%20Climate%20Screening.pdf

4.2.5 Geographical and natural environmental Related Factors

Findings also revealed that geographical factors affected the implementation of strategies to deal with the spread of illicit SALW, with 9% of the respondents supporting this. The region is plain land made up of a series of arid plains formed by erosion, and only supports semi-arid vegetation. The area has two distinct rainy seasons, peaks between April and May, a break in June, and between July and November.¹²⁵ Mean yearly rainfall varies between 300mm in the pastoral regions at the border to 1200mm in Western areas of Abim. Average annual temperatures range from 16°C in the highlands to 24°C in the rest of the region. The mentioned climate is distinct from other climate across Uganda, showing great variability due to frequent droughts, elongated dry spells and flash floods.¹²⁶ The climatic condition and geographical position present a challenge in food production in the area, affecting economic activities and resulting in very high poverty levels in the area.

In such a tough position as presented by natural factors, the area seems to have been neglected by governments in the development agendas. This is notable from the roads in the area, communication lines, fewer schools and medical facilities and a challenge in communication lines. Conducting public awareness programs and empowerment programs take relatively longer than expected due to the enlisted challenges. Security agencies also try avoiding such areas, with fewer personnel left to handle the large problem of spread of illicit arms.¹²⁷ Disarmament programs also take longer because the search process of individuals themselves presents a challenge, with very few agreeing to pick identification cards and register as citizens of either countries.

¹²⁵ Stark, J, *Climate change and conflict in Uganda: The cattle corridor and Karamoja*. FessGlobal publications (2011)

¹²⁶ USAID, *Climate risks in food for peace geographies Karamoja region, Uganda*, USAID Publication (2020), accessed on 12th April 2023, available at https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/20170130_Karamoja_Food%20Security%20Climate%20Screening.pdf

¹²⁷ Interview schedule with residents in Karamoja area on “Preventing the Spread of Illicit SALW”, conducted in the period 15th to 21st August 2022

4.3 Suggestions to Counter challenges in the fight against Proliferation of SALW

In as much as several challenges exist as enlisted in this study, all is not lost as critical measures can be employed with time to help salvage the situation. Key on the list, as discovered in the study findings will be the aggressive economic and social empowerment in the Karamoja region. Since international bodies like USAID, UN, and World Bank have tried a footprint in the area, it will be critical to reassess the soil fertility through modern technologies like Infrared Spectroscopy to identify resistant crops. Genetically Modified maize, beans, sorghum, and cassava seedlings with the ability to withstand climatic conditions can then be planted after boosting fertility status. Cross breeding the traditional cattle in the area with modern improved species that take shorter times to mature will also help avail more food. Improving food security in the area will not only provide for economic independence but will also allow community members to settle places for longer durations and be governable.¹²⁸ They can then be convinced with much more ease on the need to surrender all their illegally owned weapons and to abandon the trade in the same.

Checking on the social and cultural activities of the Karamojong people will further help tame some of their harmful practices like cattle raiding and allow them to adopt considerable modern-day practices. This can be done through provision of free primary school and secondary school education to residents in the area, and scholarship opportunities to pursue tertiary education.¹²⁹ Sensitizing parents and elders in the society on the importance of educating children through seminars, trainings, radio stations and community functions will help convert some of the parents into the modern-day practices. With education empowerment, future generations will be able to interpret and understand international agreements of arms' dealing, peaceful ways of coexistence

¹²⁸ Ibid,

¹²⁹ USAID, *Climate risks in food for peace geographies Karamoja region, Uganda*, USAID Publication (2020), accessed on 12th April 2023, available at https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/20170130_Karamoja_Food%20Security%20Climate%20Screening.pdf

and ways of improving economic status of the region. Offering specific community members leadership positions in National governments will further increase understanding of the community and be able to influence relatable policies in the area.

Redeployment of adequate security personnel in Karamojong area will also help deal with the challenge of human resource constraints. Both governments should offer adequate modern-day training centered around human psychology management, and disarmament processes before releasing security agents in the area. Investment in modern day technologies like drones, artificial intelligence and 5G communication will help better trace individuals with arms and convince them to surrender voluntarily other than using force. Employing reformed members of the community can also help deal with the manpower problem. This will partly improve the arms recollection process since the individuals understand the local terrain very well and can trace the source and hiding places of the weapons.

The study further suggests the need to have reforms in government institutions and ensure independence of the different arms of the government. The national assemblies, court systems and executive should operate with independence to reduce the power of politicians in interfering with the processes. Individuals caught and proved to be dealers in illicit SALW should be prosecuted in the courts and punished accordingly in line with defined laws. Ethics and Anti-corruption bodies in both Uganda and Kenya should strictly handle corruption related cases involving officials in the trafficking of arms and have them undertake punishments as specified in Country constitutions. Country governments in the East African region should work collaboratively in implementing Firearms Act, Anti-terrorism practices, licensing policies and record keeping practices to trace the movement of firearms and ammunitions. The collaboration should also extend to the AU, UN, USAID, and other bodies centered around the control of proliferation of SALW and cover such aspects as strategy setting and follow up. The enlisted legislative reforms at the National level will

not only streamline order across other functions but will also ensure reduced corruption in the management of arms.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has covered the challenges affecting strategies employed in the fight against the spread of illegal SALW. Key factors enlisted have included corruption, resource constraints, socio-cultural factors and geographical-related factors. Corruption as discussed in the study covered aspects like bribery of border officials by arm traffickers, bribery of officials in armories to aid in the diversion of weapons, and misappropriation of resources aimed at combating the spread of SALW. Inadequate human resource, lower technical capabilities of security personnel and limited financial power to combat proliferation of illicit SALW have been discussed under resource constraints. Socio-cultural factors analyzed in the chapter included the nomadic trail of the communities, cattle raiding culture and constant relocations while the hostile climate and terrain were covered in geo-climatic conditions. The chapter further presented the way forward in comprehensively handling proliferation of illicit SALW in the Kenya-Uganda border region.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents a summary of findings on the porous country borders and the proliferation of illicit SALW. The paper addressed impact of porous country borders on the proliferation of SALW from an international, regional, and local perspectives. In depth analysis was then conducted on the strategies employed to deal with porous country borders and to prevent the spread of illicit SALW. Finally, the study covered challenges hindering the success of the strategies of dealing with spread of illicit SALW across the Kenya-Uganda border. The study also covered suggestions to counter the challenges and better strategies for a better society of minimal illegal firearms trade and spread. Conclusion, recommendations and areas of further studies have been presented.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The first objective assessed the impact of porous borders on the proliferation of illicit SALW and insecurity. Research findings showed that porosity varied from region to the other, with the main drivers being vast and rugged nature of borders, loose controls, and border administration structures, and corruption of officers charged with managing the borders. Porous country borders allowed the movement and trade of weapons ranging from knives, homemade weapons, ropes, strangling devices, military grade explosives, chemical agents, mortars, rifles, and pistols. This movement involved hiding in trucks while transporting other legal commodities, hiding in clothes, and using common vehicles. As confirmed in the study, the increasing numbers of illicit SALW led to more deaths through combats and intercommunity fights, kidnappings, and destruction of infrastructure.

The second objective assessed the Strategies employed to address the issue of proliferation of arms along the Kenya Uganda border. Findings of the study revealed the existence of several strategies like stockpile management of weapons, licensing of guns, gun marking and record keeping, enactment of legislative measures and awareness creation, and social and economic empowerment. The enlisted measures and others still being implemented on lower scales have achieved relatable success judging from the number of individuals transformed away from raiding activities. Church related and educational programs have for instance seen a sizeable number of residents abandon their traditional cattle raiding practices and even surrendered their weapons according to study findings. Legislative practices like implementation and amendments of Firearms Act in both Kenya and Uganda have also seen success in tracking illicit SALW, and collection of the firearms circulating illegally. Stockpile management, gun marking and improved record keeping have also provided for improved tracing of lost SALW, surrender of SALW and reduced cases of violence involving illegally owned weapons in the Karamoja area.

The third objective critically analyzed the factors influencing performance of strategies employed to deal with the proliferation of illicit SALW across porous country borders. Findings of the study identified corruption, resource constraints, socio-cultural factors, and geographical-related factors as the key challenges in the fight against proliferation of illicit SALW. Corruption covered aspects like bribery of border officials by arm traffickers, bribery of officials in armories to aid in the diversion of weapons, and misappropriation of resources aimed at combating the spread of SALW. Inadequate human resource, lower technical capabilities of security personnel and limited financial power to combat illicit proliferation of SALW have been discussed under resource constraints. Socio-cultural factors included the nomadic trail of the communities, cattle raiding culture and constant relocations while the hostile climate and terrain were covered in geo-climatic conditions.

5.3 Conclusion

From the findings, it was concluded that globally societies have been in dire need to come up with prevention strategies on the proliferation of illicit SALW. Agencies for instance United Nation members who spread across numerous countries have introduced and amended their programs and policies towards tightening border securities to deal with the porosity problem. This has also been the case with regional bodies like AU, EAC, SADC and even ECOWAS. The bodies together with governmental structures like UPDF in Uganda and Ministry of internal Affairs have also crafted strategies to prevent the proliferation and trade of illicit SALW. Measures such as adoption and continued revision of legislations such as Firearms Act continue to portray clear scopes of handling crimes related to the possession of illicit arms and the trade therein. Trainings on stockpile management and investment in technology in the registration and tracing of arms also presents prospects of secure societies in the future. The process however still requires continuous evaluation, with greater attention towards social and economic empowerment of locals in order to win in the eventuality.

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher recommended that government officials, security personnel, and the international peace-oriented organizations should continuously involve local communities in crafting strategies of curbing the proliferation of illicit SALW. Agencies such as EU, AU, UN, EAC and USAID need to review country specific dynamics in order to understand local factors, how specific programs perform and ways of enhancing performance. Include the local communities will help create a sense of belonging in the program and also enhance the probability of eradicating completely spread of illegal SALW.

Researcher recommends that financing bodies for instance WB, IMF, ADB and ADF need to reserve finances to back measures of combating the spread of illicit weapons. Reserved finances ought to be issued to program managers and a follow up done to ensure resource accountability. This is important since it will help enhance program financial capability and enable agencies get the right expertise as well as technical resource to enhance program success.

Researcher also recommends that spiritual leaders and local politicians in Karamoja area of the Kenya-Uganda border ought to be educated and empower locals in the area. These individuals ranging from members of parliament, political figures, clerics and Imams are to a great extent trusted by most people. Therefore, they need to be in the front line in fostering positive discussion on need to surrender firearms, educate women and youth on the significance of being peaceful and starting programs that will improve their well-being and the community at large. Such occurrences will help reducing the rate at which locals trade in SALW and also enhance security within the County.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Researcher suggests that there is need to conduct further studies on porous country borders and the proliferation of SALW be conducted on the Kenya-Somali border. This is a high conflicted area that witnesses the spread of firearms between the two countries, with the Al-Shabaab group leading operations. Findings from this research cannot be generalized in other areas due to environmental differences but can be used to adopt prevention strategies for proliferation of illicit SALW.

There is also need to conduct further research on proliferation of illicit SALW be conducted be conducted within urban areas in Kenya or even Uganda. These areas record high crime rates with individuals relying on illegally owned SALW. Understanding the source of the weapons, and trades involved will better help to craft clear strategies on preventing the spread of illicit arms.

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