
ВОПРОСЫ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ И ФЕДЕРАТИВНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ

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ВОПРОСЫ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ И ФЕДЕРАТИВНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ

Научный журнал

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СИТУАЦИЯ В ОБЛАСТИ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ В СТРАНАХ АФРИКИ К ЮГУ ОТ САХАРЫ: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИЯ СТРЕЛКОВОГО ОРУЖИЯ И ЛЕГКИХ ВООРУЖЕНИЙ

Судьба развития Африки неразрывно связана со способностью континента взять на себя полную ответственность за вопросы мира и безопасности, в решении которых ведущую роль играет Африканский Союз (АС). К сожалению, широкое и нерегулируемое перемещение оружия постоянно создает проблемы для этого института и стран-членов. АС и связанные с ним субрегиональные институты применяют различные стратегии и подходы для координации своей деятельности с международной политикой, однако Африке еще предстоит в полной мере воспользоваться плодами этой политики. В связи с изменением модели поведения и легким доступом к СОЛВ в данной статье рассматривается влияние СОЛВ в субрегионах, исследуются некоторые определяющие факторы, такие как кустарные производители, спрос и предложение, а также даются рекомендации по усилению существующих усилий.

Ключевые слова: Стрелковое Оружие и Легкие Вооружения (СОЛВ), Африка к югу от Сахары, АС, негосударственные субъекты, перевороты, терроризм.

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SECURITY SITUATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: CASE STUDY OF PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

The destiny of Africa's development is inextricably connected to the continent's capability to shoulder complete responsibility for its peace and security issues, to which the African Union (AU) leads in. Unfortunately, the extensive and unregulated movement of arms has consistently posed a problem for the institution and its member countries. The AU and its associated sub-regional institutions have implemented a variety of strategies and approaches to coordinate their activities with international policies, but Africa has yet to reap the full benefits of these policies. Due to the changing pattern and easy access to SALWs, this article examines the impact of SALWs in the sub-regions, investigates certain determinants such as artisan manufacturers, demand, and supply, and makes recommendations for reinforcing existing efforts.

Key words: *Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), Sub-Saharan Africa, AU, Non-State actors, Coups, Terrorism.*

Introduction. In Africa, transnational organized crime engages in the illegal movement of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), characterized by

both legal and illegal proliferation of SALWs, their components, accessories, and ammunition within the region of sub-Saharan Africa. Illicitly obtained firearms promote other types of organized crime in addition to fuelling armed insurrection. Illegal SALWs smuggling is a complex phenomenon committed by government officials and criminal networks that operate between regions and across nations, taking advantage of ungoverned space and regions, weak borders, capacity to regulate, and weak regulations to do their business [24. P. 335-351]. In this regard, it is a favourable climate for all forms of transnational organized crime observed in similar circle, such as drug and human trafficking; unlawful mining, wildlife trading and crude-oil theft. Because of the interdependence between legal and illegal trade, which is common in sub-Saharan, violent non-state actors may readily disguise their operations under illegal trade. However, not all informal trade is illegal, ensuring a grey area within formal and informal trade contributing to the difficulties of combating all types of smuggling in the sub-region, particularly SALWSs smuggling. Particularly when they do not operate concurrently, arms trafficking facilitates the majority of other elements and kinds of Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) [8. 368-388]. For example, in the illegal organ trade, criminals utilize illegally obtained arms to safeguard and facilitate such malicious activities. For many years, the United Nations (UN) and institutions like the African Union (AU) have attempted to tackle the issue of SALWs trafficking. The AU and its subregional institutions, in fact, have adopted a variety of methods to address illegal SALWs spreads. These are practical approaches to assist underdeveloped countries mitigate the consequences of unregulated weapons transfers. These mechanisms address the present issues caused by illegal SALWs shipments into Africa, as well as the UN's initiatives to address the phenomenon through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [14. 995-1001]. It then examines how the AU and regional institutions are helping to alleviate the widespread consequences of illegal SALWs trafficking by participating in international arms-control strategies. The article maintains that, amidst structural obstacles, the AU and regional institutions continue to be the guardians of the agenda to mobilize to curb illegal SALWs trafficking. This is particularly true considering the strategic contributions that these organizations are undertaking to reduce illegal arms trafficking. The study goes on to examine a few of the current patterns in illegal SALWs flows in the sub-region and finishes with recommendations regarding the highlighted concerns. Armed violence and illicit spread of SALWs continue to be of great concern. According to a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), arms shipment rose to 34% between 2012 to 2022, making it one of the highest figures since 1990. The report indicates that whereas the shipment of weapons to Asia, and the Middle East has been low, the Americas has been the highest amongst all the continents, which increased between the same periods, there was a decrease in the flow to Europe. According to the report, in 2022 military spending in Africa was US\$20.1 billion, which was 1.3% lower

than in 2021 at \$39.7 billion. Comparatively, despite this decrease, African military spending remained 48% higher than it was 10 years ago. Despite the reduction from African states' SALWs acquisitions in 2022 is a welcoming step, it does not appear to correlate into a decline in rates of armed conflict on the continent or a decrease in illegal arms spread inside Africa [9]. So, why do illegal weapons continue to spread in Africa, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, amidst a multitude of organizational tools and mechanisms aimed at controlling them? The difficulty is in identifying and controlling illegal shipments and diverting of lawfully acquired weapons into illegal circulation.

Research Methodology. The paper uses a qualitative research method. Firstly, it is a process of systematic examination of an account and is descriptive in nature as it seeks to understand the consequences and the adverse effect of small arms and light weapons and its influence on security and instability in sub-Saharan Africa in comparative perspective. Secondly, other perspective like the demand and supply of arms and its nexus with violent non-state actors in comparison to acquisition of state-owned stockpiles and how legal arms flow into illegal market.

Sources of illicit arms transfers in sub-Saharan Africa. Most weapons begin their lifecycle as legally produced. However, studying how SALWs reach the illegal market gives a notion that grey areas are contributing factors to illicit SALWs trafficking. The illegal arms market contains a wide range of participants, from the producer to the recipient, as well as illicit dealers that hide their activities inside a highly complicated international organized criminal syndicate. Because of the covert characteristics of SALWs illicit trafficking, it is fundamentally challenging for anybody outside the systems to identify participants involved, as it is considerably easier to witness the consequences of arms smuggling than identify individuals or groups involved in SALWs trafficking. A wide range of sources fuels the illegal arms trade in sub-Saharan Africa, including the diverting State stockpile weapons (legal arms), regions infested with wars and conflicts, artisanal arms and international suppliers operating in collusion with domestic entities [17. P. 227].

State government stockpiles are a dominant contributor to illegal arms transfers in sub-Saharan Africa. In truth, the majority of illegally traded firearms were produced lawfully. The illegal use or reshipment of SALWs without the authorization of the state government is referred to as "arms diversion". Diversion happens in sub-Saharan in a variety of ways. For example, violent non-state actors like terrorist groups, armed militias or rebels can overpower government agents and attack State government stockpiles, or when malicious soldiers lend or trade weapons for cash. This is especially prevalent when peacekeepers or government security agents are corrupt and underpaid. Diversions occur in peacekeeping efforts as well. The Small Arms Survey conducted a survey on 11 peace operations assigned to Sudan and South Sudan by the AU and the UN across the

12-year period beginning from 2002 to 2014. The survey results identified 22 occurrences were peacekeepers that lost ammunition and firearms. In nearly half of the incidents, the loss of weapons was estimated to be between 50 and 99 firearms to 2 500 and 4 999 cartridges [6].

State-owned arms can also enter the illicit market via bribery and corruption, theft, or defeat to violent or illegal non-state actors, such example like in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, during the March 23 Movement (M23) uprisings in arms violent conflict in Africa [15]. While analysing attempts to improve arms regulations in the DRC, President Joseph Kabila fired his commander, General Gabriel Amisi Kumba, over allegations that he was participating in an arm smuggling that provided rebel groups with small arms. Weapons smuggling was listed as a significant reason for the M23 rebels' victory over government security forces in November 2012. Also, with the assistance of diverted SALWs, the rebels conquered Goma and raided the government stockpile [7. P. 1-18].

Factor driving demand and supply of SALWs. Currently, in many countries of Africa, an inventory of existing weapons is being carried out (which, as a rule, are very outdated both morally and physically), programs are being formed to repair and modernize military equipment, and in some cases, plans are being made to purchase new weapons systems. The improvement in the economic situation of some states in the region, the increase in their solvency, observed against the backdrop of growing interest in establishing military-technical cooperation with foreign states, attracts the attention of major arms manufacturers, including the United States, France, Great Britain, Germany, China, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, etc. Not Russia also stands aside from this, having at one time (during the existence of the USSR) several traditional clients in the region: Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, Madagascar, and others. True, by now many of them have large debts to Russia, and cooperation with them can no longer be built only on a political basis (a transition to commercial settlement is required). And this puts before the Russian side the task of finding the most acceptable forms of military-technical cooperation, mutually beneficial financial terms of payment for arms deliveries, and so on. This task is especially urgent, given the still low level of solvency of most countries in the region. Taking a case study on how legal SALWs are used for illegal activities, the authors analysed coups in sub-Saharan Africa, predominantly West Africa [22. P. 64].

A review of the causes of coups in Sub-Saharan Africa reveals some recurring themes. These demonstrate how likely coups are and what is required to avert them. West Africa accounted for the most coups in Africa, making up 44.4% of all coups. About 40 coups took place in Africa since 2010, with approximately 20 occurring in West Africa, the Sahel, and Horn of Africa, whilst, since 2019, 7 have occurred (five successful and two failed). While the most coups in Africa have been from former French colonies. It should be noted that these coups require SALWs as a major ingredient which are also legal weapons (government

stockpile), but what is also interesting that, during the cause of the coup, violent armed conflict could spring, up leading to lose of government stockpile due to lack of accountability and the demand for smalls will skyrocket as civilians will buy arms for self-defence. Similarly, West Africa has accounted for 12 of the 20 coups in sub-Saharan Africa since 2010. The latest successful coup in Burkina Faso followed two failed attempts in 2015 and 2016 [23].

Country	Coup date	Result	Leaders	Targets
Burkina Faso	24.10.2022	Successful	Lt-Col Paul-Henri Damiba	Pres. Roch Kaboré
Guinea	5.09.2021	Successful	Col. Mamady Doumbouya	Pres. Alpha Conde
Guinea-Bissau	1.02.2022	Failed	Unclear	Pres. Umaro Embaló
Sudan	25.10.2021	Successful	Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan	Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok
Mali	24.05.2021	Successful	Assimi Goita	Pres. Bah Ndaw
Mali	19.08.2020	Successful	Assimi Goita	Pres. Ibrahim Keita
Niger	31.03.2021	Failed	Unclear	Pres-Elect Mohamed Bazoum
Ethiopia	22.06.2019	Failed	Unclear	Amhara Regional government
Sudan	10.04.2019	Successful	Lt. Gen. Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf	Pres. Omar al-Bashir

Coups in Sub-Saharan Africa with the use of SALWs

Created by the authors.

The authors divided the causes of coups in sub-Saharan Africa into two categories: domestic and external factors. Domestic factors originate from national governance challenges. External factors are relating to global interplay that have a considerable impact on African leadership and security. Among the domestic factors are national government incompetence to rule, non-fulfilment of citizenship benefits, aggrieved masses (especially the youths), and rising insecurity creating an atmosphere that normalise acquiring small arms for self-defence as most citizens do not trust the government to protect them. Whilst external factors are

international influence by both state and non-state actors such as terrorist group whose major tools are SALWs and arm merchants who take advantage of local disagreement, to supply arms to communities, separatist group, rebels, and criminal syndicates. However, these factors play within a greater perspective that enables for causative factors to linger long enough to inspire coups [21. P. 659-675].

Factors abetting illicit arms flows. As countries transition, the occurrence of conflict and instability appears to evolve. Whilst political change is frequently linked to massive violent disruption, democratic countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya, have more protests and riots despite the outcome. When the threat of a power transition looms, such as the elections in Liberia or military coups, states are usually vulnerable to conflict. It is challenging to obtain recent incidents in sub-Saharan Africa, where weapons dealers have indeed been prosecuted and convicted [5. P. 37-49]. Even when weapons and/or ammunition are discovered in questionable circumstances, the incident almost always fades away as quickly as it emerges. In most cases, security agents do not launch an investigation that could lead to prosecution. As a result, it is challenging to uncover such cases where illegal SALWs have been arrested and prosecuted. For example, Conflict Armament Research, a UK-based NGO that monitors the worldwide flow of arms, published a report in 2013 that outlined several cases of SALWs circulation in illegal markets [10]. According to the report, the illicit SALWs were tracked down to 12 countries: Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Angola, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. Neither of these countries investigated the issues. Evidently, it is uncommon to see states attempt to verify such findings by investigating cases with the goal of convicting offenders. Reasons such as sophisticated and reliable network or supply chain of intertwined entities when transporting large shipments of weapons, either illegal or legal. This frequently involves government officials, local actors, powerful politicians, and high-profile business figures. This is illustrated by the 2004 case of Mark Thatcher and his South African collaborator and arms trader Nick du Toit, and others [19]. This exceptional case of mercenaries' attempted coup would have gone undetected if the plane transporting the mercenaries had not stopped in Harare before heading to Equatorial Guinea. Another incident occurred in 2008. Towards the Zimbabwe's national elections, a Chinese ship, the An Yue Jiang, tried to deliver 77 tonnes of SALWs. The cargo, originally intended for Zimbabwe, was scheduled to arrive at the Durban Port, from which it would be shipped by land to Zimbabwe. The same year, in July 2008, Russia and China vetoed a UNSC resolution on Zimbabwe [4]. Zimbabwe could have faced an arms importation ban under the resolution. Civil society in the SADC region raised the alarm, fearing that the weapons could be used for human rights violations, and called it a "ship of shame." The actual shipment that was authorised, was eventually revoked by a court's decision. Simultaneously, neighbouring countries Mozambique, Namibia, and Angola are believed to have

denied the ship approval to dock. Nevertheless, it is still unknown if the firearms ever made it to Zimbabwe [11]. Analogously, in December 2014, a shipment plane carrying SALWs, and a helicopter landed at Mallam Aminu Kano Airport in Kano, Nigeria, after experiencing technical difficulties in route to Chad.

Africa confidently leads the post-war world in terms of the number of regional conflicts and crises. And although in recent years there have been some positive developments in areas traditionally considered the "hottest" on the continent is sub-Sahara (West Africa, Sahel, and the Horn of Africa), the situation is still far from stable. The subsided conflicts are being replaced by new ones (of a predominantly internal nature). Thus, the civil war continues in southern Sudan; counterinsurgency has been noted in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sierra Leone. UNITA forces have been partially disarmed in Angola, but the conflict with government forces continues in the country's border areas. Internal conflicts also continue in South Africa, Burundi, Rwanda, whilst in Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, and Somalia continue to experience both internal conflict and terrorist attacks. Constant armed actions are noted on the borders of Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. A tense internal political situation persists in the Congo (Brazzaville). In Cameroon, the president of the countries face serious claims in terms of authoritarianism. Recently, armed conflict has flared up again between Ethiopia and Eritrea; in Guinea-Bissau, the military rebelled against the president and government of the country [2. P. 3-20].

A feature of the military-political situation on the continent and, in particular, ongoing armed conflicts, is the active movement of weapons carried out secretly through the territories of neighbouring countries. Examples of this are numerous. As a result, a much larger number of states are actually involved in armed conflicts than it seems at first glance; in some cases, there is a high risk of weapons falling into the hands of rebels fighting against legitimately elected governments. These circumstances cannot be ignored when assessing the possibility and desirability of deliveries of SALWs, as they play significant role in influencing the nature and duration of violent conflicts.

International institutional approach to arms proliferation in sub-Saharan Africa. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in July 2015, which is a component of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations' vision, as reflected in the comprehensive agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompasses economic, security, social, and environmental dimensions. Cooperation with relevant regional bodies and joint implementation of regional strategies will be required to achieve these development goals. The African Union's (AU) strategic plans for a peaceful and prosperous Africa are reflected in the 2063 Agenda, which is very closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations and all its sections. In this context, there is a significant connection between the AU's plan to "silence the guns" and SDG, which seeks to "promote peaceful and inclusive

societies for sustainable development, ensure access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” Interdependence between conflict resolution and sustainable development is plausible, particularly in the African context [20. P. 169].

African Union approach. Following the liberation of many African nations in the 1960s, the continent entered a phase of economic growth and recovery. Conflicts between states and within states persisted in some areas at the same time. Meeting the challenges of establishing strong, sustainable states and ensuring the full integration and participation of all citizens in public life resulted in several challenges that had a detrimental effect on economic prosperity, good governance, human rights, and development. Armed conflict and ongoing civil wars in Africa remained a defining aspect of the political and social reality of the continent throughout the 1990s. Following that, new kinds of conflicts involving terrorist groups and organized crime appeared in Africa. It became apparent that more work needed to be done in order to achieve the establishment of peace on the continent. At the AU level, efforts to establish a successful continental mechanism for conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and the adoption of successful countermeasures to this phenomenon persisted. The African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC), which became the embodiment of the African Peace and Security Architecture, was created in early 2002, but it was not until then that the contours of such a mechanism became apparent (APSA). The Group of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, the creation of the African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment Unit, and other preventive diplomacy tools were also viewed as essential components of the Common African Defence and Security Policy [13. P. 383-396].

Silencing the Guns. In 2013, yet another significant step was made toward putting an end to conflicts in Africa. African heads of state and government adopted an action plan and set the goal of putting an end to gun violence by 2020 as the African Union celebrated its 50th anniversary. Following that, the 430rd Peace and Security Council (PSC) meeting in April 2014 sought to motivate African Union member states and its allies to devise successful strategies for achieving this aim [12. P. 116-127]. The African Union Heads of State and Government adopted the Solemn Declaration on the African Common Defence and Security Policy in 2004 with the intention of completing the ongoing efforts to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW) started by the Bamako Declaration on the African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Movement, and Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity [3]. The Bamako Declaration marked the beginning of the continent’s nations’ efforts to combat illegal small arms trafficking. Among the significant initiatives launched to give Member States the required tools and platforms to share experiences, as well as to create a contingency plan, were the creation of the African Union and the

Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2008, the development of the African Union Strategy to Combat the Illicit Proliferation, Movement, and Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the African Union Common Position on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) [1]. The African Union and the Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons have helped to foster an environment that encourages member states to follow through on their regional and global commitments. The African Union's member states have steadfastly backed all multilateral initiatives for disarmament and non-proliferation, it is equally important to emphasize [16]. It should be remembered that the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted decision Assembly/AU/Dec.472 (XX) at its twentieth regular session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2013. In this decision, the Assembly urged States to use the Common Position of the African Union on the ATT to ensure that the concerns and interests of African countries are taken into consideration during the final United Nations conference on the topic. The problems of Security Sector Reform (SSR), which is regarded as one of the major components of the African Union's Post-Conflict Recovery and Development Policy, is also being taken into consideration as part of the organization's efforts to lessen conflict on the continent. In this situation, SSR serves as a tool for both conflict prevention and response, besides being essential for enhancing the capabilities of the police and the armed forces. The SSR Framework was approved by the African Union Assembly in January 2013 in recognition of its significance. The necessity to "give priority to rebuilding and strengthening the capacity of security institutions" is emphasized by this guideline [18]. Among the crucial elements of the security sector reform, which frequently aided in good governance and stability, were the incorporation of some former members of armed groupings into the military and security forces and the demobilization of others.

Conclusion. A strong commitment to implementing the African Union's policies, visions, and mechanisms is necessary to achieve the goal of silencing the guns by 2020. There is no doubt that the armed conflicts that continue to hinder peace and development in Africa are directly related to the spread of SALWs. Due to this circumstance, the continent continues to be highly vulnerable, with SALW resulting in untold destruction and human casualties. The emergence of the type and scope of such weapons' users, which include pirates, terrorists, and members of criminal organizations, is changing the dynamics of conflict and arms trafficking in Africa at the moment. Perhaps current issues continue to exist while getting more complicated. The African Union's cooperation with the United Nations is crucial in this regard. In order to implement various initiatives aimed at reducing the magnitude of armed conflicts in Africa, effective mechanisms for complementarity and coordination of actions must be established. There is no doubt that the regional economic communities (RECs) will be more successful in intensifying growth and minimizing conflict in their respective regions if the African

Union and the United Nations implement a successful, coordinated strategy in implementing the 2063 Agenda and the 2030 Agenda. Close collaboration with civil society is also necessary given the dynamics of current conflicts in Africa and new trends in the arms trade. At this critical juncture, it's critical to emphasize the role it can play in averting conflict, advancing peace, and increasing local communities' awareness. Additionally, Member States must cooperate to prevent the use of their borders and territories for arms trafficking operations. Such action ought to be carried out within the constraints of the ATT, the African Union PMS, and the United Nations Security Council. Furthermore, the significance of the issue of information sharing between Member States cannot be overstated. Such a discussion will be crucial for identifying and deterring fresh, developing threats to safety and peace.

In conclusion, effective disarmament and arms control need to be re-examined as one of the priorities linked to continued attempts to put an end to conflicts. It is necessary to remove the social, economic, and political pressures that lead individuals, groups, and communities to purchase weapons. Certainly, addressing security and development issues and offering vulnerable societies practical options to engaging in crime and other illicit activities are essential to the success of any community-based disarmament effort.

Uganda, like other African countries dealing with similar challenges, needs to enforce sustainable disarmament resolutions to deal with Karamoja's insecurity. These resolutions include but are not limited to the following:

- Strategic deployment of security forces to stem attacks while protecting lives and property of local communities;
- Immediate resumption of disarmament while securing international borders where arms and light weapons are entering the country;
- Improvement of security roads to facilitate the quick follow-up and tracking of animals;
- Meaningful involvement of local communities in the disarmament exercise without victimization of leaders;
- Provision of alternative income generating activities for reformed sections of society;
- Establishment and support for community-based security systems as sustainable mechanisms for dealing with conflict.

With all of its supporting mechanisms, the AUSA seems to be a very powerful tool for preventing conflicts. The African Union must keep up its efforts to make sure that the effective implementation of the 2063 Agenda, which aims to bring prosperity to the continent through good governance, respect for human rights, public participation, and economic development, remains at the forefront of its focus. The SDGs will be achieved by 2030 if this line is followed, according to plans from the UN. It is the shared responsibility of the African Union, its

member states, the regional economic communities, civil society, and the international community to take action to hasten the process of African gun control.

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