

SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATIONS AND ARMED VIOLENCE AMONG STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

BY

¹Fasuan Emmanuel Olawale, ²Oladapo Mayowa Ilori, ³Abimbola J Owojori, ⁴Kareem A. Matanmi

¹Institute of Peace Security and Governance Ekiti State University

²Department of Sociology Ekiti State University

³Department of History and International studies Nigeria Police Academy

⁴Department of Industrial and Labour Relation Federal College of Fishery and Maritime Technology



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Corresponding author:

Fasuan Emmanuel
Olawale,

Abstract

Proliferations of small arms has been adjudged as a stimuli that has continuously impact Nigeria's internal security negatively. It has also been highlighted that the presence, movements and proliferations of small arms has enabled the rise of armed violence in Nigeria including the various incessant communal clashes, ethnic and religious conflicts across Nigerian regions with uprising of other various militant groups. The most worrisome aspect in the rise of armed violence in Nigeria is that, the phenomenon has taken a dangerous dimension in recent times where suspected criminals, cultist, terrorist or militants are often identified as students of tertiary institutions. Arising from the prevailing armed violence among students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the study was conducted to reveal arms proliferation among the students of the selected tertiary institutions in Southwest Nigeria and how this has been driven the increasing rate of violence on society. Interview data collection strategies was used and, the key informants were purposefully selected using snowball sampling techniques. The tertiary institutions were selected based on the reported cases of students' armed violence across the selected area. The study revealed that small arms proliferations are taking prominence in various tertiary institutions across Nigeria with incidences of arms-involving violence indicating a future mirror of serious threat to national security. The study recommends that Nigerian government should intensify more actions in controlling the movement of small arms and the demand factors of small arms in Nigerian Higher Institutions.

Key words: armed violence, small arms Nigeria, students, tertiary institutions, proliferation.

Introduction

Small arms proliferations and armed violence is not a new thing. The history of the phenomenon in Africa can be traced back to the period of cold war when African nations were strategically positioned and used ideologically to influence the balance of power between the two blocks; Western (United States) and Eastern (Soviet Union). As at the time the war ended, small but firearms have already been proliferated and widespread with illicit hands to hands transfers across all African nations. Not surprisingly,

according to Small Arms Survey¹, out of the rough estimations of 875 million small arms circulating globally, 150 million was adjudged to be in Africa while about 50 million in sub-Saharan Africa and 10-15 million in West Africa, alone².

¹ Small Arms Survey, "Documenting Small Arms and Light Weapons", A Basic Guide. Issue Brief, Cambridge, No. 14, July 2015.

² Small Arms Survey (2015)

However, the increase numbers of small arms has posed a significant challenge and has become a stimuli that continuously triggers armed violence and conflicts purposelessly across African nations, such as radicalism, extremism, terrorism, insurgency, militia uprising, anti-state actors, civil wars, and organized criminal violence. In Nigeria, between the year 1999 and 2017, over 100 numbers of communal clashes were recorded such as; identity conflicts, sectarian violence, students armed violence, insurrections, ethnic or religious related conflicts³each of which has resulted into the deaths of many Nigerians, destroyed their properties and internally displaced people from their homes. Alone, Okafor, Okeke, and Aniche⁴, armed bandits alone have killed thousands of Nigerians with an average of 1000 people per year since 1999as a result of small arms proliferations⁵. Meanwhile, arising from the trigger's effects of this proliferations of small arms across African nations, situations of persistent armed violence have revealed that, the rampant and accessibility of these small arms poses a serious threat to national security.

Unfortunately, the phenomenon of small arms proliferation has however taken a dangerous dimension in recent times. Accordingly, incidences of arms-involving violence have crept into our tertiary institutions where most of the suspected criminals, terrorists, or militants are often identified as students. And, when apprehended, they are at times arrested with very numerous dangerous weapons as persistently reported by many Nigerian national newspapers. Kwesi⁶ said, several incidences of arms involving violence are taking place in Nigerian tertiary institution, while guns of different types and other small arms are found and sized from students. In many times, reports of deaths, wounds, armed violence, riot, and unrest aided by crept of small arms in Nigerian tertiary institutions are often reported in national newspapers. Some of the reported cases and occurrences of armed violence among students of tertiary institutions between 1997 and 2019 are presented in the table below:

Students' Arms-Involving Violence

Year	Actor	Victim	Weapon	Extent	of	Institution/ Place
					violence	
1997	Student Cult Members	Secretary General of the Students' Union	Gun	One Killed Others Injured	person	University of Benin
1997	Students Armed Gangs	Principal Assistant Registrar	Gun	One Killed	Person	Delta State University
1997	Female Student	Head of Department at the Institute of Technology	Gun	One Killed	Person	Enugu
1997	Cult Group	Final Year Banking and Finance Student	Knife	One Murdered	Person	Ekiti State University Hostel
1999	Cult Group	Seven Undergraduates Students	Axe/Knife	Seven Persons Murdered		Obafemi Awolowo University
2000	Cult Group	Chief Security Officer	Knife	One Killed	Person	University of Ibadan
2000	Student Riot	Massive Destruction of School Properties	Numerous Small Arms and Light Weapons	Armed Violence, no Killing		University of Ilorin

³ Small Arms Survey, Rights at Risk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁴ Okafor, Okeke, and Aniche, Power Struggles, Political Contest and Ethno-Religious Violence in Nigeria” NnamdiAzikiwe Journal of Political Science (Forthcoming), 2012.

⁵ Okafor, Okeke, and Aniche, Power Struggles, Political Contest and Ethno-Religious Violence in Nigeria” NnamdiAzikiwe Journal of Political Science (Forthcoming), 2012.

⁶ KwesiAning, 'Home Made and Imported Guns in West Africa', London 7-13 July, 2003

2000	Cult Clashes	A student was Abducted and Killed	Numerous Small Arms and Light Weapons	Killing and Adoption	OlabisiOnabanjo University
2000	Student Riot	Massive Destruction of School Properties	Numerous Small Arms and Light Weapons	Armed Violence, no Killing	University of Calabar
2002	Cult Member	300 Level Student of Economics	Gun and Knife	One Person Shot Dead and Slaughtered	Ekiti State University
2003	Student Armed Group	3 Students	Gun, Cutlass, Axe	Three Students Killed	Kwara State Polythecnic
2006	Cult Clashes	Students and Staff	Gun, knife, Cutlass, Axe	Three Students Killed, many other Staff and Students Wounded	Ekiti State University
2011	Armed Students	Lecturer in the Department of Metrology	Gun	One Person Kidnapped with a Demand N15Million Ransom	Federal University of Technology, Akure
2013	Armed Students	Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology	Gun and knife	One Person Killed	OlabisiOnabanjo University
2014	Armed Students	Threatened a Violent Attack on Campus	Numerous Small Arms and Light Weapons	No Victim	Ekiti State University
2016	Armed Students/ Cult Clashes	Reprisal Attacks	Numerous Small Arms and Light Weapons	Several Students Was Murdered From Scores Counting	Ekiti State University
2018	Armed Students	Threatened a Violent Attack on Campus	Small Arms and Light Weapons	No Victim	College of Education Ilesha
2019	Student Riot	Massive Destruction of School Properties	Numerous Small Arms and Light Weapons	Armed Violence, 2 killed	Federal University Oye Ekiti

Compiled by the author from ANUPA AGM^{7,8},

It is important to note from this point that students from these institutions graduate to take up very important positions in companies, government agencies, security sectors, and even political leadership in Nigeria. The background orientation of this group of people could spell doom for the nation if the phenomenon is not checked on time. Arising from this, this study aims to create awareness and consciousness of the phenomenon of armed violence and proliferation of illicit small arms among students of tertiary education in Nigeria by:

- i. investigating the extent of small arms proliferation among students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
- ii. identifying the categories of students that hold small arms;
- iii. examining the effects of small arms proliferation on society; and
- iv. identifying existing measures and suggesting new measures in combating the proliferation of small arms among students of tertiary institutions.

Conceptual Clarifications

Small Arms

The first small arms were introduced in 14th century and came into general use at the end of the century⁹. Initially, small arms are light-weight armed weapons such as knife, machetes small handheld cannons. Broadly speaking, small arms weapons are the kind of weapons designed for subjective, individual, and personal use or infantry weapons that are light enough for an individual person to carry. There are several definitions given to small arms and there is no universally accepted definition. Thus, this study adopts United Nation's definition of small arms.

In 1997, United Nations (UN)¹⁰ describe it as light-weight armed weapon or a "person-portable" weapons such as knife, machetes, clubs, revolvers, self-loading pistols, assault rifles (the AK-47), light machine guns, or sub-machine guns which may also include hand grenade, landmines, small mortars, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers. It also includes portable antitank, recoilless rifles, and portable launchers of anti-tank and anti-aircraft missile systems¹⁰. Small arms survey¹¹ estimated between one to three million small arms in circulation in Nigeria, while the majority of the small arms were said to have been illegally possessed.

⁷ ANUPA AGM, Annual Lecture Series held in University of Lagos on Monday, 29th November, 2016.

⁸ Cirlig, C. (2019), "Illicit small arms and light weapons, International and EU action, IN-DEPT ANALYSIS," European Parliamentary Research Service.

⁹ NteNinen. The Changing Patterns of Small and Light Weapons (SALW) and the Challenges of National Security in Nigeria", (Global Journal of Africa Studies 2011) 1 (1): 5-23. ¹⁰United Nations, "Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms", United Nations

General Assembly Resolution A/52/298 of 27th August 1997

¹⁰ UN document A/52/298, 27 August 1997

¹¹ Small Arms Survey, Rights at Risk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Trafficking in Small Arms

Arms proliferations in Africa were not noticed until after the end of Cold War. Although the end of the war resulted into a viable shift from superpower proxy conflicts and wars particularly around the Third World Nations and hope for sustainable peaceful coexistence, the aftermath of the cold war has severely affected Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Colliers quoted in Che, Kevin Ngang¹²; during the cold war, many African countries received different kinds of military supports from the Western (United States) and Eastern (Soviet Union) blocks such as military equipments and security apparatus. This period, according to Adele, Kriten, and Noel Stott¹³, was the era of hyper-militarization in Africa, when many countries were said to have a strategic interest or affiliation to either the Western or Eastern Blocks as military supports and African countries were used ideologically to influence balance of power between the two blocks. As at the time the war ended, small but firearms have already been proliferated and widespread with illicit hands-to-hands transfers while the continuous widespread of small arms precipitated the continuing and intermittent armed violent all over African nations including Nigeria¹⁴.

Movement of Small Arms to Nigeria

Nigeria, however, has witnessed proliferation of small arms and increase in armed violence from its days of independence. Nigeria has 770 kilometers of shared land border with the Republic of Benin, around 1,500 kilometers with the Republic of the Niger, 1,700 kilometers with Cameroon, and 90 kilometers with Chad. Nigeria also has 850 kilometers of maritime border in the Atlantic Ocean. It would be hard to find any state in the world capable of effectively controlling such extensive borders. Naturally, traffickers make use of these porous borders to smuggle into Nigeria such different and dangerous products as drugs and arms. The Deputy Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service attributes the growth in trafficking to staff shortages, the lack of modern surveillance equipment, and a shortage of vehicles. The smuggling of arms and ammunition into Nigeria has reached disturbing levels. Sometimes these arms are imported into the country hidden in clothing, vehicles, or kitchen utensils.

First, this movement of weapons in Nigeria can be attributed to the proliferation of small arms across Africa¹⁶. Armed conflicts in Africa started with several hundred of insurgency uprising, civil

¹² Che, Kevin Ngang, "Small Arms and Light Weapons, Africa's True WMDs: The Role of SALW in Conflict and Insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa". A thesis from European University Center for Peace Studies, 2007.

¹³ Adele, Kriten and Noel Stott, "Controlling the transfer of arms: Progress and Challenges in the African Context" (Pretoria/Tshwane South Africa, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) 2008) Paper 159.

¹⁴ Small Arms Survey 2003, Development Denied Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2003. ¹⁶Obasi, Nnamdi. Small Arms Proliferation and Disarmament in West Africa: Progress and Prospects of the ECOWAS Moratorium. Abuja: Apophyl Productions, 2002.

wars, conflicts of cessations, electoral injustice or fractionalized political system, ethnic bigotry, and religious intolerance while the surplus of small arms and light weapons serves as “triggers” and owing to the fact that the surplus of these arms in circulation had already in the hands of private users, illegal arms dealers, the agitators, the militia groups (ethnic/religion), armed bandits, and small arms local smugglers^{15, 16, 17}. Also, the proliferations of small arms were traced to other sources such as leakages and smuggling from the armories, illegally purchase and sale of weapons known as black markets; domestic productions arms, etc.¹⁸.

Today in Nigeria, there are probable rough estimates collections of illegal small arms or weapons, the estimations is pegged around three million small arms and light weapons in Nigeria^{19, 22, 20, 21}.

Implications of small arms Proliferation in Nigeria

Today, Nigerian contemporary society are characterised with various categories of armed conflicts or armed violence all over. From Boko Haram insurgency in the North to the militancy uprising in the South and other numbers of armed violence were direct, indirect, and consequential links to the presence, movements, and proliferation of small arms. NteNinen (2011)²², observed that the wide availability of these weapons (revolvers, self-loading pistols, assault rifles (the AK-47), light machine guns, hand grenade, landmines, small mortars, hand-held under-barrel, portable anti-tank and recoilless rifles) are all contributing to the alarming rate of armed crime, armed conflicts, armed violence, insurgency and militancy uprising²³. This proliferation of small

arms weapons in Nigeria, especially in the Niger-Delta region, and the widespread of weapons in the Northern parts of the country where there are continuous various activities of the Boko-Haram insurgency, rebels movements, militancy in the Niger Delta, insurrections, and other various armed crisis across all regions of Nigeria²⁴. The continuous threat of armed violence and armed related conflicts in Nigeria, has however affected thousands of people who have lost their lives, injured or internally displaced (IDP) while at many times socio-economic activities halted, destabilised, and severally affected²⁵.

Data Collections

This research work is primarily a qualitative research study. It is a study conducted to reveal the prevailing proliferation of arms and armed violence among students of tertiary institution in Nigeria. The study sampled some selected tertiary institutions in Southwest Nigeria. The study relies on numbers of sources to generate information and data, some of which include the selection of key informants across the selected tertiary institutions from South West Nigeria. Non-random and snowball samplings techniques were used in this regard; this includes purposefully selection of respondents characteristically relevant to the study from the selected tertiary institutions from South West Nigeria. The selections of the tertiary institutions were based on the reported cases of students' armed violence in the study area in the last 15 years²⁶. Key informants were selected for interviews from among the following people

- i. Chief security officers (CSO)
- ii. Students' affairs Division officer
- iii. Divisional Police Officers (DPO) from the study area,
- iv. Students Union Leaders,
- v. Commandant of Students Cadets.

The interviews were conducted via telephone calls while messages 'request for information was sent through an e-mail to other respondents that could not be reached by phone call. Other sources of data include reading from books, journals, newspapers, and the internet browsing. The study was achieved through information generated, documentary, and textual analyses of the available data.

Discussions

From this section, major observations were made based on the content analyses of data generated through interview and the reports from students armed violence cases including some other relevant information generated from other sources such as newspapers and periodic bulletins. The data generated were interpreted and analysed to provide a clear understanding and

²⁴ Badmus, BabatundeL “Small arms and light weapons transfer in West Africa: A Stock Taking”, Disarmament forum, 2009.

²⁵ Stohl, R. and Tuttle, D., “The Challenges of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Africa” Conflict Trends No, Briefing Note, Chatham House, London.(2009)

²⁶ ANUPA AGM, Annual Lecture Series held in University of Lagos on Monday, 29th November, 2016.

¹⁵ Abdel-Fatau Musa, “Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation and Human Security in Nigeria” Published by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Dispute (ACCORD) 2002.

¹⁶ Bah, Alhaji, Implementing the ECOWAS Moratorium in Post-War Sierra Leone. Ontario: Project Ploughshares and the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordination Committee. May, 2004.;

¹⁷ Badmus, (2009).Badmus, BabatundeL “Small arms and light weapons transfer in West Africa: A Stock Taking”,

¹⁸ Bah, (2004) ibid

¹⁹ Small Arms Survey 2003, Development Denied Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2003. ²²Ebo, Adedeji, “Small Arms Proliferation in Nigeria: A Preliminary Overview”, In Ibeanu, O. and Mohammed, F.

(Ed.), Oiling the Violence: The Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Niger Delta, (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Abuja, 2006), pp.1-34

²⁰ Mensah, Kent, ‘Review Laws on Acquisition of Small Arms.’ Accra Mail. 21 May. Midweek Telegraph, (The Port Harcourt). 2006.

²¹ Obasi, Nnamdi. Small Arms Proliferation and Disarmament in West Africa: Progress and Prospects of the ECOWAS Moratorium. Abuja: Apophyl Productions,2002.

²² NteNinen The Changing Patterns of Small and Light Weapons (SALW) and the Challenges of National Security in Nigeria”, (Global Journal of Africa Studies 2011) 1 (1): 5-23.

²³ ibid

establish the real situation of the menace of small arms proliferations and armed violence among students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. However, the procedure of the research work was guided by the research objectives as follows:

Findings from Qualitative Data

A. To investigate small arms proliferation among students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria;

Arising from the above objective, the researchers conducted an interview with some key informants and respondents across the selected tertiary institutions in Southwest Nigeria and observed that, an extensive numbers of small arms can be traced to students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The interview reports and analyses revealed that many students are in possession of small arms while a number of them carries weapons around. It was also revealed further that students engaged in these illicit acts, to facilitate personal protection, the fear of future attack/riot/conflict/instability/reprisal attack personal defence from gangs. This was according to one of the key informants interviewed, a retired Captain in the military and Chief Security Officer from one of the selected tertiary institutions, who reported that most students carry weapon for self-protection and defence while others carry it to intimidate other students in order to extort or to rape. The CSO identified the types of weapons usually found with students such as:

- i. locally fabricated weapons like riffle using cartridges and cut-to-size riffle;
- ii. locally fabricated pistol modified to use ammunition meant for AK-47; and
- iii. machetes like axes, knife, cutlasses and broken bottles, and some students used to specially sharpen these machetes in such a way that it can penetrate human flesh.

In another interview, according to a CSO of a college from the selected tertiary institutions, the intelligent units of the office of the security office used to receive frequent report of students carrying weapons within the campus, especially at night hanging around hostels. The security officer added that the types of weapons that are usually found with students are majorly small pistol, axes and cutlasses while most of the weapons are fabricated. In addition to the claims, the CSO said, most of the suspected holders of the weapons were either being expelled or rusticated students. In addition, the CSO maintained that the college security department usually embarks on 'Stop and Search Operation' without prior knowledge of students to control the carriage of weapons. The CSO reported that most of the students caught so far with weapons are usually cultists and expelled students.

Emphasizing the same point, the Commandant of student's cadets from one of the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria said:

Students use to protest especially any time there is an increase in school fee. During this protest, they use to carry weapons that are armful such as axes, cutlass, knives, and sometimes guns. In addition to

this, the only set of students that usually carries weapons are cultists.

The commandant of student's cadets also informed the researchers that, two major cult groups' exits in tertiary institutions in Southwest Nigeria, the major groups are identified as 'Eiye' cultist groups and 'Aayee' Cultist groups.

B. To identify the categories of students that hold small arms;

Here, the researchers observed from the report and analyses generated from the above objective that many students are in possession of small arms while a number of them carries weapons around. The study noted this fact and therefore sought to find out from respondents the categories of students who are always found of carrying weapons. Some of the views of respondents were captured during the interview and some of the categories of students using guns are indicated as follows:

Members of unregistered Association.

- I. Rapists
- II. Students under threats.
- III. Cult members (for intimidation)
- IV. Student armed robbers
- V. Students unionist (for protection)
- VI. Student cadets (for defence)
- VII. Drunkardstudents

One of the respondents (a police officer) during the interview expressed that a good number of arrested students during armed violence or whenever police carried out operation stop and search without notice are always found within the above categories of students.

In addition, Dean of Students in one of the selected tertiary institutions said that some students are drunkards. And, lots of recorded cases of violent and rampage on campuses are recorded as a result of influence of alcohol on students. The Dean further stated that, the higher the drinking levels, the higher the potential of armed crime. Accordingly, drunkard students were more likely to engaging in risky or aggressive behavior which may lead to the taking up of arms.

The researchers noted that, alcohol abuse among students was established to be a close association of violence on campus through frequency of drinking to intoxication or consumption of high alcohol beverages. A drunkard student would engage in abusive behavior, sexual violence, armed crimes and assaulting colleagues, using small arms to threaten other students.

C. To examining the effects of small arms proliferation on society;

Majority of the respondents who took part in the interview expressed their concern concerning the impact of proliferation of small arms on people and the society. The respondents affirmed that small arms proliferations has affected our society adversely and has however posed a major challenge to the state security and a high risk to the lives of other fellow students as well as a threat to general peace on campuses. The respondents added that small arms proliferations is a major instruments that had fueled or triggered

various activities of armed violence, riots and other various armed crisis across all Nigerian campuses.

During the interview with a student Union leader from one of the selected tertiary institutions, it was revealed that the availability of small arms are can easily triggers crisis because of their distinguishing features of light-weight and easily to move around by anybody. It was also said that small arms does not really required much training before it can be used effectively, therefore, it has been used to aid student violence in various tertiary institutions across Nigeria.

In another interview with one of the commandants of student's cadets from one of the selected institution in South West Nigeria, the commandant said:

Cases of students' protest are rampant this days owing to the fact that students' would want to resist harsh policies by the school managements such as increase in school fee, policies of no school fee no exam, poor learning environment etc. And most of the time, the protest usually resulted into armed violence where suspected cultist would hijack the process. Therefore, students' riots are always lethal, bloody and disastrous and can pose a tremendous threat to the whole campus.

D. Measures in combating the proliferation of small arms among students of tertiary institutions.

Based on the above measures in combatting proliferation of small arms among students of tertiary institutions, majority of the respondents indicated that the following measures can be taken by the governments to combat the proliferation of small arms among students of tertiary institutions:

- i. by constant raids of unregistered students association;
- ii. by arresting students with illegal possession of small arms;
- iii. by prosecuting illegal possessions as appropriate; and
- iv. by given students orientations and re-orientations at a regular intervals.

A female respondent and a staff from the Student Affairs Division office from one of the selected universities said:

Students have different types of conducts, some of these conducts are at times a disorderly conducts, simple disputes with colleagues, yelling at each other rudely, disagreements and even trespasses. These types of incidents deserve more attention because it often triggers armed conflicts and violence owing to the potential and availability of small arms in our institutions campuses.

Receiving information from another respondent who is a Director at the Student's Affairs Division from one of the selected tertiary institutions, the Director said during the telephone interview that:

Our society today contributed to the menace of small arms proliferation and armed violence among

students. Our political actors make use of some of these students during election and some of these students were supplied with ammunitions or small arms during election and even after the election, they hold these weapons to thwart the peace of the communities. Some of these students also fabricate these weapons locally while some purchase them from black markets.

The Director added that parents have a role to play in this regards through checking their children appropriately while political actors should desist from suppling weapons to our youths particularly students during elections.

Finally, a Divisional Police Officer who contributed to the study said that, the excessiveness and aggressiveness of students with small arms are always obvious, the DPO suggested that establishment of community/campus policing would go a long way to curb all the excessiveness and students with such illegal possession of arms would be easily identified and apprehended. The DPO further suggest, that peace relating courses should be introduced as a compulsory course to all students because this could help to change the mind-set of most students with an evil intent, especially those that carry weapons.

Summary of Findings

This section established the major findings from the research work. This includes findings from the extant literature of books, journals and newspapers including the summary of findings from survey research work generated through structured and unstructured interview questions. The findings from the study offered a complete picture, and comprehensive information on small arms proliferations and armed violence among students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria and one of the key findings of this study is that weapons have already spread into the hands of students.

The study revealed that many students are in possession of small arms while many of them carry these weapons around. The study found that several factors could be responsible or associated with this illicit acts such as either for personal protection and defence, the fear of future attack/riot/conflict/ or to intimidate other students in order to extort or to rape.

The study also recorded that, majority of the students who hold small arms make use of locally fabricated weapons like raffle using cartridges and cut-to-size raffle or locally fabricated pistol modified to use ammunition meant for AK-47 while others make use of machetes like axes, knife, cutlasses and broken bottles. Accordingly, it was discovered that most of the students caught so far with weapons are usually under the following categories

- I. Members of unregistered Association
- II. Rapists
- III. Rusticated or expelled students
- IV. Student cadets (for protection)
- V. Students under threats.
- VI. Cult members' i.e 'Eiye' cultist groups and 'Aayee' cultist groups (for intimidation)
- VII. Student armed robbers
- VIII. Students unionist (for protection)

- IX. Student cadets (for defence)
- X. Drunkard students

The study also noted that small arms proliferations has actually affected our society adversely because the menace had posed a major challenge to the state security and high risk to the lives of other fellow students and a threat to general peace on campuses. The study noted that small arms proliferations is a major instruments that had fueled or triggered various activities of armed violence, riots and other various armed crisis across all Nigerian campuses.

However, the study noted the various measures that can be taken in controlling the menace of proliferation of small arms among students of tertiary institutions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A reasonable numbers of various categories of weapons are scattered and spread over into the hands of public and private users and majority of which are believed to be in the hands of youths and students. A report, according to Small Arms Survey, indicated that over 875 million firearms are spreading around the world²⁷and, more than 1,200 companies in 90 countries produces small arms²⁸. The impression from the survey report of this study and analyses of findings show that Nigeria is sitting on the drum containing dry-gunpowder because, a student who has familiar with the use of gun and had played a prominent roles during an armed group violence in colleges and institutions would most likely graduate to take up very important positions in companies, government agencies, security sectors and even political leadership. The background orientation of this group of people could pose a threat, not only to security, but also to sustainable peaceful coexistence and development. If the phenomenon is not checked and control of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons among students of tertiary institutions are not put in place, it could spell doom for the nation.

This study, based on its findings, recommends that:

- a. Nigerian government should intensify actions in controlling the movement of small arms and the demand factors of small arms.
- b. Police and security officers should always be at alert to respond to calls such as suspicious persons and in a suspicious circumstance.
- c. Emphases should be made by tertiary institutions to induct students on the ideal cultures of tertiary institutions, particularly during the compulsory orientation programme for all new students and re-orientation for the stale of old students.

- d. Management of institutions should be able to makes laws and regulations available at all times for the students to control their excessiveness and maintain limitation.
- e. Parents and guardians should monitor the academic voyage of their wards and to observe if they are unnecessarily kept too long on campus before graduation. Most students might have been rusticated long ago and they will not go home.
- f. Management should be prompt in attending to students agitations and matters that affect their welfare to prevent violent agitations.
- g. The enforcement of rules and discipline of students in tertiary institutions should not be too draconian. The approach should be reformative, corrective and not destructive and 'lethal'.
- h. Management of each institution should as a matter of urgency start to embark on deliberate but unannounced stop and search operations with constant raids of unregistered students associations in all campuses.
- i. Nigerian government should direct the design of curriculum on Peace and Security related courses to be made compulsory for all categories of students across the tertiary institutions in order for students to be kept abreast of the need to be at peace and be conscious of the dangers attached to the act of indulgence in armed violence.

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