**PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AS AMPLIFIERS OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN KADUNA STATE**

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**Abstract**

*The Proliferation of arms in the society is a clear indication of government’s weakness and stubbornness of the evil merchants of Small Arms and Light Weapons who also double as conflict entrepreneurs. Identities do not cause crisis but growing competition over scarce resources and political representation triggers violence along ethnic, political and religious cleavages. When sound judgment and sincerity on issues disappear, mediocrity and strife sets it and overshadows sense of cogent reasoning. The tragic history of crises in Kaduna State is unfortunate because it gives the state bad image and scare investors away. This paper looks into brief history of Kaduna State, Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), effects of proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, some incidences of violent conflicts in Kaduna State (from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era). The paper recommends ways to achieve lasting peace in Kaduna State which can also be applicable to other states with similar tragedy. The survival of the fittest and jungle justice approach should not be given oxygen to survive in the 21st Century.*

**Key Words***: Arms, Proliferation, Violent Conflict, Christians, Muslims.*

 **Introduction**

The rising number of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Nigeria is a potent danger that should or must be addressed. Kaduna State has its large share of violent conflicts partly due to the proliferation of SALW which amplifies the potency of destruction of property and loss of lives. Arms don’t kill people when left idle, but people use arms to kill. The availability of SALW is based on demand and readiness of purveyors of violence to make use of such weapons.

In a class society, inequalities are relatively more pronounced and these inequalities go hand in hand with oppression. Where these inequalities and by implication oppression exist, there are always conflicts. There is a struggle by the vantage on one hand to maintain their position and on the other hand by the oppressed or marginalized to improve their lot. (Yohanna, 2006). The spate of violent conflicts in Kaduna State which often take ethno-religious dimension is to a very large extent class struggle between those who chain and those who want to dismantle or unchain themselves.

Certain variables such as hate speeches, continuous rise in economic, social and political inequalities between ethnic groups, land disputes, herders and farmers over grazing and encroachment of grazing routes, banditry and so on, causes animosity leading to killings, reprisal attacks and counter-reprisals which leaves a footprint of mutual suspicion and balkanization of settlement patterns where both Christians and Muslims live predominantly in separate locations. This deep-rooted mutual suspicion sparks violence easily at slightest provocation. There is need for a concerted effort to disembark on pilling arms and ensure mutual respect and understanding among different adherents of religion and ethnic cleavages in Kaduna State.

**Brief History of Kaduna State**

Kaduna State is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic state with diverse cultural norms which is populated by over 60 different ethnic groups.

Kaduna State is one of the major states in Nigeria. One etymological account states that Kaduna derived its name from the Gbagyi ethnic group, which lived there for centuries. Another source states that it derived its name from the Hausa word for crocodile, Kada. While the actual account can never be established, it diversity, geographic importance and rich history cannot be in doubt. As a result, Lord Frederick Lugard, the Governor General (1914-1919) of Nigeria moved the capital of the northern region from Zungeru to Kaduna. In 1967, Kaduna became the capital of the north central state, which was created from the northern region. By 1976, General Murtala Mohammed gave the state its name. in 1987, the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida created Katsina State from Kaduna. (Kaduna State Government, 2019)

In terms of administration, Kaduna State is divided into 23 local government areas which include: Birnin Gwari, Chikun, Giwa, Igabi, Ikara, Jaba, Jema’a, Kachia, Kaduna North, Kaduna South, Kagarko, Kajuru, Kaura, Kauru, Kubau, Kudan, Lere, Makarfi, Sabon Gari, Sanga, Soba, Zangon Kataf and Zaria. In terms of demography, Kaduna State according to 2006 census has 6,066,562 people which translate to a density of about 137 persons per square kilometer. (Iniobong, 2016 cited in Mustapha, 2019)

The most famous historical site in Kaduna State is the Nok village inhabited by the Ham people. The Nok Civilization got its name from the village of Nok (Jaba LGA) which was where the findings were first sighted. The Nok culture was discovered in 1928. Bernard Fagg was able to correlate the Nok culture to central Nigerian groups such as the Ham (Jaba) ethnic group of Kaduna State (Deji, 2020) indeed one of the most active technological efforts in Nigeria was during this age, around 500BC to 200 AD with unique sculptures which varied greatly in size. The site in which the figures were found is the village of Nok. (Michael, 1986). The unique history of Kaduna State is cardinal in Nigerian history.

**Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)**

Small arms and firearms and other destructive arms or devices such as an exploding bomb, an incendiary bomb or gas bomb, a grenade, pistols and revolvers with automatic loading. (Ayuba and Okafor, 2015). Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are ammunitions that can be carried by an individual with relative ease. Small Arms and Light Weapons are ammunitions that can be carried by an individual combatant. Light arms do not necessarily need thorough training by experts to operate. The availability or proliferation of such weapons which are at the disposal of non-state actors exacerbates violence. Some of these SALW include:

The Tokarev TT Pistols, Makarov PM Pistols, AR-70 assault rifles (Beretta, Italy), type 64 assault rifles (Japan), AKM-47 assault rifles (Kalashnikov), portable rocket propelled grenade RPG-7V1 Mukha “fly”, G3 assault rifles (Heckler and Koch, Germany), FNC (Fabrique Carbine, Belgium), 7.62mm PKMSN-2 machine guns (Kalashnikov), General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMG), Light Machine Guns, (UK 59; Rachot Czech), AK-47 under barrel grenade launchers, RPG-42 hand grenades (Soviet), Dynamite explosives (nitropil, dynamite, plastic), and electronic remote detonation devices. (Ikelegbe, 2014 cited by Ayuba and Okafor, 2015)

It should be noted that other local weapons such as machetes, daggers, knives, swords, arrows, big sticks, stones, cutlasses, spears, Molotov cocktails, locally produced Dane gunsand so on are equally dangerous when used in attacking people. These categories of locally produced weapons or tools are littered in the state to a large extent. At slightest provocation, people unleash such arms on their targets leading to loss of lives and property in the state.

It is evident that widespread proliferation of arms leads to the acceptance of weapons as a normal part of life and violent conflict as an everyday occurrence. These developments paved way for widespread anxieties induced by perceived threats to personal security and consequent domestic arms competition. The formation of ethnic militia groups, civilian defense groups and armed vigilante groups can be viewed as both symptoms and causal factors in processes of societal militarization and proliferation of weapons. Persistent tensions between conflicting parties ensures that arms are hardly surrendered in large quantities because they are hidden for future use by different groups of people which makes cycle of violence a possibility.(Jekada, 2005)

SALW proliferation is not given the desired fight or approach. The civil war in Nigeria (1967-1970) and other conflicts in neighbouring countries made it possible for smuggling of arms and ammunitions due to porous borders. Sadly, even Military and Police formations are attacked by terrorists and weapons are carted away. In fighting the spread of SALW, sentiments must be put aside. The more weapons in the society, the greater the potency of violence. Insecurity leads to a higher demand for weapons which is a big danger and overlaps into a bigger crisis.

**Effects of Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons**

The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons has brought severe damages and will continue to do so if not addressed. Some of the effects of SALW include:

* It motivates people to go into violent confrontations even at slightest provocation;
* It makes peace elusive in the society;
* It leads to human rights violation;
* It contributes to the rising death profile;
* It increases the rate of theft, armed banditry, kidnapping and cult-related activities;
* It slows down or destroys the prospects for future development due to its usage in destroying business outfits;
* It increases the poverty status of victims of violence;
* It gives security operatives herculean tasks in combating crime. The availability of arms in the hands of non-state actors renders the security personnel vulnerable.

Worthy of note is that while SALW destroys the fabric of peace in the society, others become rich in supplying such weapons to criminals. The vulnerable communities who are not protected by the government see proliferation of SALW as their only hope of fighting to survive. . The more weapons made available to non state actors, the more potent danger it pose to the society. The lackluster attitude of constituted authorities leading to porous borders where even foreigners illegally come to Nigeria, supply weapons and serve as mercenaries to conflict merchants.

**Some Incidences of Violent Conflicts in Kaduna State**

Going back to the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras will give a proper understanding of the age long violent conflicts ranging from raiding of communities by Jihadists, the current decimation of several communities and killings as a result of clashes between herders and farmers to the armed banditry ravaging the state thereby, causing anguish to the victims and their families.

There were repeated revolts against the Fulani leaders even in the early stages of the Jihad. In this regard, an angry Dr. Walter Miller, a British colonialist had opined that “the Fulani were `rubbers’ and `oppressors’ and it was a great pity that the great Hausa race is in the hands of the small powerful clique, who had established the most iniquitous government in human history” (Ayandele, 1966). Miller wrapped up his outburst by likening the Fulani to the trio of Ghengis Khan, Adolf Hitler and Benito Musssolini…A major area the Fulani government exploited its subjects was in their harsh tax policies especially in non-Muslim places. This was the case around Nupe land, Southern Kaduna, Bauchi and other `pagan’ territories. The Fulani, armed with the instrumentality of the legal authority delegated to them by the British impoverished and pauperized the people leaving them with no alternative but rebellion. (Ayuba, 2020)

Because of the draconian behavioural pattern of the Fulani, many ethnic groups in northern Nigeria contested their suzerainty. Within the twentieth century, some minority nationalities started self-determination agitation. An example of this agitation is the protest by the Southern Kaduna people. (Suberu, 1995).

Agitations for self-determination became inevitable. As early as 1942, there was a protest by the *Bajju* people of Zangon Kataf district over perceived discrimination by the native authority administration (Yahaya, 1980 cited by Ayuba, 2020) “in 1948, another protest was organized by the *Atyap* ethnic group of the same district over the practice of political exclusion against them”. (Ayuba, 2020). These protests became a recurring decimal in a violent manner in order to be free from oppression.

Christian students of the College of Education, Kafanchan, Kaduna state, on 6th March, 1987 held their annual night vigil. (A week before this, the Muslim Students Society [MSS] branch of the Institution held its own programme featuring the screening of a highly provocative film on Jihad). The preacher invited to preach during the night vigil was Abubakar Bako, who recently converted from Islam to Christianity. In the course of his preaching, some Muslim student interrupted the proceedings claiming that the preacher misinterpreted the Koran. A Muslim lady, Hajiya Ai`shatu Umaru, reportedly slapped the preacher, grabbed the microphone and called on Muslim students to rise up and fight a Jihad against the infidels. (Ishaku, 2009). Hell broke loose as the Christian students rushed to the defense of the preacher while Muslim students went into the town to mobilize reinforcement. The violence spread like wild fire across the state. “An announcer at the Federal Radio Corporation (FRCN, Kaduna) announced repeatedly on the radio urging Muslims to come out in support of their Muslim brothers” (Ishaku, 2009). Both Christians and Muslims were affected by the violence.

Another major crisis in Kaduna state occurred in May, 1992. There were clashes in Zangon-Kataf between the Hausa and Kataf people which were ignited by a dispute over the location of a market. The Hausa opposed the relocation of the market to a new spacious area, preferring it to be left in the congested Zango Kataf town. Violence erupted leading to loss of lives, burning of churches and Mosques, hospitals and educational centres. This conflict Balkanized Kaduna state along religious lines as a result of distrust amongst Christians and Muslims (Mustapha, 2019)

The issue of implementation of Sharia Law in the year 2000 by the then Governor, Mohammed A. Makarfi raised the eyebrows of Christians in the state and even became more fearful of their Muslim neighbours since 1999 Constitution clearly indicate that Nigeria is a secular state. A peaceful protest organized by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in February, 2000 in Kaduna against the law was hijacked. The Christian demonstrators were stoned by Muslim youths which resulted in a pandemonium and a general riot in Kaduna town. In Kachia, there were reported attacks on Muslims and there were cases of the burning down of Churches, hotels and beer parlours in Birnin Gwari also. Lives and property were lost (NIPPS, 2003). “Attacks and counter-attacks claimed the lives of 1,295 people and unstated number of bodies were buried without identification” (Damilola, 2019)

Class struggles are not always violent. At the one extreme of a capitalist class struggle is the continuum from quarrels, petitions, protest strikes, sabotage to violent demonstrations and revolution. Whatever the response of the lower classes to oppression is always proportional to a number of factors. Here, Isaac Newton’s Third Law becomes instructive, i.e. “to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”. These factors include their level of consciousness, their organization, and the means available to them to exert change, their resolve, their leadership, the issues at stake and the strength of the opposing class. The nature of response is directly proportional to the intensity of oppression. (Yohanna, 2006)

Kukah (1992) is of the view that the fundamental driving force in understanding hate is the human instinct for self-preservation and survival. Stereotyped actions and marginalization triggers violent resistance by the oppressed. In a quest to display dissatisfaction with the emirate system, residents of Jama’a emirate took the opportunity of the appointment of a new Emir in 1999 which turned into a riot between the Hausa-Fulani minority in the area and other indigenes leading to the death of perhaps 30 people and injury to many. (Edwards, 2011 cited by Favour, 2018)

The post-election violence in 2011 also led to loss of lives and property across the state especially in Zaria, Kaduna, Zonkwa and Kafanchan. There was heavy death toll; Churches, Mosques, houses and Kafanchan market were burnt. In 2011, 13 separate reports of ethno-religious crises in Kaduna State further deteriorated the already fragile peace.(SBM Intelligence, 2017). Worthy of note is that Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) lost the 2011 Presidential election to Dr. Goodluck Jonathan. Buhari had huge followership in the North who felt dissatisfied with the electoral outcome. In Kaduna State, a Christian was elected Governor in person of Sir. Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa which did not go down well with a section of the Muslim population in the state. The frustration or disappointment about the 2011 election outcome triggered violence.

In the month of November, 2002 there was another ugly and unfortunate violent crisis in Kaduna as a result of the proposed miss World beauty pageant due to be held in Nigeria. The trigger of the “miss world riots” was an article published by *ThisDay* newspaper which was perceived as very offensive to some Muslims. A good number of Muslims attacked Christians and Christians retaliated. Both groups went on rampage. (Human Rights Watch, 2003). Innocent people died and properties worth millions of Naira were destroyed because of an article that has nothing to do with Kaduna State.

Birnin Gwari Local Government is currently a hot belt for armed banditry, kidnappings for ransom, intimidation and theft. The complex webs of criminality in the area also include killings and cattle rustling. Statistics generated from the West Africa Network for Peace building (WANEP) National Early Warning System (NEWS) from 1st to 25th May, 2018, put the figures of fatality arising from attacks by armed bandits in Birnin Gwari LGA at 84. These criminal activities are thriving due to the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons with Birnin Gwari forest serving as hideout for the bandits. Hundreds of people were kidnapped on highways and many villages in Birnin Gwari. (WANEP, 2018). Amnesty International (2020) reported thus:

On 6 August at least 22 people were reportedly killed when gunmen suspected to be herders attacked four communities in ZngonKataf Local Government Area of the state. At least 16 people were killed in Kukum-Daji on 19 July 2020, in an attack that lasted five minutes, when attackers shot sporadically at villagers,

This paper can never exhaust all incidences of violence in the state. However, a new dimension of crisis in the state is clashes between Fulani herders and farmers in various locations across the state especially Southern Kaduna. Virtually all the local governments in Southern Kaduna experienced several attacks in various locations coupled with kidnappings. In a press conference on 18th January 2021, the President of Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) Mr. Jonathan Asake read SOKAPU’s position in part, thus:

As I address you today, no fewer than 143 communities across our local government areas in Southern Kaduna have been completely displaced, with over 160,000 persons, mostly women and children, now living under very harsh and dehumanizing conditions devoid of food, medication and other necessities of life…From reports of kidnappings available to us and amount of money paid in ransom, our poor, vulnerable and defenseless people in Southern Kaduna have had to cough out over N900 million from January to December 2020 in ransom to these heartless criminals. (Shiklam, 2021)

In a statement from the Chairman of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) Kaduna state chapter, HarunaTugga lamented that their people have been slaughtered in many parts of Zango Kataf and Kaura local government areas. According to MACBAN “A total of 14 Fulani settlements have been invaded and 84 persons killed in Zangon Kataf local government area”. (Isine, 2020).Currently, the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons across Kaduna State and other states in Nigeria is gaining momentum by the day. The availability of such weapons makes attacks more lethal.

Amnesty International documented an escalation in abductions and attacks in several North West and North Central states of Nigeria since the month of January 2020. “Worst affected are the villages of the south of Kaduna State, where armed men killed at least 366 people in multiple attacks between January and July 2020”. (Isine, 2020) some of the reasons for the attacks are imbedded in statements released to the Press by some Fulani leaders. The National President of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, Alhaji Bello Abdullahi Bodejo said in an interview thus:

Fulani can’t value 100 people’s lives like he can value his one cow because since he was born, he doesn’t have any business except that cow. The cow is like his own brothers and sisters. If anything happens to his cow, do you think he can leave you?...we are cow lovers that is why sometimes if you kill their cows somewhere, they go there to look for Justice, because they see like somebody has killed their brothers; they must go to see who did that and they won’t leave that person. (National Pivot, 2021)

**Islamic Movement clash with the Nigerian Army**

Notably, at the core of the rise of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) as a Shiite movement is Sheikh Ibraheem El-zakzaky who played a key role in Islamic radicalization in Nigeria, starting from his activities in the Muslim Students’ Society during his school days at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. El-zakzaky has been described as a famous preacher and a strong critic of the government-a veteran protester and mobiliser. (Falola, T. 1999)

Zaria, Kaduna State is the home of Sheikh El-Zakzaky, the leader of the Islamic Shiite sect. The Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) also known as Shiites had a serious clash with men of the Nigerian Army in December 2015. According to a press statement issued by Colonel Sani Kukasheka Usman, Acting Director, Army Public Relations:

The Shiite sect, on the orders of their leader, Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, today afternoon, in Zaria attacked the convoy of the Chief of Army Staff, while on his way to pay homage to the Emir of Zazzau and attend the passing out parade of 73 Regular Recruits Intake of Depot Nigerian Army, Zaria. The sect members numbering hundreds and carrying dangerous weapons barricaded the roads with bonfires, heavy stones and tyres. They refused all entrieties to disperse and then started firing and pelting the convoy with dangerous objects. The barricade was obviously a deliberate attempt to assassinate the Chief of Army Staff and members of his entourage… (Eribake, 2015)

The spokesperson of IMN, Ibrahim Musa who is also the Shiites editor of their publication described the claim by the Military as a blatant lie. Musa, in an interview with Press TV gave IMN’s angle of the problem, thus:

The story line they (the Army) try to dish out to the public is a blatant lie. We have never stopped anybody from passing along Sabon Gari road. This is not the first time we have been hoisting the flag of Husainiyyah, the Shiite temple… so there is no point saying we have been trying to assassinate the COAS. What we believe is that an orchestrated plan by the government of Muhammadu Buhari to attack the Shiite community.(Amzat and Akhaine)

 IMN stated that following the brutal attack on her members by the Nigerian Army where scores have been killed. El-Zakzaky was shot and arrested by the Army alongside his wife. The sect alleged that about a thousand of her members were massacred and hundreds of others severely injured by the rampaging Army.(Umoru, H. 2015) Media reports has it that 3 of El-Zakzaky’s sons and dozens of his members were killed during a similar attack by the military in July, 2014, while protesting in solidarity with the Palestinians who were being bombarded by Israel in Gaza, the IMN developed resentment against the Nigerian Army. (Amzat and Akhaine, 2015)

 The Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Zaria bloody clashes gave the following recommendations:

1. The state and its law enforcement agencies should investigate all persons allegedly breaking the law even when such persons belong to powerful religious groups. All those found to have engaged in illegal activities must be persecuted and if found to be guilty punished appropriately.
2. The IMN is notorious for engaging in hate and dangerous speech that provoke other Muslims. The National Assembly should initiate the establishment of a law against hate speech and once enacted the law should be enforced.
3. Ecumenical groups in Nigeria, the JNI and CAN in particular should be all-inclusive and resist the temptation of excluding those they disagree with. They should prioritise the culture of civility and tolerance in their relationships.
4. Intelligence agencies should improve their capacity to study and follow the activities of all groups likely to engage in acts of violence or the destabilization of constituted authorities in Nigeria.
5. Nigeria needs to invest more in the education of its youth, expanding employment opportunities and reducing the level of poverty affecting citizens.
6. The Cordon and Search Operation should have been based strictly on the rules of engagement in order to reduce the number of casualties. The force used by the Nigerian Army resulting in the death of 349 IMN members was disproportionate (JUDCOM, 2016).

**Path to Peace**

In an attempt to bring lasting peace in Kaduna State, several efforts were put in place by both government and individuals geared towards conflict resolution through peace building instead of violence. The government of Kaduna State under the leadership of Mallam Nasir El-Rufai inaugurated the Kaduna State Peace Commission in a bid to curb the incessant killings especially Southern Kaduna. The Worldwide Secretary -General of the Anglican Communion, Most Rev. Dr. Josiah Idowu-Fearon was appointed the Chairman of the Commission. Godwin (2017) quoted part of Mallam Nasir El-Rufai’s speech during the inauguration of the Peace Commission, thus:

We owe it to the victims to say never again, to try to try to establish mechanisms to proactively manage grievances and to insist that impunity shall have no place, that all persons and communities must employ only peaceful means to resolve differences… today is another significant step in our march towards rejecting the legacy of violent conflict that has marred our state for almost four decades. As strife tore apart the harmony that had made our state such a magnet for every Nigerian, the Commissions of inquiry and committees established to study each instance of conflict began to recommend the setting up of a peace commission. Today we answer these earnest pleas by inaugurating the peace commission.

The Atyap Chiefdom organized a peace meeting between the Atyap and Fulanis on 20th August, 2020 which was co-chaired by AVM Aboi Ishaya Shekari and Dr. Salim Musa Umar in order to ensure reconciliation and peace in Atyap Chiefdom. Long term stability is determined by how people choose to live. Bloodshed is not the way to go. (Aodu 2020)

In a quest to bring lasting peace in Jema’a Local Government Area, the Executive Chairman Local Government, Mr. Peter Danjuma Averik organized a one-day peace summit tagged: ‘Stakeholders Forum on Community Peace Action and Sustainable Development’ which took place on 17th December, 2020 in Kafanchan. The Peace Summit was organized in partnership with the Nigerian Early Recovery Initiative (NERI) component of the United State Agency for International Development (USAID) and Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) the summit brought together more than 250 community actors across all the social divides and the six traditional institutions in the Local Government Area. Regular engagement or dialogue gives room for people to express their grievances on a round table which quenches the raging inferno erupting as a result of misunderstanding and mutual suspicion.

Sheikh Ahmad Abubakar Mahmud Gumi in January 2021 embarked on a dangerous mission into the forests to preach and listen to the grievances of the bandits.

Leading a group of fellow Muslim Clerics, other relevant persons and law enforcement agents, Gumi intrepidly forayed into the bushes in the Central and Southern Senatorial Districts of Kaduna State, meeting communities of Fulani herdsmen allegedly breeding the main population of kidnappers and bandits terrorizing te terrain. So far, the Cleric has been able to secure the ‘repentance’ of hundreds of some alleged kidnappers and bandits, who instantly promised to lay down arms and abstain from the crimes. (Abubakar, 2021)

Sheikh Gumi’s peace mission in Sabon Gari Yadi in Giwa Local Government of Kaduna State is commendable. The location of the bush where the armed Fulanis freely preferred to converge and listen to the Cleric is about 30 kilometres from Giwa and 60 kilometres from Zaria. Over 500 armed Fulanis and 25 of their top commanders were present, including the Kaduna State Police Commissioner, Umar Muri. (Maryamu, 2021) the peace building missions are a clear indication of the existence of a problem that needs carrot approach and not only stick approach.

**Conclusion**

It is senseless for people to keep killing one another for years when dialogue, sincere apologies and forgiveness should have taken centre stage for a lasting peace. The high rate of arms proliferation is a potent danger to Kaduna state and the nation at large. In a situation where no particular ethnic or religious group has complete monopoly of pilling arms and ammunitions, it is clear that even our security personnel will have herculean task in disarming non-state actors who possess all kinds of weapons.

For a state to exist, some level of coercion is necessary. The Police, the Army and Prisons are there to provide the necessary force to keep the society intact. (Yohanna, 2006). Deviant members of the society who pick up arms against state actors should be prosecuted. The legitimate instrumentality of coercion by state actors should be used to whip deviants into line. Failure to do so is an invitation for further anarchy. Failure to punish offenders is an open invitation for more people to toe the line of misdemeanor. It is disgusting to note that both Christians and Muslims senselessly kill themselves in the state for decades as if it is a road map for development. Even if it were, development is elusive in the state, hence, the need to stop the barbaric killings and toe the path of civilized communal living devoid of jungle justice.

The availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons especially in the hands of non state actors has further emboldened criminal elements who wreck havoc in the state with the ease of a knife on butter. The violence has currently taken another dimension where school children and other members of the public are kidnapped and ransom paid before victims are released. On 11th March, 2021 College of forestry, Afaka in Igabi local government was attacked and 39 students were abducted by bandits, though later released. On 20th April, 2021 more than 19 students and two staff of Greenfield University located in Chikun local government of Kaduna State were kidnapped by bandits where a ransom of N800 million was demanded. 3 students were later killed which prompted the payment of ransom by the parents of the remaining students before they were released.

121 students of Bethel Baptist School in Chikun local government of Kaduna state were kidnapped on 5th July, 2021. 90 students were released and 31 are still in captivity as at 29th August, 2021. Shamefully, the bandits sneaked into the famous Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) located in the city of Kaduna on Tuesday, 24th August, 2021 where two officers were killed and another kidnapped. (www.vanguardngr.com) this shows the potent danger posed by the availability and usage of arms by non state actors in Kaduna State.

**Recommendations**

The glaring devastating effects of proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Kaduna state in particular are worrisome. The incessant ethnic, religious and political crises in Kaduna state is an indication of a deeply rooted animosity and bifurcation. The following recommendations are aimed at proffering solutions:

1. There should be thorough checks especially in areas sharing boundaries with other states in order to curtail the influx of arms into Kaduna state.
2. Government should implement Judicial Commission of Inquiry recommendations on time in order to address the issues at hand.
3. There should be intelligence gathering to track down arms black markets and their merchants.
4. If government does not have the capacity to Police the entire state, the local vigilante operatives should be given proper orientation and enabling law to act in collaboration with the relevant security personnel.
5. Marginalization of people or injustice meted on people based on their religion or ethnicity should be stopped. Marginalization can trigger violent conflict.
6. Hate speech should be accompanied with severe penalties in order to stop the spread of hatred and mutual suspicion.
7. The settlement pattern depicting ‘we’ versus ‘them’ in religious or ethnic lines should be promptly discouraged.
8. There should be equitable development in the state. The Southern part of the state is least developed due to government negligence. Politics of inclusion should be replaced with politics of inclusion across the state.
9. Religious leaders should desist from misinforming their followers. Religious institutions or places of worship should not be a breeding ground for hatred against one another.
10. Government should swiftly respond to quell violence by arresting and prosecuting the perpetrators in order to serve as deterrent to others. Weak action by government gives room for reprisal attacks.
11. Herders should acquire land and ranch their animals to avoid destroying people’s farmlands and crops. Grazing at night and sending kids to rear animals is a big problem that has to be stopped. Farmers should not farm on cattle routes. No one should take laws into his hands for any offence committed.
12. Peace committee comprising both Christians and Muslims should be set up in every community to foster dialogue and resolve differences without violence.
13. A robust disarmament policy should be put in place to ensure that proliferation of SALW are curtailed or stopped.
14. The fight against corruption should be intensified without political or religious bias. Corruption is a monster that breeds crisis in Nigeria and has to be frontally addressed.

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