

STRATEGIES USED IN CURBING ILLICIT SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION WITH THE VIEW TO ENHANCING HUMAN SECURITY IN WEST POKOT COUNTY OF KENYA

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Abstract: Global trade in small arms is huge, its value is estimated to exceed US dollars 335 million and it involves government companies, and individuals from around the world. Therefore, it is widely recognized that the proliferation of illicit firearms in West Pokot county of Kenya has contributed to a bigger percentage of negative effects of intensified conflict and underdevelopment in the region. The specific objectives of the study were to: examine the nature and causes of illicit small arms proliferation in West Pokot; Assess the extent to which illicit small arms proliferation has affected enhancement of community security in West Pokot County; Evaluate the strategies to be used in curbing illicit small arms proliferation in West Pokot County with the view to enhancing community Security in West Pokot County; Curbing illegal trade in arms and other light weapons, and hopefully eradicating the growing gun culture in West Pokot County and in other parts of the country. This study was guided by the Realist theory of International Politics and the Critical security theory and Anarchism. Study design was across sectional survey buttressed with mixed methods that took care of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It was clear that there was rampant proliferation of illicit small weapons that largely led to human rights violation, armed crime and insecurity in these areas. A good number of the respondents further indicated that these small arms led to underdevelopment in west Pokot. It was found out that cattle rustling, which is common in West Pokot, is usually instigated by the increase of these weapons. The government of Kenya needs to ensure that the porous borders between communities living in the northern Kenya are well manned.

Keywords: Global trade, small arms proliferation, government companies, West Pokot County.

1. INTRODUCTION

Small Arms are a major international concern. They seriously threaten governing processes of states. Because of the magnitude of their seriousness, they have been discussed in many international fora on security and governance. Consequently, during the United Nations Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNC-SALW) held in New York on 9th — 20th July 2001, a permanent committee by the international community about control of small arms was constituted Weapons [1].

Further, the Nairobi Declaration on Small Arms (NDOSA) held in Nairobi on 15th March 2000 made a noble effort in laying down the basis of formulating a regional integrated approach to management and control of Small Arms. However, despite all these efforts, the on-going civil turmoil in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions is immensely contributing to the rise in the number of Small Arms in the Kenyan market. During the cold war and the struggle for

independence, warring camps contributed a lot to the traffic of these arms to government, groups and persons sponsored to fight and advance these camps' cold war interests. Once these weapons were given out to such recipients, control of such weapons immediately became not -only difficult but also totally impossible, as they were also being deployed for other purposes after the original objective was accomplished [2].

Similarly, the abortive attempts by the Kenyan Somali to join the quest for the greater Somali in what was then referred to as "*Shifta*" skirmishes of 1967, created the first serious market traffic of illicit firearms in the country. But to make it worse, after these skirmishes ended, no serious disarmament was carried out by the Kenyan Government to get rid of these illicit weapons 3.

Continued perennial political instability in countries surrounding Kenya adversely and immensely contributed to small arms proliferation in Kenya. These included General Said Barre's Somali, Col. Mengistu Haile Meriam's Ethiopia, General Jaffar Numery's Sudan and Field Marshall Idi Amin Dada's Uganda. The Kenyan Government also tried at one time to arm communities with a view of assisting them to protect themselves against cattle rustlers from the neighbouring countries. These included the Pokot, Turkana, Samburu and Borana. But the problem was that as soon as these weapons landed into the hands of these communities, the government became totally unable to disarm them, thus exacerbating an increase in illicit Small Arms traffic and use of the same for armed terrorism and other forms of violence and anarchy in the region [3].

2. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE NATURE OF ILLICIT SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION

Weapons or arms can be classified into small, light, big and heavy. The term light and small are used synonymously. The United Nations on the other hand defines small arms to include: Revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines sub-machine guns below 20mm in calibre. Light weapons include heavy machine guns of 20mm in calibre, portable, anti-aircraft guns, portable antitank rocket system, missile system and mortars of less than 100mm ammunition and explosive devices used for the above weapons [4].

It is estimated that there are more than 639 million small arms and light weapons in circulation around the world. More than 1000 companies are involved in the production of small arms, and at least 98 countries have the capacity to produce such weapons and ammunition for them. The global trade in small arms is huge, its value is estimated to exceed US dollars 335 million and it involves government companies, and individuals from around the world [5].

Since the end of the Cold War, increasing international attention has been focused on problems arising from the worldwide proliferation of small arms and light weapons. This is so because these weapons have been the primary tool of violence in the many ethnic and internal conflicts that have erupted in recent years. Small arms and light weapons have been responsible for many of the combat deaths in recent wars and figure in much of the crime and civil violence visited upon vulnerable societies around the world. ("Small arms" refers to hand-held weapons like assault rifles, carbines, pistols, and submachine guns; "light weapons" refers to easily portable crew-served weapons like heavy machine guns, bazookas, and light mortars [5].

Mike Crawley writes that it is also acknowledged that the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, have a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic effects and pose a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels [6].

BBC Monitoring, observes that conflicts in the horn of Africa are rampant and that at the core of this and other conflicts is the availability and proliferation of SALW as tools of violence. The effects and impact of these arms have been manifest in high levels of death, injury, social dislocation and economic destruction. The increasing availability of weapons has helped drive rising insecurity and crime in Kenya, where guns are commonly used to commit a range of violent acts. There are reportedly large numbers of illegal guns in the capital, and high levels of armed crime fuel a high demand for firearms licenses across the country [7].

The menace of illicit small arms in Uganda where the government has been fighting with the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) since 1989 [8].

State Department in mid-2001 quoted Kenya's country's top firearms licensing officer as stating that "seventy-five percent of the country is awash with "illicit arms" and itself declared that arms proliferation in Kenya had reached crisis proportions, [9].

The widespread use of small arms and light weapons is not a new phenomenon. Most of the wars of the 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the widespread use of rifles, carbines, machine guns and other such weapons. But the prevalence of these weapons in contemporary combat appears to be growing. Of the 49-armed conflicts since 1990, all but three relied on small arms and light weapons as the only instrument of war, and only one, the 1991 Persian Gulf War, was dominated by heavy weapons. Modern small arms - especially assault rifles like the Soviet/Russian AK-47 and the U.S.-made M-16 - have played an especially conspicuous role in recent conflicts, accounting for anywhere between 35 and 60 percent of all the deaths and injuries in warfare since 1990 [5].

The fact that small arms have been used in the world for the last five hundred years after gunpowder discovery by china, signifies the spread to western countries and later other parts of the world [10].

The mass shooting in Orlando on Sunday was appalling in scale: 49 killed in a single attack. But it's not unusual for dozens of Americans to be killed by guns in a single day. Gun homicides are a common cause of death in the United States, killing about as many people as car crashes (not counting van, truck, motorcycle or bus accidents). Some cases command our attention more than others, of course. Counting mass shootings that make headlines and the thousands of Americans murdered one or a few at a time, gunshot homicides totalled 8,124 in 2014, according to the F.B.I. This level of violence makes the United States an extreme outlier when measured against the experience of other advanced countries [11].

Around the world, those countries have substantially lower rates of deaths from gun homicide. In Germany, being murdered with a gun is as uncommon as being killed by a falling object in the United States. About two people out of every million are killed in a gun homicide. Gun homicides are just as rare in several other European countries, including the Netherlands and Austria. In the United States, two per million is roughly the death rate for hypothermia or plane crashes. In Poland and England, only about one out of every million people die in gun homicides each year — about as often as an American die in an agricultural accident or falling from a ladder. In Japan, where gun homicides are even rarer, the likelihood of dying this way is about the same as an American's chance of being killed by lightning — roughly one in 10 million [11].

In the United States, the death rate from gun homicides is about 31 per million people the equivalent of 27 people shot dead every day of the year. The homicides include losses from mass shootings, like Sunday's Orlando attack, or the San Bernardino, Calif., shooting last December. And of course, they also include the country's vastly more common single-victim killings [11].

Most of the world's firearms are privately owned. In 2007 the Small Arms Survey estimated that civilians owned some 650 million of the world's firearms, with armed forces owning around 200 million, and 26 million in the hands of law enforcement. With the world's factories delivering millions of newly manufactured firearms annually far outnumbering those being destroyed—civilian ownership is growing in most countries. The highest national rate of civilian firearm ownership is in the United States, with at least 90 firearms per every 100 people [12].

Estimating Civilian Owned Firearms, a new research Note from the Small Arms Survey, provides an overview of how these estimates are reached, and the challenges of gathering information about civilian possession of arms. Differences in national gun culture - each country's unique combination of historic and current sources of supply, laws and attitudes toward firearms ownership - often have distinct effects on the classification, ownership and perception of firearms, and this complicates the calculation of international figures. Given the impossibility of being sure of the total number of all guns, total figures rely on estimation. Country assessments rely on the combination of a range of sources and tools, using as many different methods as possible. These include: gun registration; expert estimates; household surveys; proxy indicators (such as gross domestic product per capita, and firearm suicides); and analogous comparison (i.e. comparison to similar but better-understood countries [13].

2.1 Causes of small arms proliferation from a global perspective:

More than 70 states produce various light weapons and ammunition. Direct sales from weapons manufacturers to foreign governments or private entities are a principal source of supply. Such sales are usually regulated (that is, licensed for export) by national governments. In 1996, for instance, the U.S. State Departments licensed over \$470 million of light military weapons for export. The Commerce Department, which has jurisdiction over industry-direct sales of shotguns

and police equipment, approved an additional \$57 million of exports. While these amounts are small in the context of the overall arms trade (estimated at some \$30 billion annually), at \$100-300 per gun these figures represent enormous quantities of weapons [12].

Another cause of proliferation of small arms was the Cold war-era surplus stocks of light weapons which are proliferated today. In the past few years the U.S. military has given away or sold at discount vast quantities of excess assault rifles, carbines, .45 calibre pistols, machine guns and grenade launchers. Germany, the Netherlands, the former Soviet republics and several Eastern European countries have been unloading surplus guns on the world market [13].

Equally is the covert gun-running by governments to foreign governments or--more often--insurgent groups are a third source of small/light arms proliferation. Such policies are fraught with danger, as evidenced by the disastrous legacy of weapons shipped by the Soviet Union and United States to combatants in Afghanistan, Angola and Central America. These weapons outlived the original purpose for which they were shipped and have since been recycled to other conflicts or to bandits [12].

The black market further is yet another major channel of supply, where private dealers knowingly violate the arms sales laws and policies of the source, transit or recipient state for commercial gain [13].

Notably, there is a thriving global black market in small/light weapons. These arms are particularly attractive to smugglers, as they are cheap, and easily concealed and transported. The secretive nature of arms smuggling makes it impossible to know with any certainty the magnitude of the traffic, but some have estimated that it accounts for as much as half of all light weapons transfers. Human Rights Watch found, for instance, that illegal gunrunning to both sides of the conflict in Burundi has fuelled tensions and made possible the commission of serious human rights abuses [12].

Of critical concern is the fact that licit and illicit traffic in small arms are closely intertwined. Arms that were originally exported legally, but are not properly tracked or secured, often fall into illegal circulation. In 1994, for instance, foreign governments reported 6,238 unlawfully acquired U.S.A Firearms to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF). Over half 3,376 were discovered in Mexico. In 1996, the BATF received approximately 30,000 requests to trace weapons used in crimes [14].

Another cause of proliferation is theft or capture of state security forces arms that are in turn sold for black market supply around the world. In an alarming example, the General Accounting Office reported that U.S. military forces cannot account for 40 "Stinger" shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles shipped to the Middle East during the Persian Gulf War [13].

The domestic U.S. gun market is another principal source of black market guns. For several years, the Mexican government, in particular, has pointed out that drug cartels (and other criminals) get many of their arms north of the border with America [14].

Finally, cold war covert arms supply by the U.S. and Soviet Union, particularly during the 1980s, was a principal source of the light arms in unlawful possession around the world today. The two countries donated huge quantities of rifles, machine guns, mortars and other weapons to insurgents or government allies in Afghanistan, Angola and Nicaragua. Because these weapons were transferred in a secretive and unaccountable manner, they are particularly prone to fall into the black market. Many of these arms remain in active service today, contributing to a legacy of insecurity and violence in Asia, Africa and Central America [13].

A disarmament strategy that could be employed is the projection of Women as Victims and Villains. Women participation can be twofold as "victim-ness" and the villainess. Victims because they face human right abuses which manifests as violence, rape, sex trophies (camp wives) for men in armed conflict and this has been well documented. On the other hand, women are villains where they are directly involved in conflict either as combatants (not in Kenyan scenario), or as supplies of weapons, carriers of information, managers of logistical support (like preparing food, amassing necessary arsenal etc). It will be fool hardy not to comment on the fact that women's role in civilian disarmament must be considerate of the hidden aspects of their contribution, as observed by the Government of Philippines, [15]. This approach has not been considered in Kenya and more so in West Pokot as part of the wider civilian involvement in the process of disarmament. More so, the ensuing literature does not focus on West Pokot and thus the need to contextualise the study of phenomenon.

3. PREVALENCE RATE OF SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION TODAY

When asked a question on prevalence rate of small arms proliferation today, 121 (31.6%) respondents reported averagely high and 36 (9.4%) reported very high, whereas 141 (36.8%) respondents reported very low, and 46 (12%) reported low, 40 (10.3%) did not know of small arms proliferation. These findings are tabulated in the table below as follows:

Table 1: Prevalence rate of small arms proliferation

Prevalence	Frequency	Percent
Very High	36	9.40%
Averagely high	121	31.60%
Low	46	12.00%
Very low	141	36.80%
Do not know	40	10.30%

Source: Field Data, (2017)

An Imam at Ortum reported that since devolution was initiated as a second-tier government, 'high level insecurity in the community had reduced.

The socio-economic preoccupation in the horn of Africa has the highest population of Pastoralists. In terms of acquisition of weapons, they are not regulated. They are largely marginalised by the centralizing state. They are further compounded by environmental scarcity which are territorial scarcity, resource scarcity and population density. In countries like Sudan, Congo and Somalia marginalised groups use violence to capture rich natural resources like Oil, Diamond, Timber etc and this in effect causes small arms proliferation [16].

The issue of refugees being politically militarised owing to what they ran away from and while in host counties, there is a possibility of them becoming militarised to continue with the agenda in their home countries. In the horn of Africa among countries like Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, have been both producers and hosts of refugees. This has had a tremendous effect on arms proliferation, weighs in by attacking regional and sub-regional arrangements like ECOWAS, SADC, AU which lack capacity and limit their operations of demobilizations to armed warring groups and a typical case is South Sudan and Somalia. The net effect of this is arms proliferated to individuals who are not accountable to the state for owning such weapons. Therefore, capacity building for peace keepers on the continent can help towards demobilization and disarmament programs urgently needed in some African countries [17].

3.1. Statement of the Problem:

West Pokot county that is awash with small arms reminiscent to some towns in Somalia. The magnitude of the problem of small arms proliferation was not felt even when it occurred in a greater scale as "Shifta" skirmishes in Northern Kenya within the cattle rustling communities and pastoralists. It was regarded as "Cultural issue where inter-clan conflict occurred which however did not affect security of other parts of the country" [18]. It is estimated that there are over 30 million small arms in Sub-Saharan Africa. Over 5 million of these are in possession of the pastoralists in the Horn of Africa alone. In Kenya there are about 140,000 small arms [18]. These weapons are cheap, portable high tech, durable, easily obtained, need the minimal maintenance and require little training. It is widely acknowledged and recognized that the proliferation of illegal firearms in pastoralist areas has contributed to intensified conflict that has led to under-development in north rift [18]. Apart from the NGO sources, indeed scholars have not adequately addressed the problem of small arms proliferation in West Pokot County.

Furthermore, pastoralists own small arms and usually view them as working tools to protect their properties, water points and their herds. For many years, people living in West Pokot has been taking care of their own security. Over the years, the Government of Kenya as responded to such security issues by giving general amnesty to surrender the illicit small arms to the security organs, but the problem persists. Uncontrolled access and misuse of small arms have exacerbated armed conflict. Because of these, many lives have been lost, people have been disabled and denied opportunity to develop and earn quality life. Therefore, this study intended to evaluate the nature, causes, effects and strategies in the phenomenon of illicit small arms proliferation in West Pokot County of Kenya.

3.2 Research Design:

The design applied in this study involved a cross sectional survey and mixed method research designs that took care of both qualitative and quantitative approaches [19]. Mixed methods design gave the researcher latitude and flexibility to use both qualitative data and quantitative data harmoniously.

3.3 Study Population:

This study targeted residents of West Pokot, county who number 512,690 [20]. Total population with characteristics required for this research therefore is 512,690. Out of this a sample size was be drawn. They were mainly pastoralists and small arms are widely available to them.

3.4 Sample Size:

Propositions from [21] would suffice for sample determination using the following scientific formula:

$$N = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

d² standard deviation

In the case where the study population with similar experience if more than 10,000 and the desired accuracy is sought at 0.05 levels, the Z statistics is 1.96

Thus, the sample size is calculated as stated below using the formula:

$$N = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where:

- n= Desired sample size (If the population is >10,000)
- P= The proportion of the target population assumed to have the desired characteristics estimated as 50% because this proportion gives the maximum sample size.
- z Standard normal deviation which is 1.96 at 95 % level of confidence.
- Q 1 - p = 1 - 0.5 = 0.5
- D Degree of accuracy desired is 0.05 (Fischer *et al.*, 1998)

$$= \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2} = 384 \text{ citizens}$$

Therefore, the Sample distribution is as follows:

NGO workers 50, Administration officers (Deputy county commissioners, Assistant county commissioners, Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs) 50, teachers 50, health 50, the police 54, Civilians from various Clans 100, pastors, Imams/ Sheikhs 30.

What should the Government of Kenya do to improve security in this region?

81 (21.2%) respondents reported improve livelihood options as the first priority to improve security in the region, 78 (20.3%) respondents reported Build more police stations to improve security in the region, and 65 (16.9%) stated increase no of policemen to improve security in the region 52 (13.6%) reported Enlist/hire more KPR. 20 (5.1%) respondents reported improved water provision to enhance security in the region, 16 (4.2%) respondents reported building more roads to improve security in the region, and 10 (2.5%) stated increase no of schools to improve security in the region.

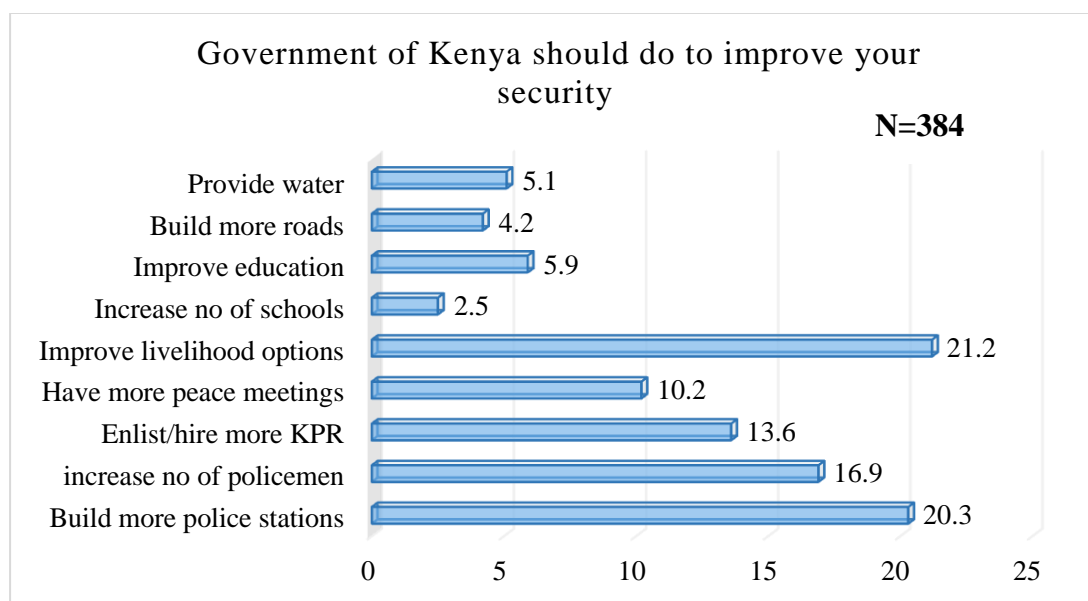


Fig 1: What GoK should do to improve security.

Source: Field Data, (2017)

Voices from the administration came in as follows:

Peace can be transformed within the neighbouring communities.

We can maintain peace and order within our community to reduce crime cases with more police reservists.

Both National and County Governments should emphasize intensive agriculture so that alternative livelihood can be offered to armed people for them to perhaps transform to peaceful co-existence.

Above findings corroborate [22], whose work on illicit small arms and human security in Mumias District, recommended that local regional and world leaders should put in place systems that will permanently check the spread and use of illicit small arms and that it should be a capital offence that attracts no bail, and that more police officers should be recruited to disarm those who own such weapons.

In tandem is also Mburu [23], whose work on civilian disarmament in Kenya is traced back to pre-colonial times in 1920 when operation tennis was carried out in the Turkana region of Kenya. In the early years of 1910s, the present Turkana region had been occupied by armed private armies of between 600 and one thousand fighters, and therefore the British had to find a way of pacifying Karamoja and Turkana region to claim full administrative control of the protectorate Kenya. In this process the operation Tennis took place for Britain to exert its presence and influence in the region. Though this initiative failed for lack of proper coordination and the evasive nature of the pastoralist communities who would relocate to the mountainous ranges for protection from British colonial patrols.

On what government has done before, [24], goes further to explain other disarmament process undertaken in Kenya in colonial times specifically mentioning the order of 1942 whose objective was to disarm the locals, through economic blockade in the Omo region disallowing grazing on specific pieces of land that primarily would have sustained livestock not unless the community parted with certain numbers of rifles. During these times, again in 1950, the government cordoned the Kolowa region of Eastern Baringo to find arms. This cordon and search operation resulted into many deaths and displacement, which saw survivors exile in Losiro in Uganda. Finally, during the colonial times there was there was the operation Jock Stock that aimed at countering the insurgency by the Mau Mau in 1952.

That in post-colonial period various disarmament programs had been executed including, the Shifta war (1968- 1973), the Bulla Karatasi massacre, the Garse, Derakali, Dandu and Takaba operation and the tragic Wagalla massacre. In 2008 the government went ahead to execute a disarmament program under the titles of operation Okoa Maisha and Operation Chunga Mpaka in Mandera and Mount Elgon respectively. Civilian disarmament initiatives taken over the years in areas that conflicts have been rife with a view of collecting arms illicitly held by civilians in the sense of the law. In most of the

occasions, the government efforts have been limited, or failed to achieve the intended targets due to the big brother approach, which most communities reject as it represents the flipside of government's failure to deliver necessary services to the poor [25].

Attempts by government to disarm pastoralists and this was Operation Dumisha Amani (ODA), which is Kiswahili for uphold or sustain peace in Kenya. ODA was a government disarmament program amongst civilians in conflict, in the northern parts of Kenya, where majority the inhabitants are pastoralists. This was done in two stages, ODA 1, executed in 2005 following vicious and cruel inter-ethnic clashes in the North Rift and Upper Eastern regions of Kenya. ODA 1 had both short and long-term objectives as follows: Stabilization of the regions and returning them to normalcy; Facilitating and supervising return of communities to their traditional areas of residence or settlement; Surrender and recovery of illegal arms and ammunitions; Opening of administrative units of chiefs and Administration Police camps; Construction of roads and branding of livestock. On a second level, ODA 1 short term objective included provision of alternative livelihoods, change of values, attitudes among local communities and development with integration of the region to the rest of the country. However, it must be noted that ODA 1 failed partly due to the inability of the implementors mostly police and security agencies to win the hearts, trust and of the local communities involved in the conflict [24].

That ODA 2 was a lesson from ODA 1, since ownership of the process by local communities being the main stakeholders at this level had become a more important strategy than the force and might of the law enforcement agencies. According to her, In ODA 1 emphasis was placed on voluntary arms surrender, development initiatives and coercive disarmament with a view of mopping up small arms and light weapons while eliminating inspirations for arms acquisition. That with this background, ODA 2 changed tact by undertaking an inclusive approach hence recruited the support of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), region-wide inter-governmental agencies, local political leaders, the private sector, mass media and the local communities, purposely to observe and uphold human rights in the process. Despite these efforts disarmament operations have not succeeded [26].

Reading discussions and conclusions [24], [23], show that the trajectory of success indicates that if success was defined under the banner of how much arms were to be collected, it fails the test of objectivity.

However, that if the same conclusions were to be placed on the scale of reduced efforts of direct conflicts, viz-a-viz revenge attacks then the ODA I and ODA 2, scored a short-lived triumph. Such triumph may not necessarily mean that the success was because of reduced number of weapons, but a knee jack reaction to the fears instilled by the presence of gun-boot diplomacy, where claims of torture and coerced confessions were cited. In this context, according to 24 confirms that disarmament faced many challenges which policy makers must embrace to generate viable solutions.

That Kenya has repeatedly used temporary gun amnesties to encourage citizens to turn in illegal weapons in exchange for a guarantee they will not face prosecution. These initiatives have registered little success, as they do not address the insecurity and other problems underlying the demand for weapons [27].

Trans Border Conflict between the Turkana and the Pokots, finds that interventions by non-state actors i.e. NGOs, CBOs, on the grim security situation in pastoralist areas of Turkana South which borders West Pokot, attracted many stakeholders who have been seeking to respond to the menace caused by small weapon. The Catholic Church (Catholic Peace and Justice (CJPC)) stands out as the main intervener in the whole county. It is credited for establishing and running almost all the primary and secondary schools except for the public ones. The church constructs and equips schools, classrooms, supports students through bursaries and scholarships to successful pastoralist children, has relief feeding programme in 199 both mobile and ordinary schools, and runs several vocational training centres in many parts of the county. The CJPC is also involved in grassroots peace building efforts through mediation and facilitates CBOs that are engaged in similar efforts [28].

Further Catholic Church has also set up medical services (clinics) in the rural areas as common services upon which shared interests and thus peaceful co-existence can be found. Oxfam, a leading humanitarian agency, establishes local structures that link the village (Adakar) to the National level. The goal is to ensure that targeted groups can interact with the government systems and benefit from policies being implemented. Oxfam also funds local CBOs to facilitate peace building and reconciliation processes. It has also a water conservation project where rain water pans have been constructed along the border with Uganda. The impact has been reduced conflicts as the Turkana do not need to move across the border for water. The project is also said to contribute to livestock health since their movement is reduced as they use the abundant pasture near the border. She observes that the main CBO in Turkana is Riam, which doubles up as the County Peace and Development Committee [28].

Through Oxfam and other donors, the Riam has conducted several peace building initiatives including cross-border dialogues that have seen conflicts reduce. Their goal is to encourage community's participation in projects that are beneficial to them and serve to build confidence and trust among communities. The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) is a Netherlands based international development organization that provides advisory services to government and local organizations in the developing countries. It runs veterinary services including livestock extension services within the Turkana community. The government initiated Arid Lands Project runs three programs: Drought monitoring and Natural Resource Management, Community Driven Development and Support to Local Development. The provision of Water is one of the major undertakings of the project and this has gone a long way in helping during the dry spells, [28].

Further, findings in this chapter corroborates the [29] findings on Kenya, where the government has since 2000 publicly and prominently recognized the need to stem proliferation of small arms, a weapons scourge that causes most devastation in in the country. Drawing on growing international attention to the spread of small arms and light weapons, particularly in the lead-up to the first-ever U.N. conference on illicit trafficking in such weapons, held in July 2001, Kenya has taken an active role to promote initiatives to stem small arms proliferation at national, sub-regional, and regional levels; to support calls for international action; and to request international assistance for small arms initiatives in poor countries. While not sufficient, these steps do mark real progress in acknowledging the problem and suggest that the government is willing to take some steps to rein in.

That Kenya took the initiative to convene in March 2000, a ministerial-level government conference on small arms in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes sub-region. The conference resulted in the Nairobi Declaration, in which ten governments pledged to work together to implement a coordinated regional action plan to stem the proliferation of small arms. They agreed to improve information-sharing and to harmonize national legislation, giving attention to legal controls over the possession and transfer of weapons and the need to improve the institutional capacity of law enforcement bodies. They also called for international support to help them implement agreed measures and designated Kenya to coordinate follow-through. The Nairobi Declaration also recognized (in introductory language) many of the dangers posed by small arms proliferation and acknowledged the need for governments to dedicate themselves to addressing the root causes of demand by reducing poverty, enhancing good governance, observing human rights, and promoting democracy. Consistent with the position of the Kenyan government, it placed great emphasis on the responsibility of external arms suppliers to rein in the illegal arms trade [30].

The Nairobi conference subsequent meetings resulted in the adoption of a regional plan of action and contributed significantly to the adoption of a common African position on the problem of small arms proliferation, known as the Bamako Declaration, for consideration at the 2001 U.N. conference, [31]. While the weak international plan of action adopted by consensus at the U.N. conference was a disappointment to African and European governments that had called for vigorous international action to control small arms flows, they vowed to continue to work to limit the spread of these weapons and alleviate their humanitarian consequences, [32].

4. CONCLUSIONS

It was clear that there was rampant proliferation of these weapons as most of the respondents ascertained that abundance of the arms largely led to human rights violation, armed crime and insecurity in these areas. A good number of the respondents further indicated that these small arms led to underdevelopment in west Pokot. The increase of these weapons in the region has led to loss of property and has seen the increase in theft cases in these areas. It was found out that cattle rustling, which is common in the West Pokot, is usually instigated by the increase of these weapons as they (the small arms) have led to an increase in murder cases/mass killings in the area.

It was, further, found out that geographical positions of these areas, politics, social-cultural and economic factors were the main factors influencing the proliferation of small arms. This was also because of the locals needed to protect their properties such as land, animals and other resources. The porous borders of these communities and the neighbouring countries contributed immensely to the availability of the small arms in the region. Regarding the sources of these weapons, it was said that most of them were sold by the local people. Others were got from war torn neighbours such as South Sudan and Ethiopia.

Overall, the nature of illicit small arms percolated from Uganda, South Sudan and a few from Somalia and this were used for banditry, cattle rustling, raids and protection of livestock. Government Interventions have not need to be more robust by improving livelihoods, increase policemen and police reservists, diversify livelihoods and improve education.

The government of Kenya needs to ensure that the porous borders between communities living in the northern Kenya are manned to avoid smuggling of the illegal fire arms from Uganda and South Sudan and embark on a serious disarmament programme to recover these weapons. By so doing, it will be hard for the bandits and Cattle rustlers to access and raid the communities of their livestock and therefore the menace of cattle rustling that makes, or sometimes coerces people to have the guns will be over. The government through the local leadership should further embark on awareness creation on the importance of peaceful co-existence amongst communities. This can also be made possible by initiating peace programmes and campaigns in the prone areas in Africa. Moreover, traditional leaders from different communities in Northern part of Kenya should take part in peace processes and reconciliations.

Secondly, to address the crimes committed by illicit gun wielders, the government ought to empower people in these communities through formal education an Civic education about reproduction rights, right to life, education and other general rights rights and how the government can be able to work with the people of West Pokot to foster and Protect those rights.

On the last objective, apart from adopt other income generating activities other than pastoralism and livestock keeping, more police officers especially from the Anti-Stock theft department to be deployed in these areas to curb the menace of cattle rustling which is rampant in the region. Moreover, security needs to be beefed up in these areas to avert the many forms of crimes such as theft, rape, murder and other social injustices. On civilian armament and community perspectives, first community members never define gun ownership as crime but as a protective gadget. According to most interviewees owning a gun was a moral representation of the capacity of one to protect and prevent their own from falling unnecessary attacks by other communities. Secondly it was a demonstration that mainstream security provisions were short of the expectations within affected communities. Lastly an emerging civilian force of communities driven by one purpose, held together by the virtues of their culture and organized under the “theme of divided we fall united we stand,” a framework engrafted in law. Therefore, this study revealed that where the government hand falls short, other powers emerge and take centre stage to fill the vacuum left by the legal power holders or service providers, as such thus leading to formalization of group identities in regarding the protection of community assets from any form of aggression.

These assumptions, made arm ownership an act of patriotism to the respective community rather than a criminal offense as defined by the government. In this regard therefore, the study recommends that disarmament programs must not be reactive but be formulated within a progressive framework which can be made part and parcel of the community’s way of life so long as gun owners can be accountable for bullets used.

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