

**EFFECTS OF PROLIFERATION  
OF SMALL ARMS IN  
SUB-SAHARA AFRICA**

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**EFFECTS OF PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has had (and continues to have) devastating consequences in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lake Regions. Belligerents in the conflict areas, for example, Somali, Sudan and parts of northern Uganda, use the small arms and light weapons as the primary tools of violence, causing deaths and injuring thousands of people, among them innocent civilians. In Sub-Saharan African countries experiencing violent conflicts, the availability of SALW escalates insecurity and duration of violence. The impact of insecurity and other problems attributed to SALW are also manifested in the neighboring peaceful countries within the region.

Proliferation of SALW impact negatively on the economic development of the Sub-Saharan African and the Lake Region countries as high levels of insecurity continue to deter economic development sustenance initiatives and cause increased military spending, which divert state resources from critical areas.

In my SRP, I intend to highlight and analyze the issue of proliferation of SALW and its effects in the Horn of Africa and the Lake Region, and make recommendations to address this problem.



## EFFECTS OF PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA

Proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has had and continues to have devastating consequences not only in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lake Regions, but in the entire Sub-Saharan Africa and many other parts of the world. Illicit trafficking of SALW is prevalent in the Sub-Saharan Africa where achievement of stability and peace remain illusive and a far fetched reality to most African countries. Continued conflicts throughout the region over the past two decades have contributed to the ever increasing requirement for the small arms and light weapons as the primary tools of violence, causing deaths and injuring thousands of people, among them innocent civilians. The wake of insecurity in the region continues to threaten democracy and stability thereby impacting negatively on trade and economic growth. In spite of the endowment with many natural resources, the region has some of the poorest nations of the world. Poor governance and insecurity, coupled with corruption, has also contributed to inability of the countries concerned to deter the trading and spread of weapons in the region. Premised on this reality, most countries, however, have acknowledged the need for initiatives and policies to arrest the problem of Proliferation of SALW and its negative drawback on the economic development in the Sub-Saharan Africa and the Great Lake Region countries. But even with efforts through regional trading blocks and initiatives of the international community, success is yet to be realized due to lack of government control in the region to deter the trading and spread of weapons on the continent. The following paragraphs highlight and analyze the issue of proliferation of SALW and its effects in the Horn of Africa and the Lake Region, and across Sub-Saharan Africa, in order to make necessary recommendations.

## Issue of Proliferation

Article 2 of the draft International Firearms Protocol defines illicit firearms trafficking as “the importing, exporting, acquisition, sale, delivery and movement or transfer of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition from or across the territory of one State Party to that of another State party without the authorization of or in violation of the legislation or regulations of any one of the State parties concerned.”<sup>1</sup> This illicit movement of weapons and in particular Small and Light Weapons (SALW) has been prevalent and widespread within Sub-Saharan Africa. There are a number of factors that have contributed to the trade and proliferation of SALW in the region, the most important of which are the continued conflicts in the region and lack of governmental controls.

The biggest contributor to the continued need for weapons in the region has been the persistent conflicts that have occurred on the continent over the past two decades. From genocide in Rwanda, to civil wars in Liberia and Sudan, to an almost nonexistent government in Somalia, weapons have been in high demand in all areas of the continent. This has led to a rise in the black market trading of weapons and in particular SALW within Sub-Saharan Africa.

The lack of government control and instability in the region has done much to facilitate the illicit trade and spread of weapons on the continent. The inability of the majority of the governments to exercise control over their borders makes it difficult to stop the trafficking of illicit arms. With the majority of the countries in Africa having three to five neighboring countries with relatively small security budgets, it becomes difficult to stop the flow of arms from one country to the next. In addition to the lack of adequate structures, corruption is extremely prevalent in the region. The result of this is that even



in countries where control structures have been put in place, corrupt government officials impede the integrity of the system in stopping the flow of arms. This lack of control has led to the flow of weapons from one conflict area to the next. “West Africa is a particularly poignant example of this trend. The same weapons, and often the same fighters, moved from conflict to conflict over the course of the past decade and a half, starting in Liberia, moving to Sierra Leone, then to Ivory Coast, and then to Guinea.”<sup>2</sup>

### SALW Trafficking

SALW are well suited for illicit trafficking. They are easily portable, easy to conceal, and small shipments of SALW do not draw much attention as governments do not consider it strategic to devote large resources to stopping the flow of light weapons in comparison to heavy weapons. In addition, the majority of these weapons require minimal maintenance, are easy to operate, durable, and require little logistical support. All these factors make SALW suitable for trafficking and particularly better suited for trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa due to the lack of government controls and the consistently present conflicts in the region.

There are broadly three types of trafficking processes of SALW in the region. The first type is “carried out through small-scale transactions by individuals or small firms that deliberately break the law by illegally transferring arms to illicit recipients, or by displaced people carrying guns for protection.”<sup>3</sup> This is the type of trafficking that is particularly prevalent in countries without significant conflict. In these areas, the weapons that are trafficked in most cases fall into the hands of criminals. This has been the case in countries such as Kenya where three of the five bordering countries have ongoing conflicts. With a number of refugee camps along its borders and a large

number of refugees coming into the country from Sudan and Somalia, this form of trafficking is prevalent in the North Eastern province of the country.

The second type of trafficking consists of “higher value or more difficult illicit shipments of arms that often involve corrupt officials, brokers or ‘middle-men’ motivated mainly by profit. These often use well-established networks and channels also employed for smuggling other illicit goods.”<sup>4</sup> It is this form of trafficking that was partially instrumental in the arming of Hutu and Tutsi warring factions during the Rwandan genocide.

The third type of trafficking sees the involvement of governments. “Governments or at least agencies of States are involved. Not only do they often turn a blind eye to the two types of trafficking outlined above, but they also deliberately facilitate covert flows of arms to their proxies or allies, or to embargoed or suspect destinations for profit.”<sup>5</sup> It was this form of trafficking that was instrumental in arming the Rwandan government in the periods prior to the Rwandan Genocide. “More than a dozen nations helped fuel the Rwandan war, and both sides appear to have purchased considerable weaponry through private sources on the open market. By its own admission, the Rwandan government bankrupted its economy to pay for those weapons.”<sup>6</sup> It is therefore easy to see that the political and social conditions of sub-Saharan Africa make the area conducive to the trading of illicit arms particularly SALW.

### Impact of SALW Proliferation

The impact of SALW proliferation in sub-Saharan Africa affects the countries and their citizens in three main categories. These are: Human rights and international humanitarian law; development; and governance.

## Impact on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law

Human rights, the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, is usually the first and most impacted part of the citizens lives that is affected by SALW proliferation. The groups or persons acquire/seek to acquire weapons in order to exercise their will or control on others. Therefore, SALW significantly undermine the human rights of civilians in the areas where they are prevalent. There are three main ways in which human rights are abused. These are escalation and extension of conflict, strengthening of criminals and criminal organizations, and increased crimes against women and children.

## Escalation and Extension of Conflicts

SALW play a significant role in determining the winners of conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa. With the majority of the fighting being done in small continuous battles and the relative lack of economic prosperity in comparison to the rest of the world, the use of heavy weaponry such as tanks, aircrafts, etc., is limited to governments or significantly large rebel groups. SALW, therefore, play a significant role in the conflicts. They tend to have an impact on the intensity of a conflict as well as the duration. "In addition to combatants, armed conflicts also greatly affect civilians, including men, women, boys, girls, the elderly, and the disabled. Civilians are often the deliberate targets of armed attacks during armed conflict – in direct violation of international humanitarian law – which provides for specific protections to non-combatants."<sup>7</sup> These attacks on civilians force them to seek out SALW in order to protect themselves, thus further reinforcing and increasing the demand for the weapons in the area. With more weapons available, the

conflict is further extended and intensified. The flow of arms to neighboring countries is also increased by those displaced due to the conflict.

### Strengthened Criminals and Criminal Organizations

Where SALW are used to intensify fighting in areas of conflict, it is not uncommon for even countries that have enjoyed long periods of peace to witness the effect of the SALW proliferation within sub-Saharan Africa. As mentioned earlier, as people flee areas of conflict, SALW trafficking on a small scale occurs as they travel. In most cases these weapons fall in the hands of criminals who in turn use them to further violate the human rights of citizens. “Violence in north-western Kenya (in particular, the areas west of Lake Turkana along the Ugandan border) has increased, exacerbated by the ready availability of firearms and spillover from regional conflicts.”<sup>8</sup> In such instances the SALW are used to abuse the human rights of civilians in neighboring countries. “Furthermore, the presence of SALW in refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps has been associated with increased intimidation and militarization, in some cases closely linked with attempts to use such camps for recruitment and training areas for armed groups.”<sup>9</sup> In instances where SALW are used to force civilians to actively participate in conflict, not only are their human rights violated but conflicts are further intensified and extended as mentioned earlier.

### Increased Crimes against Women and Children

In instances of conflict, young adult men are usually the majority of the direct victims of armed conflict. Though women and children are also directly affected by the armed conflict, they in turn face a different set of crimes and hostilities against them. In the case of women, they are faced with detention, intimidation, torture, forced

prostitution, and rape by combatants. This violates their human rights as it takes away their freedoms, creates unwanted pregnancies, and has been one of the reasons for the spread of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

Children are also faced with different problems as a result of conflicts. The most significant problem is perhaps the continued recruitment of children as child soldiers. "Statistics show ... there are 300,000 child soldiers involved in conflicts most of them in sub-Saharan Africa."<sup>10</sup> The child soldiers are equipped with SALW and are forced to fight members of their community at an early age. As they grow up during the times of conflict, they learn nothing else other than fighting such that, even when the conflict ends, they have a high chance to end up as criminals considering that the child soldiers have no formal education or skills to do anything else.

### Impact on Development

Development in sub-Saharan Africa has been slow, and in the case of countries (such as Southern Sudan and Somalia) that are ravaged by war, non-existent. The continued conflict in the area has impacted development in three ways: Direct costs; indirect costs; and obstruction of delivery and access to public goods.

### Direct Costs – Human Costs

The direct human costs of a conflict are seen in the form of deaths and injuries of the people of the country. The majority of combatants are usually young male adults or adolescents. As they fight during the prime of their lives, the lives lost reduces the number of young people available to work and help their countries develop. "Between 1956 and 1965, 105,000 people are estimated to have been killed in Hutu/Tutsi conflict...In April 1994...roadblocks were quickly erected and the perpetration of the

genocide against Tutsis and moderate Hutus began... Up to one million people died in the four months before the RPF took control of the country."<sup>11</sup> The direct costs of the genocide will affect the development of the country for a number of decades as generations were lost during the genocide. Some of those who lost their lives were professionals at their prime age.

### Indirect Costs

Indirect costs of conflict also impede the economic development of a country as it results in the displacement of a large number of people. Similar to direct costs, the productive age demographic is lost to the country in the short term and with them the future generations are also lost. Even though in some cases those displaced do return to their country of origin, a large proportion of the displaced settle as refugees in host countries. Another indirect cost of conflict is the deterred or disrupted economic investment that a country incurs during the time of conflict. As insecurity becomes more prevalent, businesses shut down as owners flee, burglary and theft take place resulting in losses for businesses. Once order is restored, the business owners may have been displaced or even have lost their lives. Foreign investors become weary of investing in the country for fear of losing their investment. As a result of the conflict, economic development comes to a stop and at times is reversed.

### Obstruct Delivery and Access to Public Goods

Public goods such as health and education are vital to the economic development of a country. With adequate health services, the population is able to maintain a lower death rate and minimize the duration and spread of illnesses amongst its citizens. This increased health in the population ensures continuous economic development a

characteristic that is not shared in countries with conflicts. In areas of conflict within sub-Saharan Africa, health services are not as readily available as workers are reluctant or unable to work in areas of insecurity. The same applies to other public services that help sustain economic development such as education. As a result, the conflict limits the country's ability to economically develop in both the long and short term.

### Impact on Governance

The governance of a country not only helps to shape the economic development of a country but is charged with providing the public good of security to its people. "High levels of armed violence and illicit SALW proliferation in both conflict-affected and non-conflict societies are often signs of weak or unaccountable security sector."<sup>12</sup> Though the presence of weak governments is part of the reason for the success of SALW proliferation within a country, the increased availability of SALW impacts the governance of the country by further weakening security sectors as more weapons are available to criminals and criminal organizations.

With weakened security sectors and increasing insecurity, security within countries of conflict may lead to the privatization of the security sector. "Private security companies, when authorized by the state, increase demand for legal SALW, but can also increase the supply of the illicit market if stockpile management is weak or there is internal corruption. Poorly trained private security guards can also be responsible for SALW misuse and in some cases have been implicated in criminal activity and human rights violations."<sup>13</sup>

As a result of the increasing insecurity, the privatization of security sources which in turn cannot be adequately monitored due to weak governance, a country's economic

development is negatively affected as the cost of doing business increases. In addition, human rights violations continue to occur as criminal activity in such areas increases.

### Current Attempts to Stop the Proliferation of SALW

Proliferation of SALW has been recognized both in sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world as a serious security threat. As seen above, the trade in illicit SALW has many negative impacts to a nation. However, as globalization of world markets continues, its effects can no longer be contained within the borders of a nation. In addition, SALW are not a simple problem to tackle as unlike heavy weapons, they have a legitimate military, police, and civilian use. As a result of the changing nature of the trade and the complexity of the problem, responses to the problems have come in three forms. These are: National Responses; Regional Initiatives; and International Efforts.

### National Responses

The first step in curbing the proliferation of illicit SALW in sub-Saharan Africa is for individual nations to set up adequate national responses to the problems within their own boundaries. Application of one country's national responses may unlikely meet the desired effects to solve the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms and light weapons of another country. Different conflict situations present varying challenges. These challenges require specifically tailored own-country national response initiatives. Failure to address this special requirement may continue to render the efforts and success of the war against the illicit trade and the proliferation of SALW untenable. This is likely to exacerbate the situation, should control and response measures in one of the member countries within the regional trading blocks be compromised. This is likely to impact negatively on the efforts of the entire Sub-Sahara Africa region on its fight against the



illicit trade of small arms. National responses appear in three main forms: comprehensive national controls of small arms trade; strengthened border security; and demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR).

### Comprehensive National Controls

As mentioned earlier, the main problem that arises when attempting to control the trade of illicit SALW is that it requires a multi-faceted approach as an outright ban will not work. This is due to their legitimate use by the military, police, and civilians. It is, therefore, imperative that national controls be established for SALW sold within a country legally. Not only are well established controls important, but a system to consistently monitor the flow and ownership of legal weapons after the initial sale is also important. This is so as to ensure that weapons purchased legitimately do not make their way into the hands of arms brokers and criminals.

For the controls instituted to be effective, the provisions of the national controls must be incorporated into the laws of a country. In addition, a strong security sector with an understanding of the law and its application is also needed. One of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa that has been effective in establishing national controls has been South Africa. Its National Conventional Arms Control Law is intended to: “foster national and international confidence in the control procedures; provide guidelines and criteria to be used when assessing applications of permits made in terms of the act; ensure adherence to international treaties and agreements; and ensure proper accountability in the trade of conventional arms.”<sup>14</sup>

Similar to South Africa, a majority of the sub-Saharan countries realize that internal controls are important in helping to stop the proliferation of SALW. However,

one of the main problems impeding the effectiveness of the internal controls has been the lack or inability of the governments to determine the risk of diversion before authorizing a transfer of arms. “According to analysis by the international Action Network on Small Arms, 34 of the 44 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have legislation regulating some portion of the small arms trade. Of these nations, only two require an assessment of the risk for diversion before authorizing a small arms transfer. By contrast, of the 41 European countries that have legislation on small arms, 32 include provisions for assessing the risk of diversion before authorizing a small arms transfer.”<sup>15</sup> It is, therefore, important for the success of any national controls to incorporate a means to assess the risk of diversion before approval of any small arms sales.

#### Strengthen Border Security

Once internal controls have been established, the next step in stopping the proliferation of SALW in sub-Saharan Africa is ensuring better control over the borders of the countries in the region. One of the reasons for the growth and success of SALW proliferation in the region is due to the open borders in Africa. With the majority of the country’s possessing three or four neighbors, it becomes difficult for states with limited resources to effectively patrol their borders. In addition to this, “many small arms are smuggled across the continent’s porous borders, occasionally disguised as other, more harmless materials, such as food, development assistance, or farming implements.”<sup>16</sup>

It is important for all the countries to take an active role and emphasize the importance of secure borders not only to the security forces involved but also to its citizens, particularly those situated near the borders. If this can be achieved, the ease

with which arms dealers perform their business and their cost of doing business would result in fewer arms dealers.

### Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration

As conflicts come to an end in a country, the governments have the ability to be proactive and take action on SALW at the national level. “Peace agreements developed before the end of a conflict can and should include plans for the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) of combatants, in order to curb the potential negative effects of proliferated and misused small arms...DDR programs must be sure to address the specific and different roles that women and children play during conflicts, as well as their roles in the community, which can help yield more complete disarmament.”<sup>17</sup>

This type of proactive approach not only minimizes some of the negative effects of the SALW such as an increase in the number of criminals and human rights violations after conflict within a country, but also serves the region by taking those particular SALW out of the market permanently.

One of the areas that DDR has worked well has been in Mali, where, “In an important act of political symbolism, Tuareg rebels participated in a high profile weapons destruction event sponsored by the government and the U.N. Some 3,000 weapons were burned in an event known as the “Flamme de la Paix” in Timbuctu in March 1996.”<sup>18</sup> In this situation, as DDR was integrated during peace talks with rebels, the government through cooperation was able to take 3,000 SALW from circulation. Had this not happened, the weapons would most probably have been used in crimes after the conflict or made their way to surrounding regions to fuel more conflicts. It is

therefore important for governments to come up with and implement any policies on SALW proliferation in the region to emphasize DDR in the peace talks of a country.

### Regional Initiatives

Other than national responses to the reduction in the proliferation of SALW, the majority of the sub-Saharan African countries realize that this is a problem that requires multi-national resolve. Though there are many regional organizations within the different parts of the continent, the African Union (AU) or Organization of African Unity (OAU) is the main regional organization comprised of the majority of the African countries. “African governments have generally been diplomatically careful at least to try to associate their initiatives relating to illicit arms trafficking with OAU resolutions... Nevertheless it remains a slow-moving institution, with relatively little capacity in these issue areas.”<sup>19</sup> It is reassuring to know that the countries involved are making attempts to harmonize their policies with regards to SALW proliferation. However, the slow moving nature of the organization is a cause for concern as it makes it difficult for countries to harmonize their policies efficiently, therefore, giving illicit arms traffickers’ opportunity to continue their trade.

In an attempt to overcome this downfall of the OAU, as well as the regional differences within the continent, governments have established organizations at a sub-regional level. There are three main sub-regional organizations that have had a big impact on SALW proliferation within sub-Saharan Africa. These are: East African Community; Southern African Development Community; and the Economic Community of West African States.

## East African Community

East Africa has been faced with a major flow of arms as a result of the continued conflicts in Somalia and the Great Lake Regions. Insecurity was on the rise with increased cases of gun related crimes and cattle rustling. In 1999 when the East African Community (EAC) was formed, it was suggested that sub-regional initiatives were necessary to help alleviate the problems caused by SALW proliferation. “[The EAC was] interested in Police cooperation to combat illicit trafficking and a security building approach to engage with the problem of reducing arms flows to conflict zones and managing disarmament in the context of demobilization programs.”<sup>20</sup> Talks on the issue between the East African countries culminated in the signing of the Nairobi Protocol which “encourages small arms registration to allow better tracing of weapons in cases of diversion.”<sup>21</sup>

Though the East African countries are actively attempting to reduce the impact of SALW in the area, they are faced with multiple problems. As seen earlier, one of the national responses necessary to curb SALW trafficking is control over borders. Within the EAC, the borders are still open and traffickers find it easy to move weapons into and out of the conflict areas. For the Nairobi protocol to be effective, it will be important to establish better control over the borders.

## Southern African Development Community

Similar to East Africa, the Southern African region of the continent has been severely affected by the flow of SALW and their trafficking. In response to this, “the Southern African Development Community (SADC) developed a Protocol on Firearms, Ammunition, and Related Materials in 2001. Parties to the protocol, which formally

entered into force in November 2004, have already succeeded in developing regional standards for the marking of small arms, which would facilitate the tracing of weapons to uncover illicit trafficking, and are crafting and implementing national action plans according to those standards.”<sup>22</sup> Unlike the EAC, the countries in the Southern African region attempted to control SALW trafficking by instituting better internal controls. As seen earlier, for internal controls to be effective in controlling arms trafficking, clear and strong legislation as well as a strong security force is needed to ensure the controls are well understood and enforced.

For the most part the policy established by the SADC has been effective in the area. “One problem is that border guards and customs officers in much of Southern Africa focus on ensuring payment of appropriate duties and do not typically regard themselves as having an important role in combating illicit trafficking.”<sup>23</sup> As a result the well defined policy is not being properly implemented and therefore still offering traffickers an opportunity to continue in their trade.

#### Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Of all the sub-regional initiatives, ECOWAS “has made the most dramatic strides toward curbing the illicit trade in small arms, with its unprecedented moratorium on the import or manufacture of small arms in the region... In June 2006, the ECOWAS secretariat approved a legally binding version of the moratorium after the West Africa Action Network on Small Arms, a regional nongovernmental organization assisted by the aid agency Oxfam, succeeded in developing acceptable treaty language.”<sup>24</sup> The moratorium finally put into law among the ECOWAS countries began as an initiative by Mali in 1993. The aim of the moratorium has been widely applauded as it challenges the

main aspects of the SALW trafficking that makes it difficult to stop. It calls for harmonized national controls among member states, supporting training programs for military, police, and security forces, enhanced border controls, stockpile management, and facilitating dialogue with arms supplier countries. As a result, the moratorium is seen as a plausible and effective means to end the trafficking of SALW.

Similar to other sub-regional initiatives, the ECOWAS policy has been faced with the problem of implementation. “It rapidly became clear in 1999 that there was substantial confusion about the terms of the Moratorium. In several ECOWAS countries, the military and the arms transfer licensing authorities were apparently unaware that their government had declared the Moratorium.”<sup>25</sup> In order for future policies to be effective, it is important that they are more detailed with respect to the implementation of the policies.

### Recommendations

After reviewing the issue of SALW proliferation within sub-Saharan Africa, its effects and the current strategies to curb its spread, it is clear that the problem is well understood within the region. In addition, the policies formulated and actions taken are consistent with the trafficking problem and seek to try and resolve the core issues driving the growth in illicit arms trafficking. However, I am strongly convinced that the problem can be effectively addressed by Sub-Saharan countries as well as international actors by adapting and implementing control measures that strengthen the existing policies. My recommendations include: the need to have a standard for National Responses promulgated by International Organizations, OAU, and United Nations (UN);

Sub-regional cooperation to ensure intelligence sharing, police cooperation, and border control; and also a standard of DDR to overcome effects of more conflicts.

#### Need for Sub-Regional Cooperation

The first issue that should be resolved by sub-Saharan states is ensuring that the national responses of a country are well established and functioning before entering into sub-regional initiatives. In areas such as West Africa where sub-regional initiatives have been significantly successful in reducing illicit SALW trafficking, we have seen that the entire process began with Mali establishing sufficient internal controls and systems to stop the flow of arms. Once that had been established, sub-regional initiatives were much more effective within the country as the appropriate government sectors understood their required actions. In contrast, in Nigeria, the security sector was unaware that a moratorium had been passed for the region making it ineffective as well as impeding its strength. It is vital that proper national responses are established before regional, sub-regional, and international initiatives can be properly executed.

#### Need For Standard of DDR

The second recommendation that would help to limit SALW proliferation is the emphasis on DDR as conflicts come to an end. With conflicts still raging on in different parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and even as the conflicts subside or come to an end in some countries, it is critical that the importance of DDR is emphasized to the warring parties. Proper execution and disarmament will minimize the amount of SALW that can be transferred by criminals to other areas of conflict. Coupled with proper internal controls, proper DDR execution will be able to remove weapons from circulation and



make it non-profitable for arms traders to continue with arms trafficking within the same country.

#### Need for a Standard for National Responses

Thirdly, I recommend an increased involvement and intervention efforts by the international actors to assist the Sub-Sahara Africa countries with their fight against the illicit trade and the proliferation small arms and light weapons. One of the main problems that limit progress on the fight to reduce SALW in the area is lack of resources, a general problem affecting the countries of Sub-Sahara Africa. To respond adequately and effectively to the problem, the Sub-Sahara Africa countries would appreciate any financial support and recommendations to improve national response strategies from international players. The increased international involvement will go long way to help the countries establish and implement proper policies that effectively stop SALW trafficking. The measures contributing to success in West African's situation should be embraced by the governments of other Sub-Saharan countries and used as a template control measure with necessary adjustments and modifications to suit the peculiar situations of individual nations or sub-regional trading blocks.

On the same basis, the UN in conjunction with the multi-national community should continue to support the initiatives of the Sub-Saharan African governments with economic assistance. On the other hand the African Union should boldly enhance Organization of African Union resolutions relating to the Sub-Saharan African governments initiatives to combat the illicit arms trafficking.

## Conclusion

It is clear that continued conflicts in the Sub-Saharan Africa continue to exacerbate the menace of illicit proliferation of SALW. In spite of the efforts of a majority of the Sub-Saharan countries, success and progress of their initiatives has been slow. Poor performing economies and lack of governmental control, attributes of corruption, and reluctance by some member nations to embrace and initiate the AU and UN resolutions have also persistently blocked the fight against the problem. Some of the nations, for example Somalia and Southern Sudan, are yet to establish any formal internal control measures and systems to stop the flow of arms. Instead, their internal conflicts continue to worsen the issue of proliferation of SALW in the neighboring nations. While some sub-regional initiatives are working effectively as witnessed in the case of Mali (within the ECOWAS), the same cannot be said for the whole Sub-Sahara Africa region. However, all countries within the region need to harmonize their efforts in executing internal initiatives, as only appropriate governments understand their unique challenges and the necessary national response requirements. The international community's economic and technological assistance to support the Sub-Sahara Africa countries' policy and strategy implementation process must be enhanced in consistent with the trafficking problem to resolve the core issues exacerbating the increase in SALW proliferation.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Owen Green, "Examining International Responses to Illicit Arms Trafficking," *Crime Law and Social Change* 33 (March 2000): 155.

<sup>2</sup> Rachel Stohl and Rhea Myescough, "Sub-Saharan Small Arms: The Damage Continues," *Current History* 106 (May 2007): 228.

<sup>3</sup> Owen Green, "Examining International Responses to Illicit Arms Trafficking," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 33 (March 2000): 154.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Nelson Alusala, "Disarmament and Reconciliation: Rwanda Concerns," (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies 108, June 2005) : 4.

<sup>7</sup> Mike Bourne, et al., "Implications of Illicit Proliferation And Misuse Of SALW " in *Reviewing Action on Small Arms 2006: Assessing The First Five Years of The Programme of Action by Biting the Bullet* (London: International Action Network on Small Arms[IANSAs], Biting The Bullet Project,2006,):223.

<sup>8</sup> "Kenya: Small Arms Exacerbate Violence Upsurge," *OxResearch* (05 September 2007) [database on-line]; Available from ProQuest; accessed 29 October 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Mike Bourne, et al., "Implications of Illicit Proliferation And Misuse Of SALW " in *Reviewing Action on Small Arms 2006: Assessing The First Five Years of The Programme of Action by Biting the Bullet* (London: International Action Network on Small Arms[IANSAs], Biting The Bullet Project,2006,): 223.

<sup>10</sup> Joyce Mulama, "Politics – East Africa: Insecurity Fuel Small Arms Trade," (New York: Global Information Network, 10 Oct 2003): 1.

<sup>11</sup> Nelson Alusala, "Disarmament and Reconciliation: Rwanda Concerns," (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies 108, June 2005) : 4.

<sup>12</sup> Mike Bourne, et al., "Implications of Illicit Proliferation And Misuse Of SALW " in *Reviewing Action on Small Arms 2006: Assessing The First Five Years of The Programme of Action by Biting the Bullet* (London: International Action Network on Small Arms[IANSAs], Biting The Bullet Project, 2006): 231.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Xolani Skosana, "Arms Control, South African Style: The Dynamics of Post-1994 Arms Export Control Policy," (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies 62, 2006): 1.

<sup>15</sup> Rachel Stohl and Rhea Myescough, "Sub-Saharan Small Arms: The Damage Continues," *Current History* 106 (May 2007):230.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Owen Green, "Examining International Responses to Illicit Arms Trafficking," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 33, (March 2000): 159.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 158.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 167.

<sup>21</sup> Rachel Stohl and Rhea Myescough, "Sub-Saharan Small Arms: The Damage Continues," *Current History* 106 (May 2007): 230.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 231.

<sup>23</sup> Owen Green, "Examining International Responses to Illicit Arms Trafficking," *Crime Law and Social Change* 33, (March 2000): 166.

<sup>24</sup> Rachel Stohl and Rhea Myescough, "Sub-Saharan Small Arms: The Damage Continues," *Current History* 106 (May 2007): 231.

<sup>25</sup> Owen Green, "Examining International Responses to Illicit Arms Trafficking," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 33, (March 2000): 160.