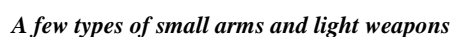


Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are known to be fairly cheap compared to other classifications of guns. Due to the fact that SALWs are cheap and powerful, and can be easily operated, many regions and groups have chosen SALWs to be their primary weapon choice. The illicit trade of SALWs is a big issue in Africa. The civilian possession of SALWs is also a pressing issue in the United States of America; however, the US constitution's second amendment gives the citizens "the right to keep and bear arms". Hence, most of the SALWs traded in the US are not through illicit trading. The issue of the illicit trade of SALWs primarily affects Africa because SALWs are believed to be even cheaper than the necessities such as water or a sack of grain in Africa. As a result, SALWs can easily be possessed in Africa. The derisory control over trading of SALWs has led to its widespread and misuse; over time, SALWs have played a major role in armed crime. SALWs have become a major cause of insecurity in several countries.



Definition of Key Terms

Small Arms

There is not a universal definition of which particular type of weapons fall into the category of small arms. Based on the results of the small arms survey, the category includes “revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns”. Most people refer to small arms as weapons that are designed for a single person to operate.

Light Weapons

There is no universal definition of what type of weapons fall into the category of light weapons. Based on the results of the Small Arms Survey, light weapons include “heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems; portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems (MANPADS); and mortars of calibres of less than 100 mm.” Most people refer to light weapons as weapons that are usually used by two or three serving as a crew.

Firearms

The term “firearms” is often referred as the weapon category including small arms and light weapons.

African Union (AU)

The African Union is a continental union that was established in 2001. This union serves as the replacement for the Organization of African Trade Unity (OAU). The AU currently has 55 member states across the African continent. Their primary objective is to establish “An

integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena”. The AU has played a major role in combatting the illicit trade of SALWs in Africa during the last decade. The AU will still adhere to combatting the issue for the next few decades.

Brokers

The United Nations recognize brokers as “a person or entity acting as an intermediary that brings together relevant parties and arranges or facilitates a potential transaction of small arms and light weapons in return for some form of benefit, whether financial or otherwise”. Brokers are professional in the field of the illicit trade of SALWs. Despite the efforts shown by governments to eliminate brokers, they still exist in modern day as they are difficult to track.

Contrabands

Goods that are illegally imported or exported.

AK-47

The AK-47, sometimes known as the “AK” is a powerful assault rifle that has been heavily used in anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements. Due to its impact in African history, the AK-47 has become a symbol of liberation in many African nations. For example, the flag of Mozambique features a symbol of the AK-47. In addition, the virtues and the national anthem of many African nations still praise the AK-47. This gun is often used by violent groups and other insurgencies in modern day; the gun had been used for a lot of negative purposes in modern day.

United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

The United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs is a body that promotes nuclear non-proliferation, the disarmament of regimes with weapons of mass destruction, and the disarmament of regions with weapons, landmines, small arms, and light weapons.

Non-State Actors (NSA)

An organization that has momentous political influence but is not allied with or a part of a state or country.

General Overview

Small Arms and Light Weapons in Modern Day

In most countries today, the trade and the civilian possession of SALWs are illegal. SALWs are more capable to murder people compared to classic weapons such as knives and swords. The illicit trading of SALWs has led to the issue of civilians possessing them. This issue is heavily affecting the USA and Africa. Small arms have been illicitly transported across the borders of Nations. With a lack of enforcement against such activities or a culture praising SALWs, the number of SALWs would only increase every year. Similarly, more SALWs could lead to more murders annually.

Africa

The researchers of the Small Arms Survey believe that there are approximately 30 million firearms inside the entire continent of Africa. SALWs have been important in the history of many African member states. These firearms were used in fatal warfare in Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Mali and other Sub-Saharan African nations. The Small Arms Survey supposes that the ownership of SALWs have been switched amongst fighters, security forces, and racketeers. Just in Western Africa alone, there are 8 million units of SALWs. Many of the SALWs used during African member states' warfare were transferred from Europe during the Cold War. Since the era of the Cold War, African nations have gradually gained the ability manufacture SALWs on their own at a lower cost. The SALWs are often traded by brokers in black markets that are currently lacking the enforcement by the government. Based on a report published by the United Nations, it is believed that the illicit trade of SALWs has been generating 1 billion US Dollars per year. With SALWs being so accessible to civilians, there is no question that a heavy illicit trade is still occurring throughout Africa.

United States of America (USA)

Throughout the recent decades, controversies have arisen on the second amendment of the US constitution. The second amendment to the US constitution was ratified in December 15th, 1791; the amendment reads: “A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” This amendment was created to protect the people of the USA, as guns were an important source of protection from the British during the colonial era. However, guns have heavily evolved; with such powerful capabilities, SALWs have fueled violence and caused a myriad of innocent civilian casualties. Just in year 2015 alone in the US, 13,286 people have been murdered and 26,819 people have been wounded by firearms. The civilian possession of SALWs in the US has always been legal. Multiple organizations have attempted to change the second amendment due to its hazardous effects. As many Americans have become used to using SALWs to defend themselves, a large percentage of the 321 million population still supports the second amendment. SALWs are still illicitly traded in the US for cheaper prices. 73,000 SALWs were smuggled during the time period between 2009 and 2014.

Key Issues

The total revenue of the global trade of SALWs is at an estimation of approximately 60 billion US dollars per year. Roughly 10-20% of that revenue is generated through the illicit trading of SALWs. SALWs are known to be easily portable; as a result, these firearms have been smuggled across borders which being transported on regular vehicles. Its durability requiring minimal maintenance has permitted the same SALWs to be used for several decades without any issue sparking; hence, its ownership has switched amongst different people over time. With the well-developed ability to cause casualties, many violent groups have decided to use SALWs as their primary weapon.

Africa

Most member states in Africa are developing countries. While developing a sustainable economy, governments have not been enforcing a stop to the illicit trade of SALWs. In Somalia, hundreds of thousands of firearms are transported from Ethiopia annually; this has sparked piracy in the Horn of Africa. On the other hand, during the Liberian civil war, firearms were

smuggled across the border into Sierra Leone to support rebel groups. With a lack of government enforcement, black markets still exist in modern day selling firearms to anyone with the ability to purchase it.

Latin America

The Venezuelan government has purchased over 100,000 units of AK-47 assault rifle from the government of the Russian Federation to update the weapons used by their military. A Columbian rebel group, the FARC often uses the AK-47 during their battles. A report by researcher of the Small Arms Survey states that some of the weapons purchased from the Russian government may have been smuggled across the border to Columbia.

Central Asia

Darra Adamkhel is a small town located in Pakistan. This town is known to be the world's largest firearm market. Most of the firearms sold in the town are locally manufactured; thus, the price is significantly cheaper than the same firearms produced by the Russian Federation. After the Soviets' invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, this market has become more famous for the illicit trading of firearms. Some terrorist groups including the Taliban are believed to be supplied by this market.



A shop illicitly selling assault rifles cheaper than smartphones in Dara Adamkhel; the cheapest SALWs could be purchased at around \$60 within the town

Non-State Actors

The abundance of SALWs has caused exertions in demilitarizing non-state actors. The War in Afghanistan has been fought for over sixteen years between the US and several non-state actors including al-Qaeda and the Taliban. As of October 2017, the US has spent a total of \$2.4 trillion from the taxpayers' money to finance this combat. For decades, the Taliban has been illegally acquiring SALWs from the town of Darra Adamkhel in Pakistan at low prices. With an abundance of available weapons, the Taliban has always been well armed during the war in Afghanistan. As a result, the Taliban was able to adequately defend themselves during the war. This has made it difficult for the US Army to demilitarize the Taliban despite the several strategies that have been in place.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

United Nations

The United Nations is a collective body that has spent adequate effort on combatting the illicit trading in SALWs. Over the last few decades, the UN has passed several resolutions, established specific organizations to tackle the issue, and created treaties. Two of the passed resolutions include the UN Security Council resolution 1325 which tackled on the armed conflicts that had on women and security; the other one is the UN General Assembly resolution 54/54 V that was passed during the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms in 2001. During this conference, the UN Development Program's (UNDP) Program of Action (POA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspect was adopted. To comply with the POA, member states have improved laws on SALWs and toughened all relevant regulations. In 2005, the member states of the UN adopted the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) which were measures to record all SALWs transfers. Later on in 2012, the Arms Trade Treaty was created by the UN and signed by 130 member states. This treaty was an attempt to illegalize the transfer of arms.



An infographic of the progress of solving the issue of SALWs in Africa

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1934	<p>The National Firearms Act is Imposed</p> <p>Due to an increase in mafia attacks, the US government has established this act to impose taxes and registrations to the transfer of SALWs. The civilian ownership of automatic weapons and grenades were also prohibited.</p>
1967	<p>The Nigerian Civil War</p> <p>Nigerians were introduced to SALWs during their civil war.</p>
1986	<p>Formation of The United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa</p>

This organization was established by the UN to conduct regional disarmament in Africa.

1989

Liberian Civil War

During the Liberian civil war, SALWs were smuggled to support rebels across the border in Sierra Leone.

1998

The Establishment of the UNODA

This UNO was established to conduct disarmament and ensure peace.

July 2001

Adoption of the POA

To comply with the POA, member states have improved laws on SALWs and toughened all relevant regulations.

2005

Adoption of the ITI

Member states started keeping better records of SALW transfers to comply with this cause.

2012

Arms Trade Treaty

Signed by only 130 parties, this treaty has the objective to illegalize the trade of arms.

Possible Solutions

Combatting the illicit in small arms and light weapons is not an easy measure. However, the goal of eliminating all illicit trade of SALWs is still achievable. A lack of enforcement towards the illicit trade of SALWs has made SALWs very easily accessible to civilians in Africa. Many countries in Africa are still developing and have not established a solid education system. With the help of relevant UNOs and NGOs, a better education system could be established in Africans member states to educate children the negative effects of SALWs. Similarly, campaigns

to stop the illicit trade of SALWs could be conducted by NGOs in affected regions to spread the awareness that those regions are currently lacking. Through those campaigns and an improved education system, the governments of those affected member states must change their ideology towards SALWs and illegalize the civilian possession of SALWs; regardless of how SALWs helped with the formation of their member states. Additionally, governments could enforce penalties for illicitly trading SALWs. In order to do that, policemen or spies need to patrol suspicious areas and confiscate all SALWs. Lastly, to eliminate the smuggling of SALWs, governments need to enforce a tougher border patrol as SALWs are still being smuggled across borders.

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