

# *The Lucrative Business of Defense*

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Buying and selling of arms today is rather a back alley profit making business ever since the end of the Cold War. It has been off the mainstream media especially in developing countries and it has become hard to grasp its activities because of the sophisticated nature of the trade.

Security in the Horn of Africa region continues to significantly decline due to the existence of these trade of arms. The constant supply and high demand of small arms only make it easier to find them but in the wrong hands. The Horn is mostly characterized by pastoralists fight for scarce resources and brutal cattle raids which has been exacerbated by the gun trade.

## **SOLUTION:**

Disarmament which is a term used to describe the reduction of arms in an area for the greater good of that region. In Africa, specifically the Horn of Africa, the term disarmament has not been in use since the beginning of the Cold War and this fore saw the Proliferation of Small arms and Light weapons. Disarmament has been a rather difficult process because the acquisition of arms has been welcomed into developing states society.

There is a satisfying feeling one gets from the sound of equal distribution of resources. Not many political leaders share this view of equal distribution of resources as a right that every citizen should enjoy, politicians believe that their "people" have a legitimate right to their ancestral resources. This is very true for residents of northern Kenya as they know this too well. A lowly pastoralist in Northern part of Kenya does not fully understand resource allocation and especially on security matters therefore they do it on their own will in the knowing that no government forces can establish order in this vast barren land. It is not unusual to find a Samburu man herding his cattle while wielding an AK47 besides it's quite the norm. They look for alternatives if the government cannot provide security.

These weapons are easily accessible and reliable to them. Yes accessibility and the reliability of these weapons continue to prove that disarmament around the Horn has been buried deep in the arid grounds of the area. It is easy to spot a malnourished teenage boy walking

around with a gun almost as heavy as he is protecting his younger siblings from the dangers he only knows so well. Since the end of the Cold War these small arms and light weapons have only been increasing and security threats spring up and continue to characterize the Horn region.

Such an environment only nurtures aggressive human behavior and this will only lead to an unending conflict. This fact can further be explained by what Kenneth Waltz described as Neo-Realism. Neo-Realism claims that the structure of the international system has shaped the behavior of states. This can ultimately be used to see how human behavior has been molded by the environment they live in i.e. The Samburu are forced to bear arms because the environment they live in is not secure for their livestock and livelihood, and therefore lead to more purchasing of arms and increased insecurity.

African states do face a number of security threats that hinder them from achieving development but disarmament may be the hardest obstacle African countries will deal with. The fact is that arms can be used for defensive or offensive purposes and that is why they will always be in constant supply. The Western states will keep manufacturing and providing these arms and the developing states will keep purchasing them in the name of defense. Equity in resource allocations is the best way to manage the creeping in of small arms and light weapons in remote areas of African countries.

**For more info**

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