

# ***ARMS PROLIFERATION AND CONFLICTS IN AFRICA: THE SUDAN EXPERIENCE***

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**KEY TERMS:** Arms proliferation, conflicts, arms and conflict.

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## ***ABSTRACT:***

The Sudanese conflict has claimed so many lives and property not because its settlement would not have been achieved but because of the perceived role of small arms and light weapons. The paper argues that the availability of arms in the hands of the belligerents was responsible for the intensification and escalation of the conflict as the belligerents use them as a major support to maintain their ground. It adopts the Frustration-Aggression theory, explaining that the rebels in South Sudan went into the fighting as a result of frustration at achieving self-determination. The Sudanese government had ruled with Islamic policies without considering other segments that practice other religions. To rid the society of illicit arms, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are carried out sincerely to avoid renewed war. Again, there should be enlightenment programme on the dangers of gun possession and peace education that advocates non-violent resolution of conflict.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Arms proliferation on the African continent poses a threat to the security of lives and properties. The control of its spread by national, regional and international governments, the collection and destruction of surplus weapons, co-operation in effective intelligence, communication, etc has been carried out with less success. The paper therefore, seeks to unravel the sources and impact of small arms and light weapons on the intensification of the conflict in Sudan.

The once peaceful country of Sudan has over the past four decades experienced armed struggle among groups and between groups and

governments. The conflict in Sudan became a problem of deep concern to international organizations, statesmen and scholars of international relations because it became a symbol of the problem threatening security of Africa. The use of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) has caused the death of over 300,000 people in the conflict and caused at least three times as many injuries and affect millions more indirectly. SALW have thus become the weapons of choice for combatants because they are cheap, durable and robust and their spread has continued to thrive in the face of disarmament processes by national, regional and international bodies.

The theoretical framework adopted for the paper is the Frustration – Aggression theory. This theory is relevant as the high conflict potential of the developing countries or areas is a function of frustration caused by economic deprivation.

The aggression theory earlier discussed by Feud, McDougal and others received its classic expression in the work of John Dollard (1939) and his colleagues (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 1981). Taking as its point of departure the assumption that “aggression is always a consequence of frustration” they defined frustration as “an interference with the occurrence of an instigated-goal response to its proper time in the behaviour sequence” (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 1981: 266). Whenever a barrier is interposed between persons and desired goals, an extra amount of energy is mobilized. Such energy mobilization if continued and unsuccessful tends to flow over into generalized destructive behaviour. The deprivation in this case is important as it relates to life goal of a people and therefore causes aggression.

The main explanation provided by the Frustration-Aggression theory is that aggression is the outcome of frustration and that in a situation where the legitimate desires of an individual is denied either

directly or by the indirect consequence of the way the society is structured, the feeling of disappointment may lead such a person to express his anger through violence that will be directed to them. According to Ogionwo & Eke (1999:87), an individual whose basic desires are thwarted and, who perceives the importance of the desire is likely to react to his condition by directing aggressive behaviour to perceived thwarting object. The Frustration-Aggression theory is therefore relevant in the paper, as the Southern Sudanese were dissatisfied and disappointed with the structural inequity, religious intolerance by the Muslim north and government, and the underdevelopment of the Southern part of the country. Their aggressive behaviour is informed by the actions of the government of Sudan and Muslim North in inhibiting or thwarting their efforts to realize their desired goal of self-determination and development. This situation results in the conflict that ravages Sudan.

Prior to independence, the colonial authorities failed to allow the people of the "closed District" to exercise their right to self-determination and when the Southern Sudan units of the Sudan forces learned of the impending independence of the Sudan as one country under the northern domination, they rebelled in August 1955, four months before independence in January 1, 1956. The southerners saw the independence as a replacement of one set of colonial masters with another and of a worst type, and thus demanded for full independence of the southern Sudan. Though, a truce was reached in Addis Ababa in 1972 granting the south regional autonomy, with its own legislature, executive and judiciary. The North however, worked to undermine the agreement, which the southerners saw as an effort to thwart their desires. The southerners were neither incorporated into the mainstream of power in parity with the north nor allowed the right to self-determination. At the same time, the north continued with its project of Islamization and Arabization of the country. These incidents led to the hostilities in the country spearheaded by the

Sudan People's Liberation Movement. The conflict however, worsened with the eruption of armed struggle in the western region of Darfur on allegation of economic and political marginalization by the government.

## 2. ARMS PROLIFERATION

The issue of arms proliferation in the world and especially Africa has been the concern of scholars in the field of international relations. Musah (2006) who did a study on small arms and light weapons proliferation contends that a major source of its proliferation remains the stockpiles that were pumped into Africa in the 1970s and 1980s by the Soviet Union, the United States of America and their allies to fan proxy interstate wars. According to him, the small arms found their way into civilian hands from official sources due to a combination of factors including the breakdown of state structures, lax control over national armories and poor service conditions for security personnel. He contends that the advent of coup d'état gradually emphasized the decisive role of weapons as the surest route to power and personal enrichment and their proliferation increased with the entry of junior officers in the political arena. He further contends that the proliferation of weapons is socially-oriented because the issues involved revolve around social relationship, values, beliefs, practices and identities.

Badmus (2005) maintains that small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) have become so wide spread that not only do they threaten security across the world but also undermine the peace and stability of civil society. He further contends that Africa has become attractive and profitable dumping ground for nations.

The spread of arms in Africa has continued, despite efforts to control it, due to the nature of African borders and the role of third

parties and the entry of new actors – the Transnational Corporations interested in the natural resources of countries in Africa. For example, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) was able to finance its military campaign through the illegal sale of diamonds. UNITA controlled two-thirds of Angolan diamonds especially the diamond-rich Lunda Norte province and between 1992 and 1997, UNITA was estimated to have earned \$3.7 billion from the sale of diamonds. UNITA received in return for the diamonds, a steady flow of small arms and light weapons (Badmus, 2005).

The proliferation of arms in the West African sub-region is made possible because these arms are “small” and are easy to transport or hide (Diarra, 2005; Yacubu, 2005). Diarra for instance, contends that it is not only a question of regulating arms in general but only a specific category of them – those that are liable to fuel civil wars or acts of banditry. He thus, states that arms are proliferated because of porous borders and unregulated movement of people from one country to another (Diarra, 2005; Akuyomo, 2006).

According to Okodolor (2005:5) arms race is the continuous competitive increase in the military power of two or more states based on the conviction that it is only retaining an advantage in such power-relation that can ensure their national security and maintain supremacy over their opponent. Arms continue to spread in Africa and the world over because countries would want to ensure their national security and of course, maintain supremacy over their opponents. There is thus, the belief that national security is best provided through arms acquisition, which constitutes a dilemma in the disarmament process. He argues that the proliferation of arms in West Africa [Africa] is assisted by plentiful supplies from law enforcement agents and military personnel selling their weapons, and from growing domestic artisan production, which passes down

established trade routes. Small arms also assist the expansion of transnational criminal networks (Okodolor, 2005:45).

Arms spread in Africa, it is argued, is possible through supplies from countries that are engaged in conflicts or full-blown war. Abalo (2006:2) asserts that there is widespread availability and rampant misuse by abusive state and non-state actors of small arms in West Africa. This situation according him, contributes to a pervasive climate of instability, humanitarian tragedy and wanton human rights violations in the region riddled with underdevelopment, poor health system and corrupt state leaders and government.

In his work, Pearson (1994:44) asserts that the problem of political control have more to do with weapon development, deployments and transfers than with theft or unauthorized access. In situations where states produce arms, it must produce weapons that it can use but that also appeal to potential foreign buyers in order to sustain the level of production needed to bring cost down. Thus, pure military priorities give way to commercial concerns and purely domestic arms production gives way to the global arms market (Pearson 1994:44). With these activities taking place, arms are likely to get into the hands of civilians and or authorized individuals in the society.

Kofi Annan (2003:3) while addressing the issue of illicit transfer of small arms asserts that uncontrolled proliferation of small arms, light weapons and the use of mercenaries, sustain conflicts, exacerbate violence, fuel crime and terrorism and promote a culture of violence ([www.voa.com](http://www.voa.com) 2003; see also [www.unog.ch](http://www.unog.ch)). The conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Annan notes, have been fuelled in no small part by unregulated trade in small arms often paid for by the illicit exploitation of natural resources. These weapons have helped regionalize and prolong wars in the conflict cluster around the

continent – from the Mano River union in West Africa through Great Lakes region to the Greater Horn. The effects – a most insecure social environmental, spiraling violence, the mounting death toll and floods of refugees constitute a major development and human rights challenges.

Similarly, Farr (2006) has maintained that small arms are widely available, transportable and easy to use and as such play a significant role in accelerating violence, both in times of war and in degraded peace time environments. Farr asserts that easy access to small arms is central to perpetuating social dislocation, destabilization, insecurity and crime in the building up of war, in wartime and in the aftermath of conflicts. Again, gun ownership and misuse also worsen race and class tensions in violence-prone communities. Conflicts in Africa therefore, degenerate into bloody and uncontrolled proportions because of the easy accessibility of small arms ([www.iansa.org/regions](http://www.iansa.org/regions)).

### 3. CONFLICT

Conflict represents part of the dynamics of inter-state relations. But when it becomes too frequent within a region (such as Africa) they divert attention from the more basic issues of development and the promotion of the aspirations of the people that are usually the primary concern of organized societies. In most cases, and especially where such conflicts escalate into open violence or wars, they actually consume substantial quantities of human and material development resources.

Alli (2006); Otite (2006) maintain that conflict occurs in Africa when two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of opponents are to

neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Alli further explains that conflict emerges whenever one party perceives that one or more goals or purposes of means of achieving a goal or preference is threatened or hindered by the activities of one or more parties. The parties may, however, be seeking to expand into the same field or physical sphere, or, more abstractly, into the same field of influence or behaviours (Alli 2006). Consequently, conflict result from interaction and contact among people when there is competition of interest to achieving a goal. Interaction according to Zartman as revealed by Alli is an unavoidable concomitant of choices and decisions and an expression of the basic fact of human interdependence. Conflict may also be caused by frustration in a relationship or interaction. The occurrence of aggressive behaviour always suggests the existence of frustration, which leads to some form of conflict.

Considering conflict as a social necessity and a normal and functional and inevitable aspect of all societies, Alli (2006) asserts that conflict becomes an obstacle to progress, political stability, economic prosperity and overall socio-economic development only when it is destructive in its impact. He notes that the spate of conflicts ravaging Africa can be attributed to the inadequacies of the African government as the structure and institutions of the state have remained relatively undeveloped. These governments in essence, have a focus on building those institutions that allow the exploitation and management of resources. Nigeria for example has been putting much effort on the management and exploitation of resources than on nation building. This attitude of government makes it possible for the people to be exploited and impoverished. Poverty caused by the activities of government in any state is bound to bring about conflict, as the people would be seeking to have a share of such exploited resources (the Niger Delta states of Nigeria). According to Alli this kind of conflict is caused by the desire to have access over natural resources.

Ibeanu (2003) identified three types of conflicts in Post Cold War Africa: conflicts that arise as a result of struggle for political participation or over political space; conflict caused by the contest for access to resources; conflict caused by struggle over identity.

Conflict is usually used for the range of arguments as tensions and violent conflicts that occur both within and between states. It is the pursuit of incompatible goals or interests by different groups or individuals (Bakut, 2006). Because of differences in views and opinions, conflicts are caused by several factors despite the enthronement of democracy in almost all the states in the region. Such factors according to Konteh (2006) are bad governance, ethnic intolerance, massive human rights abuses, poverty, and the failure of the state to carry out critical roles or functions of government and the eventual collapse of state. These however, vary from one country to the other.

Conflicts, however, may be caused by a combination of two or more of the factors mentioned above. Examples of conflicts, which result from struggle for political participation, are those of Somali, Rwanda, Chad, Uganda and Sudan. Those caused by the contest for access to resources are conflicts in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Niger Delta Area of Nigeria. Identify and citizenship conflicts are typified by the many conflicts in Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Sudan (Alli 2006; Egwu 2006). Identify conflicts are particularly pronounced because of the plural nature of Africa states. A major aspect of this ethnic dynamics is the massive mobilization of identifies as a basis for contesting hegemonic power, which is often used in igniting the violent conflict. Some of these conflicts like the ones in Burundi, Rwanda and Darfur region of Sudan, assumed genocidal proportion.

Oluyemi-Kusa (2006) posits that armed conflicts today are more likely to occur within states than across national borders. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the number of intrastate conflicts has proliferated and even more pronounced in Africa due to the level of poverty and weak democratic institutions as a result of the long period of military rule in most of these countries. Economic disintegration, political upheaval and competition for scarce resources according to Oluyemi, has opened a Pandora's box long-suppressed ethnic, religious and regional tensions that have erupted into violent conflict.

In this study, Peace Support Operations in Africa, Galadima (2006) admit that Africa, since the eve of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has been challenged by a variety of complex political, economic, environmental and social upheaval in degrees and intensity that is unprecedented in the continent. These challenges have launched the continent into a series of devastating intrastate conflicts ever experienced in a single continent anywhere in the world in the last decade and a half. Conflicts erupted into ethnic warfare in Central Africa, Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda. There was armed uprising in Northern Uganda, civil war in Sudan and border conflicts between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In fact, Sudan is encountering humanitarian catastrophe arising from a bitter intrastate conflict almost of a geographical proportion (Galadima 2006).

A major development in these conflicts is their militarization through the use of small arms and light weapons, the use of child soldiers and the struggle for control of mineral resources (Alli 2006). Countries like Ethiopia, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire have suffered greatly from widespread and intense internal conflicts. These conflicts exploded the myth of national solidarity, undermining the social fabric of these nations and destroying their fragile economies.

Conflict may be regarded as a characteristics feature of the political process Africa. There is scarcely any part of Africa without its share of major conflicts in the past four decades. African conflicts exhibit some features that seem particular to them. There are conflicts of secession, conflicts of ethnic sub-nationalism, conflicts of self-determination, conflicts of military intervention and political legitimacy, conflicts of national liberation, conflicts over religion and over territory or boundaries. These conflicts can be intractable lasting for up two decades resulting in loss of lives and property, slow pace of development and insecurity.

#### **4. ARMS SPREAD AND THE CONFLICT IN SUDAN**

The spread of arms in Sudan is made possible through several sources such as the government, military representatives, distributors, terrorists, multinational corporations, smugglers and covert government agencies engaging in secret deliveries. Direct sales from weapon manufacturers to foreign governments or private entities are a principal source of supply. Such sales are usually regulated by national government. For instance, the U.S. Departments licensed over \$470 million of light military weapons for exports.

Cold war era surplus stock is another source of light weapons supply. In the past few years the U.S military has given away or sold at discount vast quantities of excess assault rifles, carbines, 45 caliber pistols, machine guns and grenade launchers ([www.fas.org/asmp](http://www.fas.org/asmp)).

Covert gun-running by governments to foreign governments or more often, insurgent groups is another source of small arms and light weapons proliferation.

## 4.1 The Grey and Black Markets

The illegal or covert sales of arms have received increased attention because it involves larger shipments of more potent weapons. These sales of arms have been described as gray and black market.

### 4.1.1 The Gray Market

The Gray market refers to governmentally approved or covert arms shipments that skirt the letter of the law or evade international restrictions and embargoes. In most cases, government raises monies to finance and arrange the arms shipments. In 1996, the United States of America government sent nearly \$20 million of equipment through “front-line” states of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda to help the Sudanese opposition overthrow the Khartoum regime. The military aid includes radios, uniforms, boots and tents ([www.militaryphotos.net](http://www.militaryphotos.net)). The involvement of the government of Sudan in the supply of arms to the Janjawid militia is made known by Abakora Abbo Sakhairoun, a Janjawid fighter who was captured by the Chadian forces when they invaded Chad. According to him,

*The Sudanese government equipped us with light weapons-Kalachnikovs and bazookas-to fight the rebels in Darfur but we take advantage of this to steal cattle in Chad, though we perfectly know that it is not our mission ([www.IRINNEWS.ORG](http://www.IRINNEWS.ORG)) May, 2004.*

Similarly, the government in Khartoum is said to have ordered Western Platforms to improve the military’s ability to fight in Swamps that dot the war-torn South. The battlefield heightened by the government’s purchase from Australia of airboats designed to travel in Swap environments and especially useful in the oil filed

areas of upper Nile ([www.militaryphotos.net/forums](http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums)). The government of Sudan sponsors the supply of arms to the Janjawid Arab-militias directly or through third parties or agents. It furnished this armed group with weapons, which included G-3s, Kalashnikovs, mortars, light machine guns and landmine. The danger in this trade made President Clinton in 1995 to urge states “to shut down the grey markets that outfit terrorists and criminals with firearms.”

#### **4.1.2 The Black Market**

The black market involves unlawful or unapproved transfer by private arms dealers and smugglers. The people involved in the black market usually deal on smaller arms because of difficulty of packaging and concealing major Weapons transfer without some government co-operation. 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. Theft or capture of state security forces’ arms are a major source of black market supply around the world. These weapons are ideal for terrorists and rebels as they have access to them through the black market.

On August 18, 1955, the equatorial corps, a military unit composed of Southerners, mutinied at Torit. Rather than surrender to Sudanese government authorities, many mutineers disappeared into hiding with their weapons, marking the beginning of the first war in Sudan ([www.Dismalworld.com](http://www.Dismalworld.com)).

By 1969 the rebels had developed foreign contacts to obtain weapons and supplies. Israel for example trained AnyaNya recruits and shipped weapons via Ethiopia and Uganda to the rebels. AnyaNya also purchased arms from Congolese rebels. By 1986, the SPLA was estimated to have been equipped with small arms and a

few mortars ([www.Dismalworld.com](http://www.Dismalworld.com)). Other weapons obtained by the SPLA include T-55 tanks and mobile anti-aircraft guns ([www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org)).

The Sudanese rebels obtain the majority of their weapons through purchases on the international arms market or in combat with forces of the government of Sudan. SPLA captured large quantities of Sudanese government arms in Southern Sudan in early 1997, including tanks and artillery. Arms also reached Sudanese opposition forces through an informal smuggling network within Africa that stretches as far south as Mozambique and Angola. Landlocked as they are, they are heavily dependent on the cooperation of one or another of the frontline states for the transshipment of such arms. Uganda is used as a transshipment route for arms meant for the SPLA on several occasions. In July 1997 more than one hundred wooden crates of ammunition in Morobo, Sudan (between Kaya and Yei) with shipping instructions marked "To Uganda, via Tanzania." ([www.hrw.org/reports](http://www.hrw.org/reports)). With this mark, the SPLA officials identified them as SPLA equipment. South Africa had in September 1997 supplied armored vehicles ammunition and anti-aircraft missiles to the rebels through Uganda.

#### **4.1.3 Military Assistance/Aid**

Sudan lacks a reliable source of military materials except for the production line for small caliber ammunition. Consequently, foreign sources for weapons, equipment, ammunition, and technical training have been indispensable. After independence, the British advisers helped train the Sudanese Army and Air force, and British equipment, predominated in the ground forces. ([www.country-data.com](http://www.country-data.com)).

The breach with the Western nations was followed by a period of close military cooperation with the Soviet Union between 1968 and 1971. Sudan benefited from the Soviet Union's first

significant military assistance program in a sub-Saharan Africa country. By 1970, it was estimated that there were 2,000 Soviet and east European technical advisers in the country. About 350 Sudanese received training in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries.

Believing that neighbouring Ethiopia and Libyan forces are heavily armed by the Soviet Union threatened Sudan, Washington and Libyan forces heavily armed Sudan's security. Between fiscal year 1979 and 1982 military sales credit rose from U.S\$5 million to U.S\$100 million. Subsequent aid was extended on a grant basis. In addition to aircraft, United States aid consisted of APCFs, M-60 tanks, and artillery and command armored cars. Its id reached a peak of U.S\$101 million in 1982. Between the inception of the military assistance to sub-Saharan Africa in 1976 and its termination in 1986, military grants and sales credits to Sudan totaled U.S\$154 million and U.S\$161 million respectively ([www.country-data.com](http://www.country-data.com)).

On the other hand, the SPLM/A have received political, military and logistical support primarily from Ethiopia, Uganda and Eritrea. These states were firmly behind efforts to overthrow the Sudan Government and install in its place Sudanese opposition groups from the outset, the SPLM/A had the support of the government of Ethiopia. Uganda provided the SPLM/A with access to arms and permission to train its forces within its territory. Eritrea allowed the Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF) to use its territory for training, and support its activities.

They have received indirect support from the United States of America, (U.S.A) when it allocated \$20 million in "non-lethal" military assistance to SPLA supporters (Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia) in February 1998 for defense against opposition groups in their countries backed by Sudan. Sudan has long accused Eritrea, which has a hostile relationship with Khartoum, of providing training

facilities and arms to SPLM/A in the South, to rebel forces in Darfur, and another rebel group called Beja congress in the east ([www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org)). Several operational detachments – Alpha (also called A-Teams) of the United States of America were operating in support of the SPLA.

## 5. SECURITY DILEMMA

The security dilemmas as revealed in the work of Pearson (1994) are the reasons why arms proliferation is a continuous thing despite attempts to curb its spread.

### 5.1 The Political Dilemma

This requires that the issue of armament does not only relate simply to security or economic objectives but politics as well since arms serve as a means to political power. Mao Tsetung points out that “power (political power) stems from the barrel of a gun” (Pearson 1994:4). Some leaders shoot their ways into office or depend on armed force to stay in power for a longer period. Arms are therefore required by states during the process of state-making and state-building to sustain the hegemonic power of the ruling class. According to Pearson (1994:4), even if all the other ingredients for arms reduction are in place, there is still the potential, and for some the irresistible temptation, to use arms to bolster political power.

A government that holds political power acquires it to bolster such power and to have supremacy over its opponents. In fact, the coming to power President Omar El-Bashir was through a coup d'état aided by the use of gun; arms in general. The desire of the government of Sudan to bolster political power with the use of arms contributes to the spread of arms in that country. It uses arms to maintain its strong hold in power and to fight the rebels. On the other hand, the rebels capture some of these arms from the government

forces, for example when they killed 10,000 government troops in a battle on Ashwa front in 1996. The rebels in turn use these captured military equipment and others acquired through the black market to maintain their stand on their demand for self-determination and continue to fight. The government acquires arms from the United States of America, Soviet Union, Egypt and Saudi Arabia among others. In other to maintain its control over the people and country, Iran had supplied Sudan with G-3 rifles, and Kalashnikov assault rifles. Sudan purchased medium-range artillery from Iran, which include Mortars (60mm and 82mm) and ammunition. ([www.hrw.org/reports](http://www.hrw.org/reports)).

## 5.2 The Dilemma of Access

This entails the uncertainty of trying to eliminate arms since those mostly interested in obtaining the banned item would still find a way to do so and that illicit business would grow up to supply these consumers. The most violent would still find a way to obtain weapons, through contraband or black markets if necessary. According to Pearson (1994:2) "if guns are outlawed, outlaws will still have guns". Sudan for instance turned to China and Libya for arms supplies when its relations with Soviet Union chilled in 1971. Most of its weaponry of Soviet designs was more than twenty years old and could not be kept operational except with the help of China and Libya. As at the Mid 1980s, about fifty Chinese advisers provided maintenance support for tanks and aircraft, including Soviet equipment previously supplied, and trained Sudanese pilots and aircraft mechanics. Iraq also provided some military items to Sudan in the form of munitions, but ended it in August 1990 ([www.country-data.com/egi](http://www.country-data.com/egi)).

The Numeiri government (1969-85) bought weapons from China. But these purchases rose in the 1990s due to Sudan's internal war and the promise of improved finance and enhanced international

credit derived from its oil potential. Weapons deliveries from China to Sudan since 1995 have included ammunition, tanks, helicopters, and fighter aircraft. China also became a major supplier of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines after 1980. According to a human right watch report, eight Chinese 122mm towed howitzers, five Chinese-made T-59 tanks, and one Chinese 37mm anti-aircraft gun were abandoned by the government army in Yei when in 1997, the SPLA overran government garrison towns in the South. It also supplied fifty Z-6 helicopters, a hundred 82mm and 120mm mortars. Six Chinese Chengdu F-7s (MIG-21s) financed by Iran was supplied to Sudan as well ([www.hrw.org/reports](http://www.hrw.org/reports)).

Sudan also received military equipment such as tanks, MIGs combat aircraft and munitions from Britain, ten light helicopters and 4,000 vehicles from West Germany and when relation was not favourable any more, she turned to the Soviet Union for military equipment coincidentally at a period when their relation improved. Military agreements with the Soviet Union remained in force until 1977, but Sudan began to pursue a policy of diversifying its arms sources. South Africa delivered two shipments of arms to Sudan in 1995 and a third shipment in 1997 using Yemen as a transit point to disguise the origin. These shipments included light artillery, heavy machine guns and spare parts for Sudanese navy ([www.hrw.org/reports](http://www.hrw.org/reports)).

### **5.3 Dilemma of Alternatives**

This dilemma implies that finding alternatives to armament to promote security or trade (imports or exports) can be difficult, a mainly economic dilemma facing those interested in disarmament or peace (Pearson 1994:3). The lesser of two evils would be to continue selling guns and tanks to foreign market, even at the risk of fueling wars. In essence, they had no alternative than to sell guns to keep their economy growing. Sudan does not actually produce high caliber

military equipment, but in a bid to secure her territory, citizens and property, turns elsewhere to acquire arms. Yugoslavia assisted in founding the Sudanese navy and for more than a decade provided all of the vessels and the bulk of officers and technical training. In 1989 four river craft were acquired from Yugoslavia. Again, Saudi Arabia was instrumental in the purchase of six C-130 Hercules transport aircraft from United States of America estimated to cost U.S\$74 million and two Buffalo transports from Canada in '97.

To further have an alternative source of getting arms; Sudan maintained its closest military ties with Egypt under a twenty-five years defense agreement signed in 1976. The two countries established a joint defense council, a joint general staff organization, and a permanent military committee to implement decisions of the joint council and the staff organization. Since 1986 Egypt has provided Egyptian – manufactured swing fire antitank missiles, Walid armored personnel carriers, ammunition and other equipment tom Sudan. ([www.coutry-data.com/egi](http://www.coutry-data.com/egi)).

#### **5.4 Dilemma of Adequacy**

The dilemma of adequacy relates to how much armament would be enough for a country. In this light, how would a country feel secure against attack by its neighbours? Theoretically, in a system of independent states, government decides for themselves how much arms are enough. However, their decisions can play havoc neighbour's security and regional balances of power (Pearson 1994:3). The extent to which a country is armed would make other countries, especially neighbours to continue to arm. It is unreasonable that an unarmed man should remain safe and secure when the other is armed. So it is to countries. No one country will feel safe and secure if her neighbour is armed. There will be suspicion and in order to feel safe and secure, militarily, the country will arm.

In Sudan, the warring factions, SPLA, JEM and especially the Sudan government need to continue to arm, as they do not know the strength of each other. While the government gets its supply of arms from other countries through direct buying and the grey market, the rebels get theirs from the black market. Sudan obtained about U.S\$350 million in military arms and equipment between 1983 and 1988. The United States of America was the largest supplier, accounting for US\$120 million. About US\$160 million came largely from Egypt and Libya, and purchases from other Western suppliers financed by Arab countries ([www.country-data.com/egi](http://www.country-data.com/egi)). The rebel groups have continued to arm so as to withstand the pro-government Janjaweed militias and government forces. It receives arms from Congolese rebels, Eritrea, Uganda, Ethiopia and indirect support from the United States of America in non-lethal military equipment. This attitude leads to arms proliferation. For instance, while the government imports, the rebel factions also import or buy through the black market in order to secure their own territory.

Arms in the hands of militants and or rebels seem to cause more havoc in a conflict situation. Misol (2006) has argued that the problem of small arms and conflict in West Africa are interwoven. The spread and misuse of small arms helps to fuel conflict, and combatants who have a history of indifference for the principle of civilian immunity, lead to violations against innocent people.

## **6. THE IMPACT OF ARMS ON THE SUDAN CONFLICT**

The irresponsible transfer of arms to Sudan and its neighbours are a significant factor in the massive human rights catastrophe in Sudan and its spread into Eastern Chad. Arms availability in the hands of the government forces, Janjaweed Arab militia and the rebels made the conflict more intense and escalating. The weapons are cheap, durable, easily transferred and made available through government official

purchase, military assistance/aid to Sudan by governments of other countries - The United States of America, China, Libya, and Soviet Union - and the grey market through which the Arab militia is supplied arms. The black market is the Chief source of arms supply to the rebels. The rebels received arms from Israel through Ethiopia and Uganda. The SPLA also purchased arms from the United States of America, China, South Africa and Iran. It served as a support to the warring to enable them maintain their grounds.

The government of Sudan bears the primary responsibility of protecting civilians in Darfur yet continued to divert and deploy important attack and other military aircraft, "dual use" and domestically made military equipment, as well as firearms and ammunition to target civilians directly, launch indiscriminate attacks involving civilian casualties and to arm and support the Janjaweed militias ([www.amnetsy.org](http://www.amnetsy.org)).

The conflict has destroyed so many lives and property, internally displaced about three million people with another 670,000 forced to become refugees in other countries. The negative humanitarian situation has been worsened by drought, famine and ecological devastation as a direct result of the war (Okereke 2005). According to him, between 1984 and 1985, more than 100,000 Sudanese suffered severe starvation in the drought-stricken western region while an estimated 250,000-500,000 perished in the war-torn South between 1987 and 1988. The United States Secretary of State Colin Powell (2004) classified the Sudan situation as genocide.

More than 200,000 people have died in the four and half years of conflict in Darfur, and more than 2.5 million have been displaced from their homes. During March 2011, there was no decrease in human right violations and abuses against internally displaced people, including sexual and gender based violence. There were

40,000 new displaced civilians as a result of the ongoing violence and armed banditry has continued unabated.

According to James (2006) the militia and the Government soldiers raided communities of Nuba Mountains, resulting in the killing of many Nuba people, including women and children. The government burned and destroyed houses and crops; abducted women and children and took entire families against their will. In the camps, family members are separated; men taken for military training and conscripted into the National Armed forces, young boys are taken to the Arabic Islamic schools where they are to study the Qur'an. The fate of women and girls are the worst of all, they are forced into domestic work and for some unluckily ones, are sexually abused by the men.

Civilians in Darfur are bearing the brunt of escalating fighting between the government and rebel factions. Thousands of civilians were displaced following recent attacks between October 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> 2007 on the towns of Haskanita and Muhajaria, weeks before the warring parties were scheduled to meet in Tripoli, Libya for a new round of peace talks. On September 29, 2007 rebel forces killed 10 African Union Peacekeepers in Haskanita in North Darfur ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)). Government forces quickly took control of the area and on October 4, the entire town was burned to the ground and at least 10 civilians were killed ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)).

Despite several attempts to end the conflict through peace talks, arms, ammunitions and related equipment such as T-55, aircraft, uniforms, boots, tents airboats, and grenade launchers are still being transferred to the country especially the Darfur region for military operations. This causes serious violations and abuse of human rights and international humanitarian laws that are committed by the Sudanese government, the government-backed Janjaweed militia and

armed opposition groups ([www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)). These arms amount to continued fighting and thereby escalating and or intensifying the conflict.

In a nutshell, millions of people are caught in the crossfire as victims of the warfare. Many are women and children. Children are recruited or compelled to be soldiers. Child soldiers are exploited in the recent war in Sudan. Also affected are political dissidents, Union organizers, land rights activists, journalists, foreign relief and development workers, local and foreign business people, and tourists ([www.fas.org/asmp](http://www.fas.org/asmp)).

## 7. CONCLUSION

The Sudan conflict is rooted in religious intolerance and the structural inequality between the Centre (North) dominated by Arab Muslims and the 'peripheral' areas such as Darfur, Fung, Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile dominated by non-Arabs – Christians and Animists. These 'peripheral' areas have been excluded from the centre of State affairs since independence and are relatively underdeveloped. The rebels accused the government of oppressing non-Arabs in favour of Arabs and neglecting the Southern region. This neglect, exclusion from state affairs and underdevelopment necessitated a call by the Southern Sudanese for self-determination. The conflict became destructive and devastating in its impact when arms, especially Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are used. The direct impact of these arms in Sudan is the high rate of violent crimes. The most negatively impacted people are women, children, humanitarian workers, peacekeepers and properties. It proves Camille, Annan and others right when they posit that the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons affects the intensity and duration of violence and encourages militancy, a vicious circle in which insecurity leads to a higher demand for weapons ([www.international-alert.org](http://www.international-alert.org)). Pearson

(1994:62) was right when he asserts that more weapons clearly tend to make conflicts longer and bloodier.

The government of Sudan and South Sudan in particular should sincerely embark on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes that will offer armed groups a benefit package as an incentive for them to report to authorities and disarm. Such programmes include collection and destruction of weapons and creation of employment opportunities for armed groups. This process will considerably reduce the risk of renewed civil war.

Other than allowing conflicts to degenerate into full-blown war that will destroy lives and property, it should be nipped in the buds through a peaceful settlement. By so doing, weapon manufacturers and producers will not have a booming market for arms supply. By and large there will be reduction in arms demand and supply.

Generally, public enlightenment programmes on the dangers of gun possession and peace education programmes that advocates non-violent resolution of disputes be carried out to guarantee public safety. Reducing demand for Small Arms and Light Weapons will eliminate citizens' perception that they need a weapon and also change the culture of gun possession and gun violence in the citizens into a culture of peace.

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