

Combating cross-border smuggling of firearms in Nigeria: latest threats and challenges

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Executive summary

Border Security



Arms seizure – source: Nigeria Army

Aims: To showcase the measures put in place by the NCS in combatting cross-border smuggling of firearms' in Nigeria

Scope: The study adopts ex-post design [by studying the past] in order to address the research paper. It also employs inferential method in examining measures put in place in checkmating cross-border smuggling of arms-latest threats and challenges. Secondary data on included variables were used to carry out the analysis. The data were sourced from the NCS Enforcement seizures statistics, publications from NCS and other relevant journals and related papers.

Findings: shows that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), this means that there is strong nexus between insecurity and cross-border smuggling of arms in the country.

On the other hand, from the regression table R-square is less than d i.e. [$R^2 < d$] which implies that every sample size accepts the hypothesis of normal distribution at 0.05 significant levels[p-value>0.05]

Motivation



Ammunition seized-Source: NCS

The study is motivated by the apparent high level of insecurity in the country and measures put in place by the NCS to checkmate influx of arms into the country

Introduction



Cross-border smuggling of arms is increasingly and dangerously becoming worrisome in Nigeria



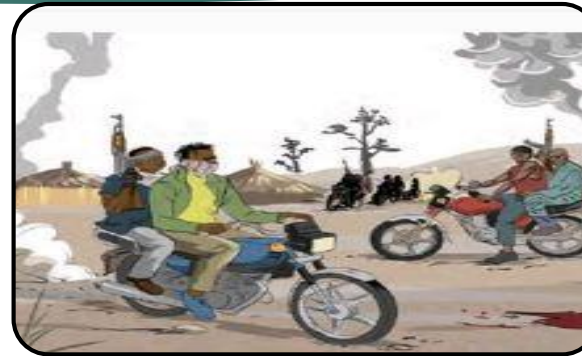
With Boko Haram's insurgency, reemerging banditry and escalating kidnappings,



communal crisis and unknown gunmen activities in the South East serving as hubs or impetus for arms trafficking

Introduction cont...

Recent abductions and kidnapping of school children and French citizens closed to border between Nigeria and Cameroon and Chad are basically examples of insecurity caused by the illegal arms



Continuous escalating nature has heightened the wave of terrorism, insurgency, banditry and other violent crimes

This no doubt has prompted the NCS to put series of measures in place in checkmating this trend

Research Questions

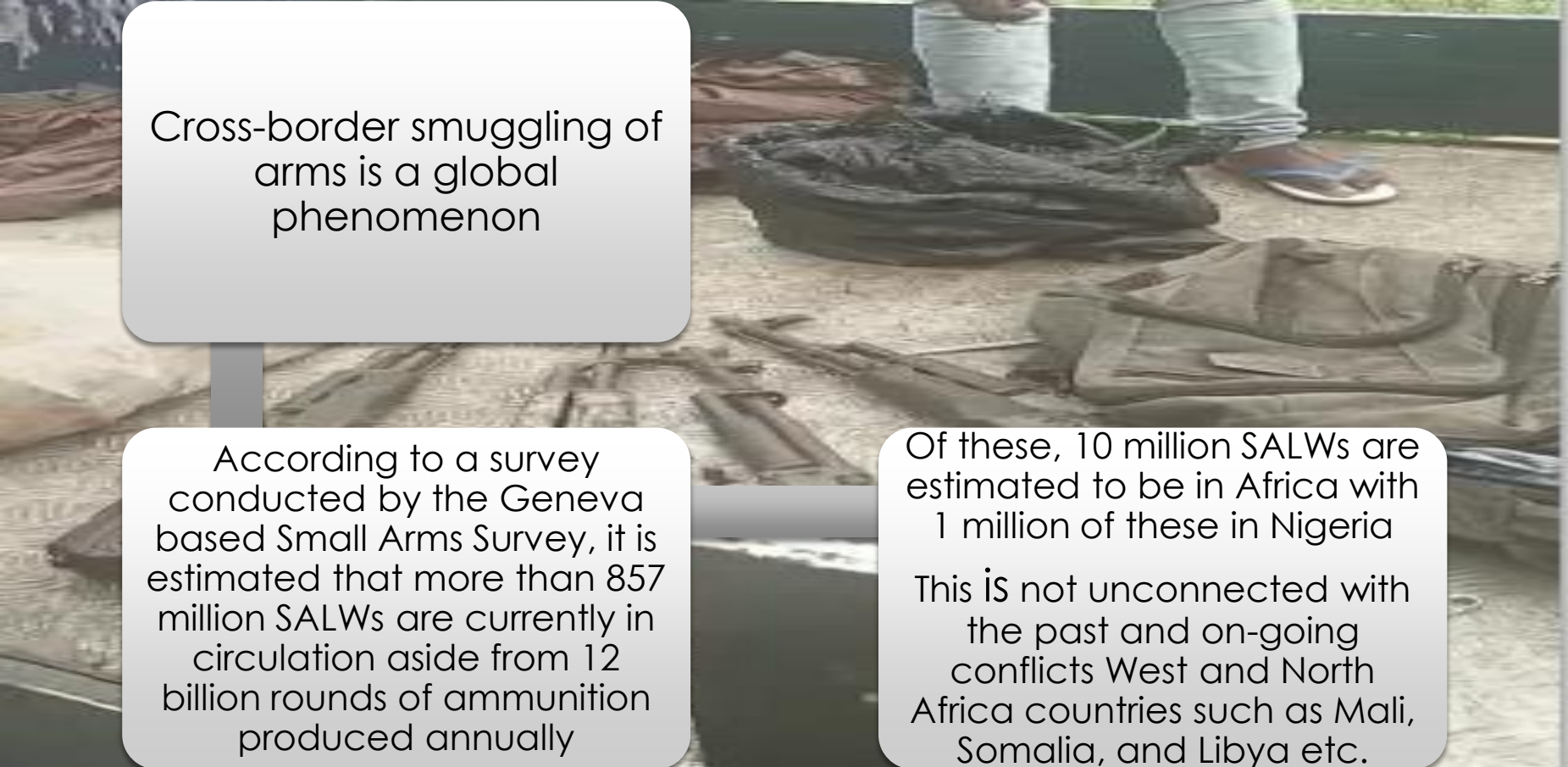


WMD seized by NCS – Source: NCS Hq.

Are the measures implemented to prevent influx of illegal arms smuggling having a mixed impact on national security?

Is there any nexus between insecurity and cross-border smuggling of firearms?

Review of Literature



Cross-border smuggling of arms is a global phenomenon

According to a survey conducted by the Geneva based Small Arms Survey, it is estimated that more than 857 million SALWs are currently in circulation aside from 12 billion rounds of ammunition produced annually

Of these, 10 million SALWs are estimated to be in Africa with 1 million of these in Nigeria

This is not unconnected with the past and on-going conflicts West and North Africa countries such as Mali, Somalia, and Libya etc.

Fragile environment and arms smuggling – the nexus

Fragile environments no doubt serve as a fertile ground for SALW smuggling and trafficking.

many arms and ammunition of various types, sizes and caliber have been intercepted and confiscated by the NCS and other security agencies. The recurrent detection and recovery of cache of arms, ammunition and Improvised Explosive Device Materials by the JTF further buttressed the point

Service has discovered hundreds of illegal routes in Nigeria that link or lead to some neighboring African countries. Nigeria's borders are massive with hundreds of footpaths crisscrossing to neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger with links to Mali, Libya and Sudan

Insurgency in fragile environments hamper cross-border formal and informal trade that occur along the borders

Mode of operandi

The “merchants of death” have since devised methods use to beat security agencies at the borders and through the footpaths

These methods include the use of camels, donkeys and cows to traffic arms, ammunition and drugs, like cocaine into Nigeria.

Other methods include; hiding of cache of arms and ammunition in empty fuel tankers, under vehicles' engines and inside bags of grains mostly undetected by security agencies at the affected border posts.

The “grains” are transported in large number via trucks, trailers, Lorries and old model pickup vans and jeeps with little attention given to them by security agents.



Data Analysis

Data analysis



The annual weapons seized between 2010 – 2020 has varied from 16,343 and 623 small arms and light weapons per year, while that of ammunition seized varied between 710,793 and 60,091 respectively

It is clear that this number represents only a small fraction of the illegal weapons in circulation in Nigeria.

Aggregated statistics availed in NCS about weapons seized due to violations of applicable regulations

Result and Discussion

	No. of Seizure	SALW	Ammunition
Pearson Correlation	1	.482	.041
Sig. (2-tailed)		.134	.905
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	54.727	52700.000	19668.064
Covariance	5.473	5270.000	19668.064
N	11	11	11
Pearson Correlation	.482	1	.786**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.134		.004
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	52700.000	218780488.000	754660303.000
Covariance	5270.000	21878048.800	75466030.300
N	11	11	11
Pearson Correlation	.041	.786**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.905	.004	
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	196680.636	7546660303.000	421822
Covariance	19668.064	754666030.300	421822
N	11	11	11

Correlations & Regressions

SALW & ammunition are independent variables while number of seizure is the dependent variable

From the descriptive statistics, correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and this could be said to have of correlation i.e. there is strength of relationship between the model and dependent variable on a convenient 0-100% scale

Result and Discussion cont...



Correlations & Regressions

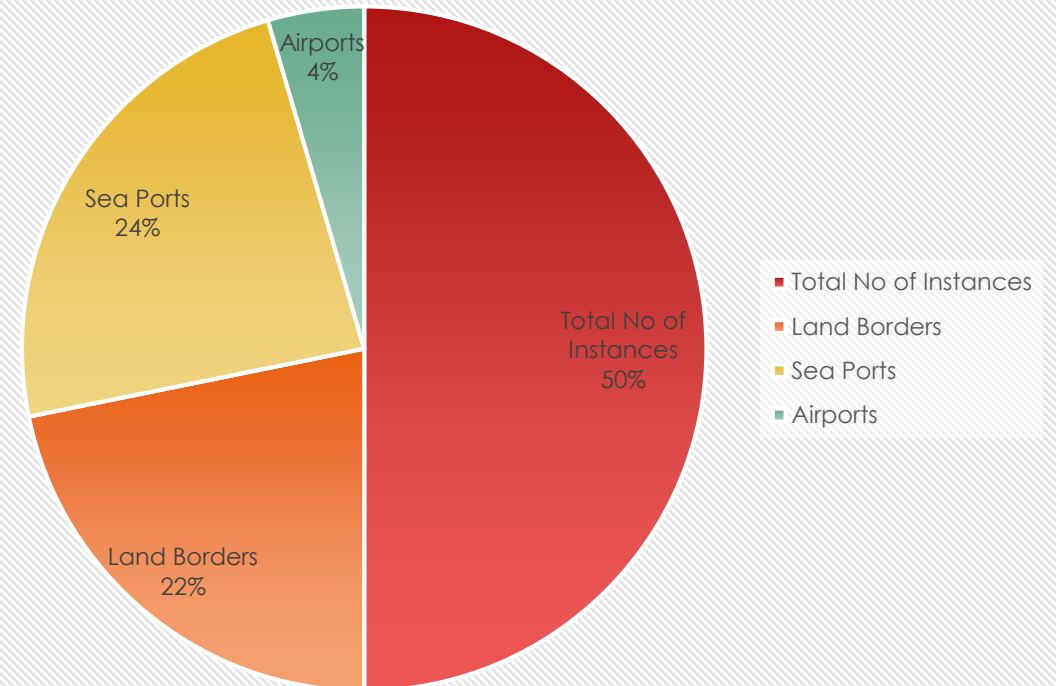
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Arms smuggling trends and routes based on NCS interdictions

- ▶ Cross-border smuggling of arms occurred most through Nigerian seaports and land borders due to lack of modern scanning machines to detect concealment and surveillance cameras/drones to monitor porous borders. From the data obtained from the Service, NCS recorded 55 numbers of instances during the period under review. Seaports instances remained the highest at 24%, follow by land borders 22% and airports accounted for 4%. This implies that arms smuggling booms more at the seaports and land borders, hence the interdictions. The conflict and the increase in insecurity correlate and significant at 0.01% with decreased seizures from 2011 to 2015, although efforts to stem

Pie Chart showing the percentage of locations of interceptions



Emerging issues and latest threats

- ▶ The Libyan and Malian rebels desperate to exchange arms for money to Boko Haram Terrorists, their financiers and collaborators as the Sect has since been affiliated to Al-Qaida in the Maghreb
- ▶ Banditry and kidnapping
- ▶ The increasing outlets for conflict emission into the polity have sparked up the desire for weapons for self-protection
- ▶ Emergence of sophisticated networks of arms dealers and smugglers.



Challenges

- ▶ Porous borders – inadequate trans-border control
- ▶ Lack of state of art equipment
- ▶ Political instability/conflict in Sahel region
- ▶ Unavailability of functional scanners at the entry points
- ▶ Leak of armories
- ▶ Political desperation



Recommendations

- ▶ Enhancing smart borders and smart connectivity using high level of technology to man our porous borders is highly recommended
- ▶ Push for political stability in Sahel region becomes paramount
- ▶ Provision of functional scanners at the entry points
- ▶ Intensification of adequate security around the armories should be looked into



Conclusion

- ▶ From the foregoing, the paper was able to capture the major factors responsible for arms smuggling, the level of performance of NCS and other security agencies in combating cross-border smuggling of arms, and the threats associated with arms smuggling in the state. Though, this has been summarily articulated above, thus the study established the connection and the influencing factors between the variables, with its attendant implications as uniquely captured. It is on this note that the study states in holistic terms that cooperation and collaboration that exist among the security agencies saddled with combating this menace is not yielding desired results. Hence needs to adopt new strategies by use of IT driven solutions become lofty.
- ▶ Adequate provision and use of ICT facilities or the technological gadgets such as the geographical information system, surveillance drones, biometrics etc are very essential in order to effectively track down the activities of trans-border criminals like terrorists, arm traffickers, illegal arm dealers etc. The use of ICT or technological gadgets no doubt will significantly help to complement the physical border control.

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**Thank you for your
attention**