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PROLIFERATION OF ILLEGAL SMALL ARMS AND THE CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE IN JUBA CITY, SOUTH SUDAN

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Abstract: *The study sought to establish the relationship between the proliferation of illegal small arms and the escalation of violence in Juba City, South Sudan. Anchored on Collier and Hoeffler (CH) Model of “Greed and Grievance in Civil War”, it adopted exploratory-explanatory research design in which both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilized. It was based on a sample of 105 participants, selected through simple random, purposive and snowballing sampling techniques. Data was collected through interviewing and observation. The data was analyzed by both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study found that the volatile boulder areas, many armed bandits and high suspicion among residents were some of the causes of small arms trade and availability. It recommends strengthening boulder security, enhancement of peace and socioeconomic support for all citizens to ensure high stability and mutual co-existence of the ethnic groups to reduce free availability and use of small arms.*

Key words: *Proliferation, Escalation, Small arms, violence, socioeconomic survival strategies*

1.1 Background of the Study

South Sudan became independent in 2011 from the Sudan which makes it the youngest nation on earth after Kosovo. Juba is the Capital city of the Republic of South Sudan. After independence Juba city has been embroiled in incidences of crimes caused by groups who are in possession of illegal small arms. Those groups are sometimes referred to as “Unknown Gunmen”. The citizens of the city have been subjected to silent suffering for the last six years. This even became worse when war broke out in the capital city which made the government to lose more control to those

gangsters who waste no time in taking chances out of the loopholes and security gaps created by the general situation of war that broke out in 2013. It is very difficult to say how many illegal guns are there in Juba because the weapons are everywhere in South Sudan. What is known is that there is a proliferation and illicit trade in small arms taking place within the city's peripheries as described by Eye Radio: "arms proliferation has contributed to insecurity in South Sudan, including cattle raiding and armed robberies" (Eye Radio, 2013). Both armed robberies and cattle rustling take place even in Juba where the seat of the national government is located. Incidences of cattle raiding at the peripheries of the city of Juba are not so rare. But robbery has become a matter of what goes-around-comes around from time to time. The most disturbing and fearful thing for the residents is the robbery with guns which is difficult to contain by the police. Sometimes the government carries out disarmament within the city as they did in the December of 2016 through cordon and search which ends up with many fire arms being captured and put to stores under the care of the security forces and the police. In juba disarmament has been carried out almost every year and has proven to be only a temporary solution limited for Christmas festive days. And after that it does not take long before some residents are robbed or killed using a gun and especially Kalashnikov or AK-47 rifle which is the most common rifle available in the country.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

South Sudan before independence was in war with North Sudan, for more than twenty years from the second civil war of the Sudan and one can imagine the inflow of both illegal second-hand and new small arms given the situation and level of violence emerging as a result of the civil war. With war arms spill over to non-state actors such as those organized gangsters because of the gaps created by the lack of the rule of law and porous borders during the armed struggle for liberation and independence. The inflow of all illegal second-hand small arms such as AK-47 and other types of small hand-guns in Juba have been increasing exponentially since that time. According to Collier, (2009) guns do not kill people, people kill people. For him the case of Rwanda indicates that mass killing does not need guns. For him, the question that does the availability of guns make a society more dangerous or less dangerous is a matter that needs to be studied. The fact is that not only cheap weapons increase the risk of violence but also their presence in abundance does. Firearms may sometimes also make violence so dangerous that they deter it. Guns are expected to be available in abundance where there is violence or conflict (p. 104).

1.3 Objectives of The study

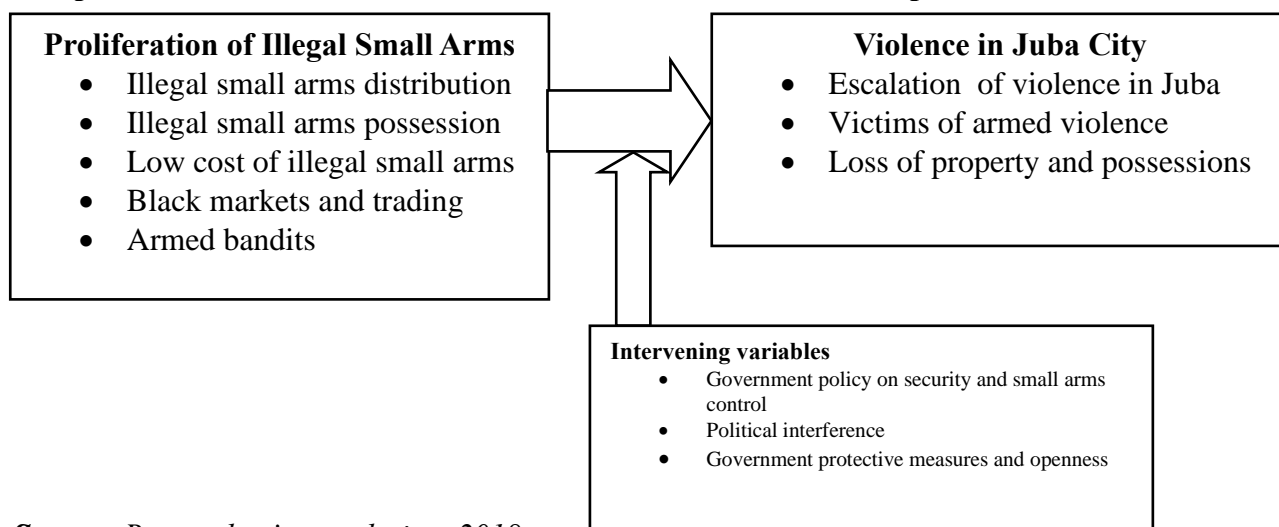
- a) To analyze the drivers (motivating forces) of illegal small arms and armed violence in Juba city
- b) To investigate how the perpetrators of armed violence access arms
- c) To discuss the manifestations of the proliferation of illegal small arms and incidences of armed violence in Juba City
- d) To assess the law enforcement agencies are unable to eradicate the proliferation of illegal small arms in Juba City
- e) To examine the efficacy of national, regional and international mechanisms that address non-conflict armed violence and illegal small arms proliferation

1.3.1 Study Questions

- i) What are the drivers (motivating forces) of illegal small arms and armed violence in Juba city
- ii) How does the perpetrators of armed violence access arms

- iii) What are the manifestations of the proliferation of illegal small arms and incidences of armed violence in Juba City
- iv) Why the law enforcement agencies are unable to eradicate the proliferation of illegal small arms in Juba City
- v) What is the efficacy of national, regional and international mechanisms that address non-conflict armed violence and illegal small arms proliferation

1.4 Conceptual Model



Source: Researcher's own design, 2018

1.5 Empirical Review of Literature

A lot of research about armed violence and gun proliferation has been conducted in both Sudan and South Sudan, but not a single research has been conducted about the violent crimes that have been taking place in the capital city Juba. They tend to focus on ethnic or communal violence and political violence of the civil wars. Although the perpetrators of armed violence are young men, the violence they cause affects everybody in the society in one way or another without exception. This kind of violence although committed with a gun by a member of an organization, it is committed by an individual against another individual or group (except gangs) without authorization from his or her group for reasons known to the individual committing the offence with either a legal or an illegal gun. Some individuals may not necessarily belong to a group or organization to access a gun for committing crimes against other citizens. The issue of non-conflict armed violence is a global phenomenon and it is hard to be regulated internationally since some countries are benefiting from the sale of guns that are produced in their homelands and there are no strong regional regulations against arms transfers. The only existing treaties that Africans are grappling with are international treaties. In South Sudan the struggle to control the illegal gun proliferation is underway and is yet to have achieved credible effects on the ground. In Juba the rate of crimes committed with guns has been on the rise since Juba became the capital city of South Sudan.

Drivers of Illegal Gun Trafficking & Armed Violence In Juba

Majority of Juba residents believe that drivers of illegal gun trafficking are the cause behind the violence that is rampant in the city of Juba. The respondents cited among others high unemployment rate and the ongoing civil war as the drivers of illegal gun trafficking and consequently the armed violence that is prevalent in their city. The possession of illegal small arms by civilians and criminals is evidenced by rampant robberies, killings and hijacking of vehicles at gun point. The perpetrators of gun violence are the unemployed youths (aged 19-35), uncontrolled foreign elements from neighboring countries and beyond, illegal gun traffickers and individual elements from organized and security forces (especially former guerrilla fighters) who have not been properly disarmed and reintegrated into their communities. The impact of the availability of illegal small arms on the security of Juba is insecurity and instability in form of loss of lives and properties, loss of trust between the residents the security forces, restriction of movement at night, displacement of some residents, and increased rate of crimes and depreciation of economic growth.

How Unauthorized Individuals Get Access To Guns

Criminals and gangsters buy small arms from government and rebels alike, from secret mobile black markets around the city and porous borders with the neighboring countries such as Uganda, Sudan, DRC, Kenya, CAR and Ethiopia. Majority of respondents admitted to the presence of black markets around the city of Juba although they are difficult to locate and not in specific locations. They are not official markets and they are not easy to locate. They are only known to criminals and gun traffickers. Therefore they are not easy to police. This study also found out that the ongoing civil war of 2013 is promoting both the illegal small arms proliferation and trade, because it has given the opportunists the chance to exploit the security loopholes that emerge as a result of this meaningless war. Most of the respondents also believe that the ongoing armed violence in their city is a contribution of small arms circulating in Juba, because most of the crimes are committed with guns including revenge killings.

The Inability of Law Enforcement Agencies To Curb Illegal Guns Proliferation

Law enforcement agencies are unable to stop gun proliferation and the violence they cause because of lack of professionalism and training, lack of serious concern to combat illegal gun proliferation, lack of responsibility and accountability, lack of comprehensive national disarmament carried out to cease proliferation of arms, porous borders with neighboring countries, and corruption attitudes of individuals within the law enforcement agencies. Lack of proper equipments and that is why many respondents cited that the police use excessive force which sometimes results in extra-judicial killings because they are afraid to use lawful means since the culprits possess the same equipments they have in terms of capacity and capability.

Mechanisms in Place For Addressing Non-Conflict Armed Violence

There are national mechanisms in a form of joint patrol operations in the city of Juba, community security bureau for small arms and light weapons, annual search and disarmament of criminals in the residential areas and those civilians found in possession of illegal small guns, holding to account the violators of law and public order and regional protection force helping in many ways. Internationally UN police are also helping in the training of the South Sudan police force, international disarmament and reintegration programs and banning of sale of arms to conflict prone zones or areas around the world. However, their impact to the security of the city has been ineffective and doubted by the citizens given the ongoing rampant armed violence and civil war

Theoretical Framework

Collier and Hoeffler (CH) Model of “Greed and Grievance in Civil War” by Collier and Hoeffler was applied to Juba Case to explain the relationship between guns and violence. It also explained factors that contribute to accessibility and availability of guns and rampant violence. It was used to analyze illegal small arms and the continuum of violence in terms of motive and opportunity as determining factors for crimes. Stolpe (2015) asserted that the theory offers “two strings of argumentation, the economic causes, which is the greed based argument, and the socio-political causes”, which is the ‘grievance based argument’ (pp. 3-4). The model compares two contrasting motivations of greed and grievance that are behind those negative acts of violence committed with guns. According to Collier, organized crimes are somewhat analogous to three other types of organizations: rebel organizations, protest movements, and armies (Collier, 2009, P. 3). The distinction between greed and grievance in the CH model is based on the motive for crimes, violence and availability of guns. According to CH model the motivation for rebellion is greed and grievance. According to the World Bank, this theory, which is now known as the Collier-Hoeffler (CH) model, confirms the link between poverty and conflict, although some of its other findings were more controversial which spark a lively international debate, which is now known as the ‘greed versus grievance’ debate. The main point of contention is centered on whether the CH model was too narrowly focused on economic explanations and thus ignored genuine grievances, or other causes of conflict suggested in the political science and international relations literatures (World Bank, 2005, p. x). Therefore, political grievances should not be ignored for economic grievances. They are to go in hand for holistic resolution of conflicts at individual and groups levels. What could be the motivational force behind guns and violence by organized criminals or gangsters? This is based on CH model in an attempt to explain the factors that may contribute to access to small arms and violence in Juba.

1.6 Methodology

This research study applied exploratory-explanatory design in which both quantitative cross-sectional survey and qualitative phenomenology research designs were utilized. Data was collected through interviewing and observation. The data was analyzed by both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study found that the volatile boulder areas, many armed bandits and high suspicion among residents were some of the causes of small arms trade and availability. It recommends strengthening boulder security, enhancement of peace and socioeconomic support for all citizens to ensure high stability and mutual co-existence of the ethnic groups to reduce free availability and use of small arms.

1.7 Study Findings

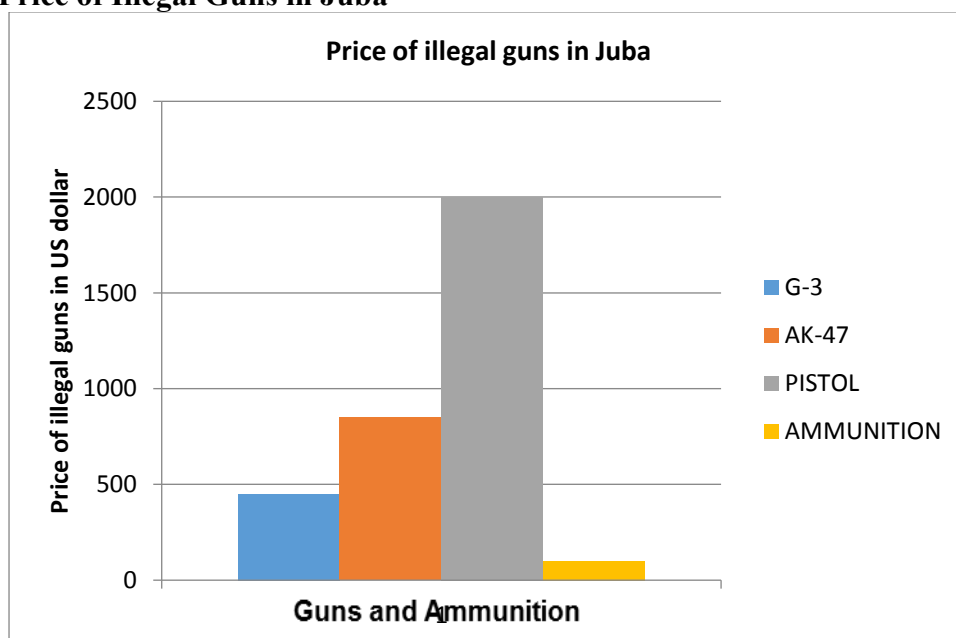
Table 1: Price of Illegal Guns in Black Markets

Type	Highest Price	Average Price	Low Price
AK-47	\$1500	\$1000	\$550
Pistols	\$1200	\$850	\$700
Bribes	20%	10%	5%
Parts/ Attachments	\$399	\$213	\$49
AK-47 Bullets	\$359(120 rounds)	\$149	\$97
Pistol Bullets	\$198 (30rounds)	\$154	\$138

Source: Study Findings, 2018

Generally, the price of illegal guns in black markets in South Sudan is not in United States dollars but that is how far they can cost when converted to dollars. In some states AK-47 costs three cows as the highest and in others two cows and below. One thousand five hundred USD is equivalent to 7000 or more South Sudanese Pounds (SSP) before civil war of 2013 could ensue. The price of illegal in Juba is higher than the rest of the country given its status as the capital city. The price of pistols exceeds the price of AK-47 rifles because its portability and legality to own in that urban environment. But the price of ammunitions is more expensive in the countryside than in the city and towns because of the scarcity.

Figure 2: Price of Illegal Guns in Juba



Source: Study Findings, 2018

This study found out that most of the respondents believe that those responsible for the proliferation of illegal small arms are some individuals from government security organs and foreign brokers from neighboring countries. The respondents have cited many manifestations of

violence in form of home attacks at night which results in killings of innocent lives and loss of properties. Nationally reported incidences of gun violence since 2011 are above ten thousand including Juba city and Juba alone records more than two thousand out the ten thousand reported incidences. When applied to the ten states Juba and Jonglei carry the highest number of the reported incidences of gun violence although Juba falls short of being number in terms of urban crimes.

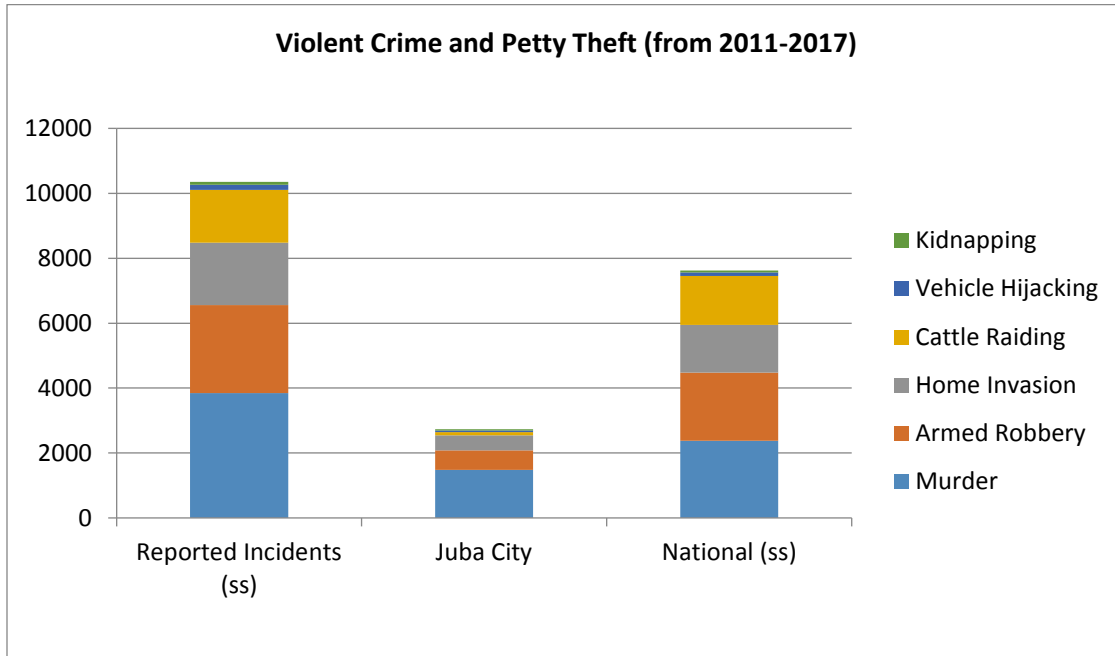


Figure3: Violent crime and petty Theft (2011 - 2017)

Source: Study Findings, 2018

Map of Movement of Firearms



Figure 4: Movement of fire arms
 Source: UNMISS, 2018

It was confirmed that the CH model provides the most appropriate explanation for the reasons behind both the civil war and gun related violence in Juba.. Manifestations of armed violence in Juba are the clearly strong signals of both economic and socio-political issues being aggravated. The unpreparedness and inability of law enforcers to deal with the problem and the suspicions that rogue elements within the very agencies may be sources of small arms indicate the immensity of the challenges faced. These suspicions were, however, not proved by this study.

1.8 Conclusion

Based on the findings the research was largely carried out in line with its objectives. Violence causes the availability of guns and the availability of guns causes violence. (Chicken and egg causality problem) Correlation here does not mean causation, because there are many factors involved beyond the availability of guns including civil wars and cultures. The research has revealed the motivating forces or drivers behind gun trafficking and the violence that has befallen the city. Research respondents also revealed that perpetrators of robberies and street fights at night are elements from the security organs and a mixture of gangsters and foreign elements from the neighboring countries and West Africa. Informal black markets which are hard to locate and police exist within the peripheries of the city. This study also found out that the ongoing civil war of 2013 is promoting both the illegal small arms proliferation and trade, because it has given the opportunists the chance to exploit the security loopholes that emerge as a result of this meaningless

war. Manifestations of armed violence are in form of home attacks at night, rapping, street fights with the police and hijacking of vehicles at gun point which results in killings of innocent lives and loss of properties. The police are unable to stop gun proliferation and the violence they cause because they are weak and ill-equipped. They lack proper training and professionalism. As for the improvement of Juba city there is need for organized deployment of discipline soldiers (from the army and other security organs) to conduct a joint patrol with the police force, application of laws, rules and regulations against the violators, which also minimizes killings and the use of excessive force to avoid killings of the culprits outside the due process of the law. .

1.9 Recommendations

This study recommends that the government of Juba to deploy a police force deep in the residential areas not just along the main roads because insecurity is still looming in the city to date. Last November alone three public officials and a pastor and his wife were gunned down in their homes. There is need for the establishment of police posts in the residential areas at the peripheries of the city in order for police to be closer to the people for immediate rescue and quick response. Rising food insecurity also contributes to increased theft and crimes committed with the use of small arms. There is need to provide regular security updates to citizens by the government through the media. There is need for government to end gun violence as a matter of priority. Government to increase security of citizens at night, for example provision of additional street lights, an emergency line, security patrols and disseminating information on areas of particular vulnerability. There is need for government to pay security forces promptly and consistently to let them perform a satisfactory work. Government to provide means for civic education by civil society on the importance of the role of different security units or institutions in order to improve citizen-security relations. Drawing from the results of this study the areas for further studies in the future may focus on the smuggling rate of small arms across the porous borders with the neighboring countries. There is also need to assess the different prices of the second hand weapons and their ammunitions that are circulating within South Sudan and from across the border lines with the neighboring countries including how black markets operate in that environment of a civil war. Another research could be carried out with regard to the number of crimes committed in Juba and South Sudan at large with illegal guns since independence in 2011.

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