

THE *TUNGAZI* (SLAVE SETTLEMENT) SYSTEM IN PRE-COLONIAL  
BIDA EMIRATE: 1857-1901

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### Introduction

Bida emirate, one of the successor states to Tsoede an Nupe kingdom in the 19<sup>th</sup> century grew to become the most successful and powerful of the Nupe emirates despite being last to be established in 1857. Other emirates established earlier were Tsonga(1810), Lafiagi (1810) Agaie (1822) and Lapai (1822).<sup>1</sup> Bida emirate became the most powerful because of her strategic central location, territorial space, richer in natural and human resources and above all blessed with ambitious and astute leadership. The leadership most especially the first three, namely Usman Zaki (1857-1859), Masaba (1859-1873) and Umaru Majigi (1873-1884) were key players that made Raba emirate foundation of 1833 to be unsuccessful due to factions, rivalry and internecine wars that engulfed the area.

The experience from the crisis in the consolidation of their power and authority and building of a strong and powerful capital and emirate came into play when Bida emerged as the new base. To overcome this, the leadership adopted 'containment policy'. The first strategy in the containment policy was to evolve a three ruling houses among which leadership rotated systematically. The ruling houses established were that of Usman Zaki, Masaba and Umaru Majigi. Secondly, in an effort to consolidate their authority and build a strong emirate amidst internal opposition and within Sokoto caliphate, imperial wars as a strategy of containment policy came into being. This strategy also took care of the much needed resources to finance the emirate. The imperial wars were undertaken within the emirate to silent the opposition and recalcitrant western Nupe on one hand and beyond central Nupe to expand territorial influence and acquisition of material resources on the other<sup>2</sup>.

The imperial wars yielded resources to the emirate that included territorial acquisition, war booties including captives and varieties of taxes. Captives turned slaves from the imperial wars and continuous demand for slaves as tribute payment in the course of the century made the emirate leadership established 1611 *tungazi* slave settlements between 1857 and 1901<sup>3</sup>. The *tungazi* became an economy and social strategy of containment towards food and social security.

It is for these reasons that this chapter examined the established *tungazi* slave settlement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bida emirate and how they became ambit of economic and social security and development to the slaves as individuals and the emirate in general. This could be adopted to ameliorate the challenges of displaced persons, settler /migrant and herdsmen and farmers issues in Nigeria.

### Foundation of *Tungazi* Slave Settlement in Nupe Land

To appreciate the discourse on the origin and practice of *tunga* settlement among the people of Bida emirate and by extension Nupeland we need to begin with identification and location of the people and area of study. The term Nupe is a generic word referring to people, their spoken

language and even their land. They constituted one of the ethnic groups that inhabited middle Niger and could be found on a tract of land from Lokoja the confluence town of Niger-Benue extending a long both sides of Niger to the frontiers of Borgu and lower basins of the Kaduna.<sup>4</sup> Today they are concentrated in the states of Niger and Kwara cutting across emirates of Lapai, Agaie, Bida, Lafiagi, Tsonga, Patigi and formed minority groups in Kontogora emirate and Koton Karfe.<sup>5</sup> Apart from linguistic and cultural identity attached to the name Nupe, it came to connote a political enclave whose power was felt beyond Nupe land to Yagba, Akoko, Afenmai as well as areas near Umaisha on the Benue.<sup>6</sup>

Political evolution in Nupe land was a gradual process. It began from the amalgamation of smaller units that shared common environment, characteristics and occupation of which they came to be known with. Among these units, Bini and Kede evolved a well defined political system. Bini evolved into a confederacy of 12 member states namely Bida, Tafyan, Esa, Doko, Towagi, Egba, Gaba, Nupeko, Eda, Panjuru, Ewu and Yisa with one among them being accorded position of leadership. The Kede on the other hand lived entirely on water activities of fishing and canoe transportation. This made them evolved an administrative structure after establishing colonies along the river courses and established their authority over cohabitants Bataci.<sup>7</sup>

From the above, emerged Nupe kingdom in the 15<sup>th</sup> century holding both the people and the land together The kingdom held sway reaching its peak in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and collapsed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was balkanised into pocket of emirates.<sup>8</sup> However, the strength of a political enclave depends much on its economy which also depends on nature of environment. The Nupe environment was friendly providing diverse economic activities based on the dictate of the environmental factors of land, water and mineral resources among others.<sup>9</sup>

Land thus, came to be the epic centre of the economy with majority of the population earning their living from it. West Africa and indeed Nupe land being agrarian society, agriculture was the most basic to the economy and the society as in one way or the other it employed majority of the populace.<sup>10</sup> Land that was one most important factor of production was never lacking both in quantity and quality. The entire land in a given settlement belongs to the community and held in trust by the village head. Acquisition of land was based on the first to clear the bush and subsequently inherited by his descendants.<sup>11</sup> Also, the availability of land, growth in population, technology and its adaptability led to continuous demand for farm lands. This demand brought about constant founding of new farm lands and settlements called *tungazi*<sup>12</sup>. The *tungazi* thus became a dependent settlement of the parent settlement, as they were often located within the community land. However, where such new farm lands/settlements have to be acquired outside the community land, it has to be on request from the host community. This is because the beneficiaries are now emigrants and strangers on foreign land. For example people of Etsu Tasha found such farm lands at Sakpe, Kutigi and Patigi among other areas in the course of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>13</sup>.

The expansion of economic activities, accumulation of wealth and development of states led to evolution of societal stratification between the have and have not. In response to this and in an effort to increase production most especially agriculture more lands (*tungazi*) were acquired hence the need for additional labour. This gave birth to institution of slavery. In the course of 18<sup>th</sup> century acquired slaves were settled on new farm lands to produce crops for their masters. In fact, it became a state policy during Etsu Jiya (1760-1785) when Nupe kingdom was at its peak extending from Ebe country neighbouring Kambari (Kontagora emirate) to Kupa (Lapai emirate)

in the Niger-Benue confluence area<sup>14</sup>. During this period, it was reported that Etsu Jiya made captured people settled and build towns<sup>15</sup>.

The policy of settling captives to build town in addition to favourable environment and adaptive ability of the people more *tungazi* came into being. This resulted into not only increase in production but specialization and diversification that widenscope of agriculture beyond dependence on mono-cropping and subsistence to surplus production.<sup>16</sup> This made a colonial officer to report that 'the Nupe is not dependant on any one crop for his mainfood supply... There is large variation in the crops sown, some of which are sown and reapedtwice in a year'<sup>17</sup>.

#### Slave Settlement *Tungazhi* in the Emirate Period.

No doubt the excruciating internecine wars of about three decades in the central Nupe area not only disrupted economic activities of the area but left the leadership of the emergent Emirate in a dare position of need of resources to build the emirate and put her on a footing of sound and sustainable economy. To achieve this, the emirate leadership has to secure its position and that of the emirate through a number of war expeditions to tap fishery of natural and human recourses within and beyond its immediate territories. This gave the emirate additional territories, and area of influence to collect taxes as well as large quantity of booties including slaves.

However, in the utilisation of these resources the emirate has to be guided by the caliphate economic policies of massive production of agriculture (food and industrial raw materials), industrial goods and services to meet both domestic and export needs.<sup>18</sup> Thus, ownership or control of lands was vested in the hands of government to improve access and increase production by the people and deployment of slave labour on farm estate.<sup>19</sup> The emirate as done at the capital were urged to embark on agriculture production on its reserve estates.<sup>20</sup>

Armed with the economic policy of the caliphate most especially on the control of land, the emirate leadership divided the entire area of influence into four spheres influence. The first was the conquered territory refers to outside people that included Gbari,Igbira, Kamberi,Kakanda,Yagba,Bunu and Kyedye that formed the nucleus of Nupe kingdom and the emirate while the remaining towns and villages within central Nupe formed the third sphere. Bida the capital city is the forth realm<sup>21</sup>.The divided areaof influence apart from the capital city became areas where much emirate resources from taxes and tributes were sourced. The imperial wars led to the conquest of outside territories and those oftowns and districts in the western Nupe area that were in opposition to the emirate leadership. From these territories, booties and slaves in large quantity were acquired.<sup>22</sup>

The third sphere of influence was also parcelled into smaller units and allocated to princes and nobles as fiefs territories while the adjoining communities in and around Bida the seat of the government were divided along the threeroyal domains. Thus, Usman Zaki control the land in the eastern part where its palace is located hence called Ekpantsu Usman Zaki. Etsu Masaba that has his palace to the west controls theland in the west refers to Ekpantsu Saba while Umar Majigi lay claims to the southern part of the territory.<sup>23</sup>

As pointed out earlier, the need for resources made Bida leadership embarked upon wars of expansion. From these wars slaves were acquired in large quantity. Theacquired slaves were either sold or conscripted into the emirate military or those of the nobles.<sup>24</sup> However, following the abolition of slave trade and in line with the caliphate policy of agriculture production towards

food security, slave trade continued to decline. In place of trade in slaves, slaves labour became important economic institutions in the production of goods and services. Nobles and men of wealth acquired slaves who worked their farms in the villages. The ruling class also continuously settled slaves on farm settlements as cultivators and craft workers. This continued till the conquest and imposition of colonial administration in 1901.<sup>25</sup>

The slaves were settled in various *tungazi* established most especially in the Trans-Kaduna area and part of C1S-Kaduna. The area of slaves settlements cut across six districts of Lemu, Jima, Katcha, Badeggi, Kutigi and Mokwa. Lemu district had 740 *tungazi*; the largest in number of *tungazi*. Etsu Masaba (1859-1873) was also responsible for the largest number of slave settlements with a total of 694 *tungazi*. The slaves settled on these *tungazi* cut across different ethnic groups with varying population. For instance out of 1415 slave settled 1074 were Nupe, Yoruba 87, Afenmai 16, Gbari 30, Igbira 8, Koro 1, Bassa 1, Kambari 10, Hausa 41, Fulani 41 and unknown 96.<sup>26</sup>

In the settlement of slaves on *tungazi* conditions of adaptability and skills were considered. For instance Nupe captives who came from similar environment and speaks same language could easily adapt to the new place of abode. The Yagba and Igbira slaves that were settled on *tungazi* was done due to their weaving skills to enrich the Nupe textile industry. Infact in the course of 19<sup>th</sup> century the name Nupe became a trade mark for her cloth which was a bi-product of marriage of Yagba and Nupe weaving skills. The Hausas were also settled to tendered horses while some Yorubas because of their knowledge of making gun were also settled in Bida and surrounding areas.

Foundation dates and settlement patterns of Tungazi

District of Settlement	Usman Zaki 1857-1859	Masaba 1859-1823	Umar Majgi 1873-1882	Maliki 1882-1895	Abubakar 1895-1901
Lemu	30	386	137	168	19 (740)
Jima	7	149	109	20	0 (285)
Katcha	4	35	136	7	2 (184)
Badeggi	0	60	71	47	1 (179)
Kutigi	8	52	20	66	35 (181)
Mokwa	6	12	1	3	0 (22)
Total	55	694	474 <sup>10</sup>	311	57 (1591)

Source: Mason, M. Captive and Client Labour...459

#### Abstract

Central Nupe was engulfed in internecine wars that lasted nearly three decades that rendered foundation of emirate of Raba ineffective. The end of the conflicts in 1857 led to the establishment of Bida emirate in the ancient Bini settlement that grew to become a war camp. With the establishment of the emirate came the challenges of the leadership consolidation of their power and authority and building of a strong emirate through containment of the opposition within central Nupe and expansion beyond Nupe land. The imperial wars that ensued within and beyond Nupe land led to acquisition of large number of captives turned slaves and establishment of slave settlement called *Tungazi*. The established *Tungazi* served dual purpose of economic growth and social security in the development of Bida emirate. Using historical research method of interview, published and unpublished materials and reconnaissance survey, information collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential model of interpretation. The end result

of economic growth and social security of the emirate can be applied in solving economic and social security challenges of contemporary Northern Nigeria.

Keywords: social security, conflict, tungazhi, settlement, containment policy

As part of the consolidation of emirate leadership power and authority, Bida town and adjoining land were divided among the three royal houses. Within the walls and immediate surrounding the land came to be known as *esozhi* or royal estate. On this royal estates royal slaves were settled, lived and cultivate the land.<sup>27</sup> Royal horses are also taken care of them land. The other land apart from the *esozhi* was the *tungazi* discussed earlier where slaves also lived for crop production.

#### Social and Economic Importance of *Tungazhi* to Bida Emirate

Prior to the emergence of Bida emirate in 1857 *tungazhi* were in existence in response to population growth and need for more farm land, their establishment in the emirate period by the emirate leadership revolutionised their significance. It is on this note we examined their social and economic importance in this section.

The slaves settled on *tungazhi* were forcefully removed from their native home to a new land to begin a new life as aliens and slaves. Though, caution was taken in settling slaves to avoid creating rivalry and discontentment among them, hence people from the same background were settled in relatively same area. For instance, in Jima district six out of twelve *tungazhi* and eighteen out of twenty eight *tungazhi* in Kutigi areas were settled by captives from Mokwa.<sup>28</sup>

Similarity, despite the passing of control of land to the emirate leadership by the caliphate economy policy, the original inhabitants were accorded respect of *kintsozil* landlords. Thus in the settlement of slaves on any *tungazhi*, though *kintsozhi* have no power to stop them, in principle they were made to grant land to slave owing elites of Bida. This ensures harmonious co-existence between the landlords and inhabitants of *tungazhi* thereby ensuring security of lives and properties and growth in production.<sup>29</sup>

From 1857 to the late 1880s can be considered as period of consolidation of the emirate power and authority. It was also a period occasioned by stiff oppositions within, most especially from the western Nupe elites and period of expansion. In the process, a number of imperial wars were fought and many captives turned slaves were acquired and settled on the *tungazhi*. This was also a period where labour of slaves and clientship was important to the economy of the emirate. It was also a period when many of the title holders and nobles have private armies which they used to invade weak areas for booties. In the light of this, *tungazhi* became more secured for habitation than other lands that are liable to invasion by the armies from Bida.<sup>30</sup> This therefore afforded free economic opportunities and stability when compared to elsewhere.

To many elite of the Bida ruling class, ownership of *tungazhi* became a source of investment and wealth nourishment. This was so through annual payment of royalty in terms of agricultural produce and gifts or tributes paid as *emisa* from time to time. The *tunga* owners whenever in want of food or other necessity turn them into store house in which they send through their emissaries to the leadership of *tungazhi*.<sup>31</sup> However, the most striking importance of *tungazhi* as source of investment, is that it gives room for inheritance. Thus, the acquired farms in *tungazhi* are directly inherited and shared by the children of the deceased king or owner.<sup>32</sup>

The economy and sustainability of Bida, the capital city of the emirate came to depend much on the produce most especially of food from the *tungazhi*. Once Bida became the new administrative centre of central Nupe (apart from the invitation or directive of the emirate leadership to officials and supports to relocate to Bida from Raba and elsewhere) other group of people mostly traders and artisans moved in to Bida. Most of the new settlers were unproductive or into service provision

hence dependent on the labour of slaves for food. Thus, Mason rightly observed that:

The *tungazi* produced the food and the fodder which sustained the large and often unproductive population of the capital- its rulers and courtiers, the slaves and servants, the middle men and the long distance traders, as well as the sizeable private armies of the nobles, each with its force of calvary.<sup>33</sup>

Apart from food supply that emanated from *tungazhi* evidence abound that indicated that they contribute to the market economy of Bida through production of raw materials and manufactured goods. For instance, though Shea nut trees grew and food in Nupe land were in abundance, its processing into shea butter is a task that requires enormous effort and labour of which slaves in *tungazhi* became necessary. This development cannot be unconnected with the growth of export of shea butter from 1871 when over 600 *tungazhi* were established. Thus in 1871, 120 tonnes worth of 4800 shea butter was exported and rose to about 637 tonnes valued at 25,400 pounds (?) in 1876 and increase to 1500 tonnes valued at 58,000pounds (?) in 1879. The cost of a tonne of shea butter as at then range between 39-40pounds (?).<sup>34</sup>

With the establishment of *tungazhi* across Nupe land, apart from swelling the population, it contributed to the economic growth of the area by bringing more acres of land under cultivation. The *tungazhi* were usually established on vacant lands between villages. Thus, virtually all land in Bini section of Nupe land that were hitherto unoccupied or not cultivated (running from Jima to Lemu) became homes and farm lands. This attracted observation and comment that the area has become an "upon rolling farm land, with no true bushand no trees except shea, *dorowa* and palm".<sup>35</sup>

Many of the settled slaves on *tungazhi* came with their occupation and skills. Not all were farmers or hunters, some most especially, those from Yagba, Isanlu, Okene, Akoko, and Afenmai specialised in textile production. With their settlement in Nupe land and their skills in textual industry, they added value to the industry, thereby increasing the quantity and quality of cloth production in Nupe land.<sup>36</sup>In fact, Nupe cloth became a trade mark in the whole of the region as textile products became a major article of trade of which European merchants attested to not only its quality but its superiority.<sup>37</sup>

#### Implication of *Tungazhi* to Contemporary Northern Nigerian Social and Economy Challenges

Social and economic development can only thrive in any giving society where security of lives and properties are ensured. Nigeria at independence in 1960 and up to the end of 1970s lived in relatively peaceful environment except for the thirty month civil wars and isolated cases of communal clashes and violence. During this period, Nigerians were majorly engaged in agricultural and allied production accounting for her large percentage of Gross Domestic Production and foreign exchange. However, from the mid-1970s following the exploration of oil and oil boom period when production was neglected in place of import of virtually everything ranging from paper to plastic, Nigeria began to witness rural-urban migration, rise in crime, breakdown of family value and disrespect for dignity of labour. The resultant effect being decline in agricultural and other sectors' production and import of food as well as corresponding rise in crime rate and criminality. In Nigeria of today this has accentuated not only into armed robbery, arson and rape but complete communal/tribal or religious conflict that resulted in the destructions of lives and properties and displacement of millions from their homes. This has culminated into social and economic insecurities.

In the last two decades, crime and criminality in Northern Nigeria and indeed in Nigeria has been on increase. The menace of kidnappers, armed banditry, cattle rustlers, herder-farmers conflict and above all the activities of Boko Haram insurgency that has turned the region into a arena of insecurity or almost a warzone. This situation has led to loss of hundreds of thousands of lives and

made them to abandon their means of livelihood, pauperised. They have fled their homes to become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) or refugees in their own country<sup>38</sup>. The combined activities of the aforementioned actors have not only halted agricultural and allied production but other economic activities due to fear, threat and anxiety among the people. Farmers could not have access to their farms, artisans could not visit their workshops, traders could not attend markets and even free movement became curtailed.

Prior to this unfortunate situation, the breakdown of family values and communal living among the populace led to settler and indigene dichotomy. The mistrust built in by the settler/indigene phenomenon heightened hate, rage, conflict and violence that the vices identified above identified were built upon<sup>39</sup>, despite over a century or more of corporate existence of Nigeria and most part of the area that became Northern Nigeria.

Making reference to Sokoto caliphate's economic policy and its implementation in Bida emirate in handling social and economic challenges expected to emanate from settlement of slaves on *tungazhi* for production purposes, contemporary Northern Nigeria and indeed Nigeria can benefit from.

Beginning with the declaration of all land to be state land allowed for control and allocation of land to slaves forcefully removed from their homes. Thus, government using the instrument of 1979 Land Use Act, the IDPs, orphans and even reformed bandits and insurgents can be settled by the government on identified and allocated land so that they can began a new life. Such land can be acquired by the government in agreement with community leaders of host environment from the uncultivated land available.

Similarly, mutual trust can be built between or among the land lords or the natives who let go their lands and IDPs turned settlers to enhance integration and removal of inferiority complex and stigmatisation.

Government should provide enough incentives to the new settlers based on chosen occupation or economic activities to enhance or accelerate production and provision of services.

As people are settled in new homes and are involved in economic activities, adequate security should be provided. This can be done through joint effort between the regular or official security personnel and community policing volunteers.

#### Conclusion

Prior to the advent of Bida emirate in 1857 slave trade has been on decline. Though, the emirate relied more on acquisition of slaves in the first two decades of existence it continuously settled them on lands that came to be known as *tungazhi* for economic and social productivity. In settling slaves on *tungazhi* areas of origin, ethnic/cultural affiliation and economic background were considered to reduce tension and conflicts. These considerations can be adopted in dealing with activities of crime and criminality that resulted in the displacement of thousands of people from their homes, thereby distorting the economic and social wellbeing of the people and the region of Northern Nigeria.

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## ARMS PROLIFERATION: THE BANE OF MILITANCY, BANDITRY AND EXTREMISM IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*Since the last decade, security in Nigeria has deteriorated to an extent that is perhaps second to only the Nigerian civil war in terms of casualties. Within this period, Nigeria has witnessed the rise of terrorists, bandits and several violent extremist groups whose activities have led to the death of tens of thousands, displacement of hundreds of thousands and loss of properties. These violent activities have cost the nation billions of dollars as a significant portion of the country's yearly budget is allocated to the security sector. The increase in these violent activities despite government's efforts informed the need to examine the issue of arms proliferation in the country which is the focus of this paper. The paper relied on secondary sources of data collection and adopted a qualitative descriptive method of analysis. The theory of state failure was applied to explain the inability of the Nigerian state to ensure security of her citizens as well as its inability to maintain its monopoly on the legitimacy of the use of force. The study found out that Nigeria there is a huge arms market. Violent state actors get arms both from government and non-government sources. The paper concluded that the insecurity problem of terrorism, banditry and violent extremism will continue to worsen and the government efforts to restore order will be an effort in futility if the proliferation of arms is not curbed. The paper recommended the need to ensure border security, strengthening of intelligence agencies and security establishments in the country, commitment to the implementation of a national, regional and international framework against arms proliferation as solutions.*

Keywords: Arms Proliferation, Banditry, Terrorism, Extremism, Security

### Introduction

When the Cold War ended in 1991, there was worldwide optimism for international peace and development due to the belief that a shift from superpower proxy conflicts in the Third World will pave way for increased attention towards socio-economic development. However, actual events in recent years have disastrously shattered those expectations. In place of enhanced security, virulent internal conflicts accompanied by unprecedented civilian casualties and gross violations of human rights have emerged at an alarming rate. The local roots and causes of the conflicts are numerous and diverse. However, in nearly all of the conflicts, the diffusion of small arms, particularly from the industrialized nations to the developing world has played a decisive role in the escalation, intensification and resolution of these conflicts (Jekada, 2005). Following this, In his famous 2000 Millennium Report to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the then Secretary General, Kofi Anan, brought the phenomenon of arms proliferation to the forefront of the UN's agenda when he asserted that the death toll from small arms dwarfs that of all other weapons systems—and in most years greatly exceeds the toll of the atomic bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as “weapons of mass destruction”. Small arms proliferation is not merely a security issue; it is also an issue of human rights as well as development. The proliferation of small arms sustains and exacerbates armed conflicts. It endangers peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. It undermines respect for international humanitarian law. It threatens legitimate but weak governments and it benefits terrorists as well as the perpetrators of organized crime. Since then, this genre of weapons has

continued to attract concerns not only from the international community, but also from nation-States because of the multifaceted effect it has in conflict and non-conflict situations. SALW result in high death toll directly inflicted by their use; but more than this, they have indirect and pernicious consequences of humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions. This has underscored the imperative for legal measures to regulate arms in order to prevent, combat and eradicate their proliferation.

Arms Proliferation in Nigeria is not new and predates colonial era (Saburi Biobaku, 1957). Guns were introduced by the Europeans prior to colonialism during legitimate and illegitimate (slave) trade between them and Africans. Subsequently, guns and other arms, ammunition and weapons were used by Europeans to realize their imperial ambitions when they used force to suppress Africa's resistance to European incursion, conquest and colonialism. The gunboat diplomacy was popularly employed by the British to compel African chiefs to enter into various treaties with them. There was establishment of West African Frontier Force (WAFF) used by the British which was used to execute the British-Aro War of (1901-1902), and other forms of resistance in Nigeria, West Africa, and Africa. The role of Royal Niger Company (RNC) later United African Company (UAC) backed by British Government in using force to suppress dissenting communities is imperative (ChumaOkoro, 2011). These arms or guns possibly found their ways to the hands of Africans during the period of colonialism subsequently used in tradition and hunting in the rural community. In no time, guns and gun powder became symbols of strength and power, and were later transformed into ceremonial weapons displayed during funerals, burials, ceremonies and customary festivals among the natives. They also became symbols of individual and ethnic grandeur, and for deterring aggressors and invaders. Today, guns are no longer just ornaments of prestige, or just for hunting, safari and expedition. Guns have transformed in terms of functionality, lethality, sophistication, ubiquity and motive of ownership. They have become more weapons of criminality and instruments of the underworld (Chuma-Okoro, 2011). Ostensibly, the 1959 Firearms Act was enacted to check the increasingly rate of arms proliferation in Nigeria towards independence. The failure of the Nigerian government to execute a comprehensive disarmament and arms destruction programme after the civil war (1967-1970) exacerbated the proliferation of guns and illicit arms trafficking. As at 2002, the number of SALW in Nigeria was estimated by various reports and studies at between 1 and 3 million including arms in lawful possession of members of the armed forces and the police and those (majority) in the hands of civilians.

In examining its relations to development in Nigeria, the fundamental implication of arms accumulation and circulation is in its tendency to pave way for higher risk of armed violence. The supply of arms stimulates violence, instead of dialogue and has many undesirable effects. Violence leads to loss of lives and properties and no foreign investor will invest in a place where there is no peace. According to Ali (2014) the interdependence of small arms control, security and development suggests that no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere which is conducive to the production and distribution of small arms. It prevents people from conducting business, leading to reduction in trade and foreign investment. Since 1999, the pernicious and multidimensional effects of the proliferation and misuse of arms have also been felt through the prevalence of organized armed violence and criminality in Nigeria, which have become defining characteristics of the socio-political landscape. Literarily, Nigeria cannot be described as a country at war; but it is predominantly militarized and is plagued by armed criminality and internecine armed conflicts. Current examples include the activities of terrorists, bandits and extremists. This is in addition to other acts of criminality and violence. It is very evident that since the year 2000, Nigeria has been faced with one conflict or the other which has led to loss of lives and properties. This continued perpetration of violence has had a negative toll on the economy and the overall development of the country. While the country is still battling terrorists in the North-East, banditry and violent extremism is on the rise. It is against this background that this paper seeks to

examine the relationship between the proliferation of arms and the hydra-headed problem of terrorism, banditry and violent extremism bedeviling Nigeria.

#### Statement of Problem

Insecurity has been a persistent and recurring problem in Nigeria in the last decade. Since the activities of Boko Haram insurgents to the rise of bandits and other extremist groups in the country, Nigeria has been a nightmare to its citizens especially since the transition into democratic rule in 1999, as it accounts for the most protracted conflict in the period under review. There is no denying that the West African sub-region has housed several violent conflicts in this period, but that Nigeria's conflict has been the most enduring in the sub-region, accounting for well over 1.7 million IDPs as at June, 2017, according to Displacement Tracking Matrix-DTM released by OIM (UNHCR, 2017). From the South to the North, Nigeria heats up with the activities of non-state combatants, who have taken up arms against the state in a hit and run tactics situation or direct confrontation as the case may be. Overall, the activities of these groups have continued to have debilitating effects on the country's socio-politico-economic life.

In its quest to restore peace, the Nigerian government has mobilized both men and material resources. Hundreds of billions of naira and thousands of persons have been sacrificed. Yet, the insurgency in the North East has become like an illness refusing to be cured. This has been accompanied by increase in other activities like banditry. These conflicts have been exacerbated and even intensified by the proliferation of arms which has motivated and provided the protagonists with the tools which enable them to instigate and sustain violent actions and other criminal activities. These issues present a major obstacle to achieving long-term peace (with justice) and human security. Ironically, most of those small arms are residue of the ongoing conflicts in the sub-region, which as a result of uncompleted disarmament and weapons control programmes have consequently become a source of security in Nigeria. Added to this problem, porous borders and weak governmental capacity have facilitated the trans-shipment of these weapons. The proliferation of arms has gone beyond impacting more than just an individual's well-being; it is challenging the very existence of the Nigerian state.

#### Conceptual Review

##### Arms Proliferation

Proliferation is defined as the sudden increase in the number or amount of an entity. Used in various contexts, it implies rapid expansion, abundance or multiplication. When used in relation to arms, it describes the spread of the weapons, generally, from one country to another or from one group or individual to another. Proliferation of weapons can be defined as their spread from one group of owners or users to another. This can be horizontal, which refers to the acquisition of weapons systems by states not previously possessing them, or vertical, which refers to increases in the arsenals of these states already possessing particular weapons (Obasi, 2001). Proliferation, as a mode of arms spread or multiplication is facilitated by certain intermediaries in response to both legal and illegal demands. The Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva (2001) observes that arms do not proliferate by themselves- They are sold, resold, perhaps stolen, diverted, and maybe legally or illegally transferred several more times-, At each junction in this complex chain of legal and illicit transfer, people-brokers, insurgents, criminals, government officials and /or organized groups – are active participants in the process.

##### Banditry

Banditry is a type of [organized crime](#) committed by [outlaws](#) typically involving the threat or use of [violence](#). A person who engages in banditry is known as a bandit and primarily commits crimes such as [extortion](#), [robbery](#), and [murder](#), either as an individual or in groups. Bandits are known to

have several attributes. It was Bankoff (1998) who asserted that whatever the name or attributes, the bandit might be a fugitive, a thief, a rustler, a highwayman, an assailant, an abductor, a rapist or a murderer. He was difficult to classify or quantify, and colonial authorities made little effort to do either, simply using the generic term "bandit" to cover a multitude of people who, operating in bands, engaged in the frequent robbery and assault of travellers and the widespread pillage and plunder of rural communities.

### Terrorism

The UN General Assembly Resolution 49/60 (adopted on December 9, 1994), titled "Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism," contains a provision describing terrorism as Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them. The UN Member States still have no agreed-upon definition of terrorism, and this fact has been a major obstacle to meaningful international countermeasures. It is pertinent to state that consensus would be necessary for a single comprehensive convention on terrorism, which some countries favor in place of the present 12 piecemeal conventions and protocols. Cynics have often commented that one state's "terrorist" is another state's "freedom fighter". The Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice in Cairo, Egypt in 1998. Terrorism was defined in the convention as: Any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs in the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda and seeking to sow panic among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or seeking to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupying or seizing them, or seeking to jeopardize national resources. UN Security Council Resolution 1566 (2004) gives a definition: criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

### Efforts by the Nigerian Government to Curb Arms Proliferation

The Nigerian government established National Commissions for the Control of the Proliferation and Unlawful Circulation of Light Weapons (NATCOM) for the implementation of the ECOWAS moratorium in July 2000 less than two years after the agreement on the moratorium which was politically-binding moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms were made, later legally binding in 2006. A year later in July 2001, the NATCOM publicly destroyed a stockpile of arms and ammunition seized by the security forces in which a total of 1,257 weapons worth 50 million Naira were destroyed. Among the weapons destroyed were 428 rifles, 494 imported pistols and 287 locally-made pistols. These unlawful weapons were seized by the security forces between 1998 and 2011. In September 2001, a request by the NATCOM for the suspension of the granting of licenses to carry weapons by police representatives were accepted (Aderinwale, 2005 cited in Ocheche, 2005). Nigerian government played a prominent role in the adoption of the Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa signed on October 31, 1998 in Abuja, Nigeria renewable for a period of three years later extended in 2001. On December 1999, the ECOWAS member states adopted a code of conduct for implementation of the Moratorium. The Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) was established with assistance from UNDP (Ndime, 2005). The Nigerian government has also entered into bilateral cooperation with its neighbours, Benin Republic, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. They have taken a

number of measures to boost cross-border cooperation and enhance security at the borders. These measures include the establishment of joint commissions like Chad-Nigeria Joint Commission, Niger-Nigeria Joint Commission, Benin-Nigeria Joint Commission, Cameroon-Nigeria Joint Commission, Lake Chad Basin Commission and joint border patrols between Nigeria and Republic of Benin (Adejo, 2005). Nigeria is a signatory to a number of international measures to curb arms proliferation. It supported the adoption in 2005 of the international instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, and has argued that political document needs to be transformed into a legally binding instrument in order to control effectively and criminalize the illicit movement of arms. At the regional level, Nigeria has supported ECOWAS measures aimed at reducing the proliferation of arms. At the global level, Nigeria is a signatory to the United Nations (UN) Firearms Protocol on November 13, 2001; which it ratified on July 15, 2004 (Vines, 2005; Hazen and Horner, 2007). Nigeria supported the extension of ECOWAS Moratorium in October 2004 for the second time and the agreement to strengthen it by transforming it into a legally binding convention.

#### Method of Data Collection

The qualitative nature of our study informed our choice of using secondary sources of data collection. This documentary method of data collection is particularly useful when the task is to gather, interpret and extract valuable information so as to draw inference from the available evidence to reach a conclusion. The study collected data from books, journals and internet publications, papers, magazines and newspapers and other documents relevant to the subject under investigation.

#### Method of Data Analysis

The qualitative-descriptive method was adopted as a method of data analysis. This method involves analyzing the contents from secondary sources and drawing logical inference.

#### Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the failing state theory as its framework of analysis. A Failed state has been defined as a state that is unable to perform the two fundamental functions of the [sovereign nation-state](#) in the modern world system: it cannot project authority over its territory and peoples, and it cannot protect its national boundaries. The governing capacity of a failed state is [attenuated](#) such that it is unable to fulfill the administrative and organizational tasks required to control people and resources and can provide only minimal public services. A failed state is composed of feeble and flawed institutions. Often, the [executive](#) barely functions, while the [legislature](#), [bureaucracy](#), and armed forces have lost their capacity and professional independence. A failed state suffers from crumbling, faltering utility supplies and educational and health facilities, and deteriorating basic human-development indicators, such as infant mortality and literacy rates. Failed states create an [environment](#) of flourishing corruption and negative growth rates, where honest economic activity cannot flourish. State failure comes in degrees and is often a function of both the collapse of state institutions and societal collapse. A strong state provides core guarantees to its citizens and others under its jurisdiction in the three interrelated realms of security, economics, and politics. A failed state cannot maintain a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence and minimize internal conflict. Thus, state failure [manifests](#) itself when a state can no longer deliver physical security, a productive economic environment, and a stable [political system](#) for its people. However, a relevant contribution to the field of failed states and its attributes was made by Goldstone (2008) in his paper *Pathways to State Failure*. He defines a failed state as one that has lost both its effectiveness and legitimacy. Effectiveness means the capability to carry out state functions such as providing security or levying taxes. Legitimacy means the support of important groups of the population. A state that retains one of these two aspects is not failed as such; however it is in great danger of

failing soon,

There has been intense debate among scholars on what level a state can get to before it is classified as a failed state. Nigeria is sometimes referred to as a failed state by some scholars and as a failing state by others. Going by the indicators discussed above, the Nigeria state has lost control over its boundaries, has been failing to provide physical security for its citizens, demonstrated its incapability to maintain a monopoly on the legitimate use of force and minimize internal conflict. This explains why the proliferation of arms is possible in the country. The failure of the government to man the borders and address the myriads of socioeconomic, cultural, religious and political issues in the country has led to the twin problem of the rise of terrorism, banditry and extremism and the illicit flow of arms. The implications has manifested in the wanton loss of lives and property recorded in the country in the last decade. The inability to curb the flow of arms that has facilitated the growth of violent groups who have inflicted enormous pains on Nigerians is an attribute of state failure.

#### Arms Proliferation in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis

Nigeria is a transit and destination of arms (Obasi, 2001). Out of an estimated 640 million arms and light weapons in circulation world-wide, 100 million are estimated to be Africa, about 30 million in sub-Saharan Africa and 8 million in West Africa alone and Over 70% of about 8 to 10 million illegal weapons in West Africa are in Nigeria (Nnaka, 2018). As at 2002, the number of arms in Nigeria was estimated by various reports and studies at between 1 and 3 million including arms in lawful possession of members of the armed forces and the police and those (majority) in the hands of civilians. Smart (2020) in his study, concluded that this number has more than doubled in 2020. He adds that the majority of these arms, about 59%, are in the hands of civilians, 38% are owned by government armed forces, 2.8 % by police and 0.2% by armed groups. According to the UN (2005), 80% of arms and light weapons in civilian possession were illegally acquired because of the strict regulations. It is instructive to mention at this junction that arms do not just move everywhere, but where they are demanded. Therefore, there are demand factors in the proliferation of arms. Some scholars focus on the supply side or push factors of proliferation of arms like willing sellers, lucrateness, and porous borders while others concentrate on demand or pull factors like crime, violence, conflicts, riots and unrests (Chuma-Okoro, 2011 cited in Nte, 2011). The gun trade is worth \$4 billion annually, of which up to \$1 billion may be unauthorized or illicit. Eight million new guns are manufactured every year by at least 1, 249 companies in 92 countries. Ten to 14 billion units of ammunition are manufactured every year enough to kill every person in the world twice over (Obasi, 2001). African countries spent over 300 billion dollars on armed conflict between 1990 and 2015 equaling the sum of international aid that was granted to Africa within the same period. An estimated 79% of small arms in Africa are in the hands of civilians (Ibrahim, 2003 cited in Nte, 2011).

In Nigeria, the proliferation of these arms is fuelling banditry, terrorism, extremism and other acts of insurrection. In fact, between 1999 and 2003, there were over 30 communal clashes, sectarian violence and ethno-religious conflicts with each claiming hundreds of lives and properties, and internal displacement of women and children. Between 2009 and 2020, the activities of terrorists in the country has led to the death of over 30,000 persons between 2009 and 2020 and displaced tens of thousands particularly in the North Eastern part of the country (UN, 2020). To add to this, Obasi (2015) stated that the proliferation and use of arms has led to an average of 1000 people per year since 1999. Moreso, injuries due to arms and light weapons have increased as much as ten-fold in urban areas in Nigeria because most homicides are committed using small arms and light weapons (John, Mohammed, Pinto and Nkanta, 2007 cited in Nte, 2011). In his study, Nte (2011) asserted that there is a direct link between the proliferation of arms and escalation of conflicts into a full-blown war.

The assertion of Nte (2011) has proven to be true as Nigeria is now faced with a insecurity situation with Boko Haram terrorists in the North East, bandits in the North Central and separatist and militant groups in the East, West and South respectively - a situation akin to a state of full blown war. These armed groups possess arms and ammunitions that make it difficult for the country's security to easily curb their activities. In several reports, the nation's army had in times more than one, been overpowered by terrorists. This includes attacks on military bases and formations in the North East by terrorists who are armed with sophisticated weapons. The incessant attacks by bandits on farms and schools are not done without the use of sophisticated weapons with which they use to engage and confront military and other security agents that attempted to forestall their nefarious activities. In the South-East and South-South, there has been a rise in the guerilla style activities of gunmen whose primary targets are police officers and members of the country's armed forces. Again, no group will engage in such acts or wish to take its chances in confronting security officers unless they are emboldened by the arms in their possession. Consequently, we argue in this paper that terrorism, banditry and extremism thrive in Nigeria due to the proliferation of arms. Every effort to address the security challenges in the country will yield no significant result unless a great part of these efforts is channeled towards curbing the proliferation of arms in Nigeria. To be fair, the Nigerian state has made several efforts to check the proliferation of arms but not from the demand side, or the root causes. To be truthful, most of these efforts made had been superficial or superfluous.

Arms proliferation is still a booming practice in the country. For instance, in the South known for activities of separatist groups in the South-East and Gunmen and militants in the South-South, arms are gotten from several arms market. The table below shows a list of some of the weapons purchased in an arms market in Awka which is a source of weapons for the extremists within that region.

Table 1: Craft-Produced Small Arms in Awka

Weapon	Features	Ammunition	Cost
Pocket single -shot handgun	Approximately 13 cm long; steel muzzle to wooden stock; extremely rudimentary hammer requiring cocking; effective only at a distance of 1 -2m; uses single shotgun cartridge	Various calibers of shotgun cartridge	NGN4,000/USD32
Four-shot revolver	Available in manual and automatic configurations	9mm, 7.5mm, or 8.5mm	NCN8,000/USD64
Eight-shot revolver	Available in manual and automatic configurations	9mm, 7.5mm, or 8.5mm	NCN12,000/USD96
Single-barrel shotgun	Breech-loading safety cocking mechanism	Various calibers of shotgun cartridge	NCN 10,000

Source: Nigerian Customs Service, Enforcement and Drugs Statistics Section, Abuja

NOTE (was the data collected during fieldwork? How and when was it collected)

(NOTE Analyse the table above)

In his field research, Smart (2020) interviewed apprehended gunmen on their sources of arms. 40% represent the percentage that confessed to their arms are gotten from a market while 30% claim to have been supplied by members of the armed forces. 10% stole from someone and 10% hired from someone and other sources respectively. This is shown in table 2 below. In addition to the arms markets in Awka, bandits who have either surrendered (as in zamfara) or apprehended by the armed forces have made shocking revelations of the existence of arms markets in the forests in zamfara, katsina and Borno.



Table 2: Sources of Weapons

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Bought from the Market	10	40
Supplied by the armed forces	15	30
Stolen from someone	5	10
Hired from someone	5	10
Other	15	10
Total	50	100

Source: Smart, 2020

(NOTE Analyse the table above)

The irony of the arms proliferation problem in Nigeria is that the main enforcement agencies responsible for checking arms trafficking and proliferation of arms in Nigeria are the Nigeria Police Force, the custom service, the immigration service, among others. The responses of some selected gunmen in a study conducted by Adeniyi (2017) are shown in the table below:

Table 3: Sources of Weapons (Guns) Among Armed Forces

	Frequency	Percent
Police	10	40
Customs	5	20
The army	7	28
Air force	1	4
Private security companies	2	8
Total	25	100

Source: Adeniyi, 2017

Table three above shows that 40% got their weapons from the police, 20% from the customs service, 28% from the army, 4% from the Air force, 8% from private security forces.

Nevertheless, while it is not always possible to accurately pinpoint how arms find their way into one country from another, and eventually into the hands of civilians, seven possible ways can be identified:

- Arms captured from enemies during fighting
- Soldiers defecting from armed groups
- Stolen or captured peacekeeping stocks (from UN troops)
- Arms supplied by the armed forces
- Purchase through the open market
- Supply from government stockpiles of neighbouring states
- Inheritance from family and relatives or friends.

Table four below shows some statistical data regarding SALWs proliferation in Nigeria over time.

Table four: SALWs proliferation in Nigeria

S/N	DATA ON SALWS PROLIFERATION	YEAR	SOURCE	COMMENT
01	21,407,903	2010	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons.
02	3000	2012	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons.
03	58,889	2013	Nigeria Customs Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons.
04	31,285	2014	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons.
05	350,000,000	2016	United Nations/ UNREC	Data backed by research.
06	1,300,000	2017	PRESCOM	Data backed by research.
07	350,000,000	2018	Federal Government of Nigeria	Government provided data

Source: compiled by the author from data collected from *Nigerian Tribune*, June 13, 2018 and *Vanguard*, August 02, 2018

From the foregoing analysis, the increase in the flow of arms between 1999 and 2003 heightened the activities of militants and the doubling of this inflow between 2003 and 2009 facilitated the rise of bokoharam and strengthened their activities. The continuous inflow and supply of arms from 2009 to date have led to the emergence of armed bandits whose activities are threatening the nation's economy and educational sector. This flow of arms has also emboldened separatist groups and gunmen in the south-eastern and south-western parts of the country. Overall, the proliferation of arms has made it difficult for the country to nip its rampaging insecurity situation. As long as people have access to arms, they are most likely to commit violent acts especially in a country like Nigeria whose terrible socio-economical conditions are available motivations for crime and violent actions. Until government curbs the proliferation of arms, the fight against banditry, terrorism and extremism in Nigeria will be akin to throwing water into a basket.

### Conclusion

The proliferation of arms in Nigeria poses a major threat to peace, security and development in the continent as it has encouraged and sustained the activities of terrorists, bandits and other extremists in the country. Although arms proliferation do not cause the conflicts and criminal activities in which they are used, the wide availability, accumulation and illicit flows not in themselves of such weapons tend to escalate conflicts; undermine peace agreements; intensify violence and impact on crime; impede economic and social development; and hinder the development of social stability, democracy and good governance. The war on terrorism, banditry and all forms of organized and unorganized violence in Nigeria will never end as long as this menace of arms proliferation continues. The country is moving towards collapse as the security situation continues to worsen. To save Nigeria from the impending dooms day, there is an urgent need to put a stop to the proliferation of arms in the country - This should be treated as a matter of national emergency and national survival.

### Recommendations

This paper makes the following recommendations:

- Government should take the issue of border security seriously in order to check the illicit importation of arms into the country.

- Intelligence Agencies should be equipped so as to be actively involved in gathering intelligence on existing illicit sources of arms in the country.
- In addition to proper record of the nation's armory, security establishments should conduct regular audit of state owned arms in order to curb the transfer of arms from security personnel to criminal syndicates and groups.
- The holistic involvement of government at all levels is crucial. Interventions at the local, state and national levels to be strengthened and promote peaceful coexistence amongst diverse ethno-religious and political groups in Nigeria to minimize the outbreak of violent conflicts that stoke arms proliferation. The Nigerian government should also ensure a successful implementation of DDR process (Demobilization, Disarmament (retrieval and destruction of arms and weapons) and Re-integration of Former Combatants into the society).
- The Nigerian Government should intensify efforts to work with neighboring countries in implementing a comprehensive plan on curbing the flow of arms. The Government should demonstrate the political will in implementing existing national, regional and international framework for curbing arms proliferation.
- The above measures will be meaningless if the country's political problems and economic woes continue to worsen. Government must work towards building a political stable and economic prosperous nation.

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