

## PREVALENCE OF ARMED ATTACKS AND THE SECURITY IMPLICATIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

**\*<sup>1</sup>ONWUCHEKWE, STANLEY IKENNA; \*<sup>1</sup> OKORONTA, CHIBUIKE CHRISTIAN  
& \*<sup>2</sup> IBEKWE, CHRISTOPHER CHIMAObI, \*<sup>1</sup> ONWUCHEKWE PIUS  
TOBECHUKWU**

<sup>\*1</sup> Department of Criminology and Security Studies,  
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam

<sup>\*2</sup> Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka,

<sup>\*1</sup> Nigeria Defence Academy, Kaduna

### ABSTRACT

The internal security environment of Nigeria appears to have deteriorated in the recent past. While efforts were being made to curb the old security threats; new twists like the unknown gunmen and bandits attack emerged. This paper examined the prevalence of armed attacks and the security implications in Anambra State, Nigeria. The theoretical thrust of this paper was the theory of deviance. The paper adopted a survey research design and the sample size was 400 adult residents of the State. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents. The major instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, Mean score, table of descriptive statistics, and chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) inferential statistics through the aid of SPSS. The findings revealed that sources of arms were perceived to be from desperate politicians, local blacksmiths, smuggling from neighboring countries, corrupt law enforcement agents, Niger Delta militants, and prison/security cell breaks. The security implications of the attacks were found to comprise fear to participate in the electioneering process, demoralized presence of security personnel, wanton killings and loss of lives, destruction of operational facilities of law enforcement agents, exposure to an atmosphere of threats, frightening sense of insecurity among residents, wrong signal to residents/investors, increased risk of sexual violence, unhindered accessibility of arms by untrained individuals and looting/burglary. This paper concluded that if adequate measures are not taken to address the precipitating issues, the State and region by extension might not just be turned into a terror zone, but could be deserted. It, therefore, recommended among others, that efforts should be made by the government to call for arms disarmament in the South-East region and grant amnesty to anyone willing to drop his arm.

**Keywords:** Armed attacks, prevalence, security implications, and sources of arms.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The internal security environment of Nigeria appears to have deteriorated in the recent past. While efforts were being made to curb the old security threats that may have remained or assumed worrisome dimensions, new twists like the unknown gunmen and bandits attack emerged. The activities of these unknown armed bandits are gradually turning the once peaceful South-Eastern Nigeria in general and Anambra State in particular into a Hobbesian

state of nature where life was short, nasty, and brutish. The attacks are coming at a time of heightened insecurity when almost every part of the country is reeling under one form of security challenge or the other (Abaenogbe, 2021).

These attacks appear to be aided by the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) that are in the hands of non-State actors. It has been estimated that about 70 percent of over 100 million illegal weapons in West Africa are in Nigeria (Njoku, Udejah, Osibe, Nzeagwu, Jimoh & Akubo, 2021; Onuoha, 2014). Regrettably, more than half of the weapons are said to be in the hands of non-State actors and criminal groups (Onuoha, 2014; Okeke & Oji, 2014). Access to these weapons can fuel and prolong armed violence, support illegal activities, encourage the emergence of violent groups and even threaten legitimately elected government (Okafor & Emesibe, 2015; North Atlantic Treaty Organisation - NATO, 2014).

The implications of the attacks can only be imagined. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, 2021) reported that between January and March 2021 the attacks have caused much damage, which ranges from burning of police stations, ambush and shoot-out with security officers, burning of patrol vans, to helping prison inmates to escape. Aside from these, there seem to be fear and undercover by security agents. Reports have it that many police officers in the South-East and Anambra in particular now move about without their uniform to avoid attracting attacks (Chukindi, 2021; Sahara Reporters, 2021).

On February 24th, and March 18th, 2021, hoodlums have reportedly attacked a patrol team of the Nigeria Police in Ekwulobia and a police checkpoint at Neni, Anambra State, respectively. In the process, two police officers were allegedly killed and their patrol vehicle burnt (BBC, 2021). In another instance, the yet-to-be-identified gunmen were allegedly attacked the Nigerian Navy and the Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS) officers (Abaenogbe, 2021). Since then, what has become a trend continued almost unabated. What could be the offense of security personnel in the State and region, in general, is yet to be ascertained. However, it does appear that since the #EndSARS protest in 2020, the police and other security formations in various parts of the country, especially in the South-East have come under heavily armed attacks by criminal elements.

Without drastic measures to bring the situation under control, this may not only mar the peace Anambra State has been known for, but could equally affect commercial activities as well as make residents and investors relocate to other areas within or across the country. It is against this background that this paper examined the prevalence of armed attacks and the security implications in Anambra State, Nigeria.

## **2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The primary responsibility of every elected government is to provide security for lives and properties. Security and the political will of the Nigerian government seem to have come under serious challenge today as the rate of criminal activities increased in scale. Criminal elements are moving unhindered in carrying out attacks and harassing residents with impunity. In Anambra State, this is unhealthy for the realization of Governor Willie Obiano's mantra of "Aku-rue Ulo", loosely translated as investments of Anambra people should come home. This economic ideology was believed to be yielding results with new investments from great sons and daughters of Anambra being springing up in different parts of the State and

thereby creating jobs for her people. However, legitimate business investments can only thrive or survive in a safe or secured environment and where this is not guaranteed, investors are likely to relocate elsewhere.

Furthermore, the dire security situation seems worsening as the State actors saddled with the responsibility of ensuring safety are not safe anymore in the course of their duty. They appear to be the prime target, hence, they too, like ordinary Nigerians are seeking cover as well. Vanguard (2021) reported that a few months after the #EndSARS protest against police brutality with loss of lives and massive destruction of properties, Policemen virtually disappeared from public space as armed attacks continued in the South-East. The report noted that many police officers in the region, inclusive of Anambra State still could not wear their uniform in the public domain; thus, dampening their morale.

Anambra State has a history of armed conflicts and general insecurity, notably in Aguleri and Umuleri, with unprecedented forms of political instability and tension (Iwuamadi, 2012). Expectedly, these crises were not without adverse effects on governance, socio-economic development, and livelihood of many residents. The State appears again to be witnessing a return to the dark days with a series of coordinated armed attacks on security formations, political rallies, and other institutions of the government. This ugly scenario has not only resulted in the killing of security personnel but also threatened the peace of law-abiding residents. Today, it does appear that citizens are left at their own peril and anyone who cannot afford private security to guard him seems to be at the mercy of gunmen. It is against this backdrop that this paper examined the prevalence of armed attacks and the security implications in Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

This paper was guided by the following research questions;

1. Where are the sources of arms being used for attacks in Anambra State?
2. What are the security implications of armed attacks in Anambra State?

### **Research Objectives**

The broad objective is to examine the prevalence of armed attacks and the security implications in Anambra State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are;

1. To trace the sources of arms being used for attacks in Anambra State.
2. To examine the security implications of armed attacks in Anambra State.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide this paper;

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no relationship between access to arms and armed attacks in Anambra State.

## **3.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Efforts have been made by scholars to study armed attacks, though; it is yet to receive adequate empirical attention in Nigeria. To this effect, some related literature were been reviewed and the major findings are highlighted. A study by Iwuamadi (2012) which tried to examine governance and security in Anambra State revealed that there was a general perception that security is a major challenge affecting the delivery of good governance in the State. The study further revealed that there was a strong feeling that lack of peace or order in the State has affected economic development over the years. Similarly, the study showed that security outfits established by governments and occupational groups ironically contributed to undermining the security situation of the State. The study further found that both the government and the families were to be blamed for the insecurity in the State. There was a perception of the failure of social and educational institutions, including the family, to teach moral values to children and young people. Consequently, these young people grow up with a wrong value orientation and carried it to their respective workplaces and position of authority, including the government.

Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013) examined the insecurity situation in Nigeria and its implications for business investment, operations, and sustainable development. The results indicated that the insecurity challenge in the country is enormous and complex and would continue to be if the situation remains unabated. Similarly, Chilaka and Idika (2019) examined vigilante administration and firearms proliferation in Dunukofia LGA of Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that the establishment of vigilante groups engendered firearms proliferation. It also showed that these firearms in the hands of vigilante groups increased conflicts involving firearms.

Ushe (2015) examined education as a catalyst for resolving conflicts and enhancing national security in Nigeria. The results revealed that religious conflicts and insecurity are endemic in Nigeria in the last two decades. It also showed that the Muslims and Christian adherents have fought wars in Nigeria than they had actually fought for peace, thereby threatening peaceful co-existence and national security among the citizenry. Similarly, Iregbenu and Uzonwanne (2015) examined the security challenges facing the Nigerian government and their implications to national stability. The findings showed that insecurity has posed a conundrum for the Nigerian government and appears intractable. In the face of apparent insecurity, the Nigerian government has wobbled in its responsibility.

Adigwe (2013) in his research discovered that the resurgence of vigilante groups in Anambra State and elsewhere in Nigeria after the handover to civilian government was not far from the fact that some thugs that worked for politicians were unceremoniously laid off. It also revealed that people that were deterred from crime following the military regime, embraced crime with the entry of civilian government. He argued that the inability of the new government to holistically tackle the avalanche of security challenges led to the emergence of different vigilante groups, aimed at tackling insecurity in the polity. In other words, the proliferation of vigilante groups which has necessitated accessibility of firearms by non-State actors is a failure of the ruling class to successfully execute its social contract responsibility in providing security to the people.

Omomia (2015) examined the present security challenge in Nigeria and attempted to advance some panaceas in achieving true security. The results indicated that the state of insecurity in Nigeria was occasioned by religious fanaticism, especially by the contemporary

ethnoreligious and religion-political crises. The study also showed that the problem is not necessarily with religion, but with its teachings and practice. The study submitted that bad religion captures clearly the reasons for the present state of insecurity in Nigeria, especially ethnic and politically motivated conflicts that have found religion as a ready—bride to exploit.

Furthermore, a study by Onuoha (2013) indicates that criminal elements in the Sahel region smuggle arms into Nigeria through the porous borders in Borno and Yobe States. In another study, Madubuike-Ekwe and Obayemi (2019) observed that some police officers have at one point or another hired their lawfully assigned guns to armed robbers for night-work (robbery) and possible returns in the morning. Sometimes disagreement led to the non-return of the guns. A study conducted by Nte (2011) in Niger State revealed that criminal elements within the region procured illegal arms from local blacksmiths. Similarly, it was also revealed that arms belonging to law enforcement agents were carted away by hoodlums under the guise of #EndSARS protesters (Abaenogbe, 2021; Chukindi, 2021).

A study conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC, 2014) showed that women's experience in armed conflict is multi-faceted, but comprises separation, loss of relatives, physical and economic insecurity, increased risk of sexual violence, wounding, detention, deprivation, and even death. Oli, Ibekwe, and Nwankwo (2018) in their study in Nigeria observed that armed clashes, especially between farmers and herdsmen have resulted in the loss of human and animal lives, destruction of crops and properties, displacement of persons and animals, distrust among the opposing group, rising anti-Fulani sentiment, and breakdown of a peaceful relationship with host communities. This suggests that the implications of armed attacks are numerous and can affect an entire society.

#### **4.0 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION: CONFLICT THEORY**

This paper adopted the theory of deviance as its framework. This theory was considered relevant and suitable to explaining issues surrounding armed attacks in Nigeria.

The theory of deviance is associated with American sociologist, Robert K. Merton. He proposed a typology of deviant behavior, a classification scheme designed to facilitate understanding. The basic tenet of the theory is that an individual deviates from social norms guiding a society largely because of either their biological or environmental makeup. Deviance theory describes an action or behavior that violates social norms, including a formally enacted rule, hence, crime commission (Meltzer, Petras & Reynolds, 2005). Deviance is relative to the place where it was committed or to the time the act took place. Killing another human is generally considered wrong for example, except when governments permit it during warfare or for self-defense. There are two types of major deviant actions: mala in se and mala prohibita. Deviant acts can be assertions of individuality and identity, and thus as a rebellion against group norms of the dominant culture and in favor of a sub-culture.

Deviance refers to any behavior that violates the norms of society and attracts a negative formal or informal sanction (Rothwell, 2012). Each society subscribes to different norms. This has to do with what is proper and right within society. It is expected that each member of the society complies with the norms, and a violation should incur a sanction or reprimand

(Omonia, 2015). The conduct of each member of society is said to have an overwhelming effect on society. This is due to the fact that man and society are involved in each other. Thus, Awolalu and Dopamu (2005) were of the opinion that there can be no society without a man.

In application to this study, it is instructive to state that in Igbo land, South-east Nigeria, killing or shading of human blood is culturally and traditionally prohibited. In fact, it is abhorred and any Igbo person found wanting in this aspect is considered to have soiled his or her hands and not worthy of associating with. This long-standing norm has guided dealings in the land, especially as it pertains to human relations. This traditional practice made it clear that strangers must always be welcome and protected. Due to societal failure and environmental influences of wrong socialization, many young people seem not to reference this important cultural belief. As human-induced deprivation, marginalization and even provocation from the government or State actors hold sway, there appears to be no more regard to the sanctity of human life. Therefore, there seems to be the new ideology of fire for fire, and attack for attack, thus, resulting in the avoidable loss of human lives.

**5.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This paper adopted a survey research design. The study was carried out in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria. Anambra State emerged from the restructuring of the old Anambra following the State's creation exercise of August 27, 1991. It has 21 Local Government Areas. The State's motto is "Light of the Nation" and Awka is the State's capital. The State is bordered by Enugu State and Imo State and the River Niger is the natural boundary that separates the state from Delta state. Anambra State occupies a strategic geopolitical and economic position in the South-east of Nigeria. It is not only a gateway State by road to the east; a major center of commerce at Onitsha and Nnewi but has also produced some of the most illustrious political, entrepreneurial, and literary figures of Nigeria. The population of this study was two million, six hundred and ninety-two thousand, two hundred and sixty-one (2,692,261) adult residents aged 15 years and above. The sample size was 400 adult residents which were generated using the Taro Yamane formula. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents. The major instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, Mean score, and table of descriptive statistics, while the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using chi-square (x2) inferential statistics through the aid of SPSS.

**6.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**6.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

**Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents Socio-Demographic Characteristics (n=378)**

S/n.	V a r i a b l e s	Frequency (378)	Percentage (100%)	Mean (x)
1	S e x			
i	M a l e	1 9 6	5 1 . 9 %	

ii. Female	182	48.1%
<b>2 . A g e</b>		
i. 15 - 25	79	20.9%
ii. 26 - 36	72	18.3%
iii. 37 - 47	114	29.2%
iv. 48 & Above	93	23.9%
<b>3 . E d u c a t i o n</b>		
i. No formal education	3	0.8%
ii. Primary	24	6.3%
iii. Secondary	203	53.7%
iv. Tertiary	111	28.4%
v. Others	37	9.8%
<b>4 . M a r i t a l S t a t u s</b>		
i. Single	152	39.2%
ii. Married	216	57.1%
iii. Once married	10	2.6%
<b>5 . O c c u p a t i o n</b>		
i. Unemployed	82	21.1%
ii. Students	32	8.5%
iii. Working	100	26.5%
iv. Business/Trading	95	24.6%
v. Artisan	39	10.3%

Field data, 2021.

Table 1 presents the analysis of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. The table showed that the majority of the respondents 196(51.9%) were males, while 182(48.1%) were females. The average age mean of the respondents was 39 years, and the majority 114(30.2%) fell within the age bracket of 37-47. The majority of the respondents 203(53.7%) had secondary education and the least of them 3(0.8%) never had formal education. The marital status of the majority of them 216(57.1%) was married and the least of the respondents 10(2.6%) were once married. More so, the occupation of the majority of the

respondents 199(52.6%) was business/trading, and the least of them 8(2.1%) were unemployed.

### 6.2 Sources of Arms Being Used for Attacks in Anambra State

The views of the respondents on possible sources of arms that were being used for attacks in the State were sought. Their response is presented in Table 2;

**Table 2: Respondent’s Perceived Sources of Arms in the Hands of Non-State Actors**

S/n.	Q u e s t i o n s a n d R e s p o n s e s	Frequency	Percentage
1	. Looking at happenings in the State in recent times, which of these sources do you think is the most likely source of arms for the attacks?		
i	. S m u g g l i n g f r o m n e i g h b o u r i n g c o u n t r i e s	5	6 1 4 . 8 %
ii	. P r i s o n / s e c u r i t y c e l l b r e a k s	2	2 5 . 8 %
iii	. C o r r u p t l a w e n f o r c e m e n t a g e n t s	3	9 1 0 . 3 %
iv	. D e s p e r a t e P o l i t i c i a n s	1	3 4 3 5 . 4 %
v	. N i g e r D e l t a m i l i t a n t s	3	6 9 . 5 %
vi	. L o c a l b l a c k s m i t h s	9	1 2 4 . 1 %
<b>T</b>	<b>o t a l</b>	<b>3 7</b>	<b>8 1 0 0 %</b>

Field data, 2021.

Table 2 displayed the respondent’s perceived sources of arms in the hands of non-State actors, which appear to be aiding armed attacks in the State. The result revealed that 134(35.4%) of the respondents linked arms in the hands of non-state actors to desperate politicians. Elections in Nigeria usually go with buildup tension and desperation to cling to power. It is, therefore, pertinent to state here that the Anambra election is around the corner and the overzealousness of some political classes has heated up the atmosphere. Since earlier in the years that the campaign process began in earnest, there have been reports of the attempted assassination of gubernatorial aspirants and disruption of political rallies by thugs working for politicians. Those hoodlums move about armed and intimidate political opponents of their paymasters. It is, therefore, evident that those politicians armed the thugs for the purpose of ensuring that they rig their way into political offices.

Again, about 91(24.1%) of the respondents were of the belief that arms sustaining attacks in the State were possibly from local blacksmiths. The indigenous people of Awka and other towns in the South-east are traditionally blacksmiths of repute. This understanding could have informed why the respondents thought that there could be a link between local arms production and sustained arm attacks in the State. This confirms the findings of Nte (2011) that criminals in Nigeria procure arms locally through illegal craft gunsmiths. However, another set of respondents 56(14.8%) were of the view that the arms used for attacks in the State were smuggled in from neighboring countries. This aligns with the findings of Onuoha (2013) that criminal elements in the Sahel region smuggle arms into Nigeria through the porous borders in Borno and Yobe States. This was followed by 39(10.3%) that pointed at



corrupt law enforcement agents. It has been established over time that security personnel in Nigeria, especially the police usually collaborate with criminal elements to perpetrate evil acts of robbery, disclosing secret security information to criminal elements, etc. This is in agreement with the findings of Madubuike-Ekwe and Obayemi (2019) that some police officers have at one point or another hired their lawfully assigned guns to armed robbers for robbery.

Furthermore, 36(9.5%) looked at the direction of the Niger Delta militants. Perhaps, this is a result of the proximity of the South-east with the region and unhindered cross-border movement. The least of the respondents 22(5.8%) attributed it to prison/security cell breaks witnessed recently in various parts of the country. Reports have it that during and since after the #End SARS protest; there have been cell and prison breaks, where ammunitions were allegedly carted away. Some analysts have argued that since after those incidences, there have been increased armed attacks in various places in the country, including the Southeast region. This corroborates the findings of Abaenogbe (2021) and Chukindi (2021) that separately reported that hoodlums under the guise of #EndSARS protesters broke security jails and carted away arms belonging to law enforcement agents.

### 6.3 Security Implications of Armed Attacks in Anambra State

The respondents’ opinion on security implications of armed attacks in the State was obtained and analyzed in Table 3;

**Table 3: Respondent’s Perceived Security Implications of Armed Attacks in the State**

S/n.	Q u e s t i o n s a n d R e s p o n s e s	Frequency	Percentage
1 .	Which of these best describe the security effects of armed attacks in Anambra?		
i .	Exposure to atmosphere of threats	6	6 17.5 %
ii .	Sending wrong signal to residents/investors	6	4 16.9 %
iii .	Wanton Killings / loss of lives	9	6 25.4 %
iv .	Increased risk of sexual violence	6	3 16.7 %
v .	Destruction of operational facilities of law enforcement officers	6	8 17.9 %
vi .	C a n ' t c a y	2	1 5.6 %
<b>T</b>	<b>o t a l</b>	<b>3 7</b>	<b>8 100 %</b>
2 .	Kindly identify other security implications associated with armed attacks in the State that are not mentioned above		
i .	Frightening sense of insecurity among residents	5	4 14.3 %
ii .	Fear to participate in electioneering process	1	3 0 34.4 %
iii .	Unhindered accessibility of arms by untrained individuals	4	2 11.1 %
iv .	Demoralised security personnel, thereby endangering lives	1	1 9 31.5 %
v .	L o o t i n g / b u r g l a r y	3	3 8.7 %
<b>T</b>	<b>o t a l</b>	<b>3 7</b>	<b>8 100 %</b>

Field data, 2021.

Table 3 shows respondents’ perceived security implications of armed attacks in the State. The table showed that the highest number of the respondents 96(25.4%) believed that the attacks have led to wanton killings and loss of lives. This aligns with GCPEA (2018) that Boko Haram armed attackers had killed and displaced many individuals in the wider Lake Chad region. Similarly, 68(17.9%) said it had resulted in the destruction of operational facilities of law enforcement officers. Reports have it that police stations and patrol vehicles have been burnt by gunmen.

In addition, there was the belief that the attacks had created an atmosphere of threats 66(17.5%), as well as sending the wrong signals to residents/investors 64(16.9%). As much as residents will get frightened by insecurity, so are investors. In fact, no investor would want to put his resources in an environment where his investment is likely to be destroyed. More so, 63(16.7%) feared that the state of insecurity could increase the risk of sexual violence. This validates the findings of ICRC (2014) that women's experience in armed conflict is multi-faceted, but mostly on the increased risk of sexual violence.

Furthermore, when the respondents were asked to identify other security implications associated with armed attacks in the State which were not mentioned above, the majority 130(34.4%) attributed it to fear of participating in the electioneering process that is ongoing. This is followed by 119(31.5%) that argued that it had led to the presence of demoralized security personnel, thereby endangering lives. This was perceived to have led to a frightening sense of insecurity among residents 54(14.3%). It is understandable that when adequately equipped security forces are no longer there to repel possible attacks, residents will just be at the mercy of criminals. The implication of this is possible relocation, thus, displacing people from their abode. While 42(11.1%) said one of the implications is unhindered accessibility of arms by untrained individuals which is a threat to the public, 33(8.7%) posited that it had led to looting and burglary.

### 7.0 TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

There is no relationship between access to arms and armed attacks in Anambra State. This hypothesis was tested using chi-square (x<sup>2</sup>) inferential statistics and the result is presented in Table 4;

**Table 4: Test of hypothesis one**

		Do you think that easy access to arms is the major factor sustaining armed attacks in the State?		Chi - Square		
				Total		
		Y	e	s	N	o
Y	e	s	Count/% within	287(75.9%)	91(24.1%)	378(100%)
N	o	Count/% within	0 ( 0 % )	0 ( 0 % )	0 ( 0 % )	

---

T	o	t	a	l	Count/% within	287(75.9%)	91(24.1%)	378(100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 73.130^a$
									N = 378
									df = 1
									p=.201, >0.05 Sig.

---

Field data, 2021.

Table 4 presents the analysis and result of hypothesis one. The outcome of the analysis showed that computed chi-square was  $X^2 = 73.130a$ , and the p-value was .201, while the degree of freedom (df) was 1. This indicates that the p-value was greater than the 0.05 level of significance ( $p=.201, >0.05$  sig.), and informs the need to reject the tested null hypothesis. In other words, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, implying that there is a relationship between access to arms and armed attacks in Anambra State. This suggests that the uncontrolled flow of arms into the hands of non-State actors could definitely be used for either criminal activities or threats to the safety of society.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper submits that security and the political will of the Nigerian government have come under serious threat as the rate of criminal activities has also increased in scale. Criminal elements move across borders unhindered in carrying out attacks and illicit activities with impunity. Anambra State has witnessed unprecedented armed criminal attacks in the recent past and this has brought about a lot of implications on not just the residents, but also to security formation. Therefore, this study concludes that if adequate measures are not taken to address precipitating issues, the State and region by extension might not just be turned into a terror zone, but could be deserted. It, therefore, recommended that;

1. Efforts should be made by the government to call for arms disarmament in the South-East region and grant amnesty to anyone willing to drop his arms. The amnesty program should be religiously implemented and possibly grant them empowerment training overseas. This will help reduce illegal arms in the hands of non-State actors that are circulating within the region.
2. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in collaboration with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) should embark on grassroots political sensitization across Nigeria on best electoral campaign practices. This should be geared toward re-orienting Nigerian politicians and electorates against politics of hate and violence, as well as strengthening the weakening socio-cultural values of the people. Such a campaign should be backed up with a stiffer sanction of banning anyone found indulging in such an act not to hold any public office for life.
3. Security should be beefed up in the State and region, especially in border areas. This will not only help to halt the flow and easy access to arms by non-state actors but will also enable the apprehension of criminal elements in whichever guise.

## REFERENCES

- Abaenogbe, T. (2021, March 23rd). Attacks on security agencies in Anambra have semblance of emerging terror group – Experts. Daily Post. Retrieved from <https://dailypost.ng/2021/03/23/attacks-on-security-agencies-in-anambra-have-semblance-of-emerging-terror-group-experts/>
- Achumba, I.C., Ighomereho, O.S. & Akpor-Robaro, M.O.M. (2013). Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business
- Adigwe, A. F. (2013). Crime, vigilantism, and electoral violence in Nigeria. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 2 (9), 46-50.
- Awolalu, J. O. & Dopamu, P. A. (2005). West African Traditional Religion. Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Limited.
- BBC (2021). Gunmen attack in Nigeria: Abia, Imo, Anambra, Ebonyi see 11 gunmen police attacks in three months. The BBC. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-56552823>
- Chilaka, F.C. & Idika, O.I (2019). Vigilante Administration and Firearms Proliferation in Dunukofia LGA, of Anambra State from 1999-2016. Social Facts: FUOtuoke Journal of Sociology & Anthropology (SOFUOJOSA), 1(1&2), 50-67.
- Chukindi, J. (2021, March 19th). Security agencies remain helpless as South East descends to anarchy, policemen hide uniforms. Daily Post. Retrieved from <https://dailypost.ng/2021/05/19/security-agencies-remain-helpless-as-south-east-descends-to-anarchy-policemen-hide-uniforms/>
- Iregbenu, P. & Uzonwanne, C. (2015). Security Challenges and Implications to National Stability. Journal of Economics & Sustainable Development, 6(4), 169-175.
- Iwuamadi, C.K. (2012). Governance and Security in Anambra State. In, Chukwuma, I. & Ukiwo, U. (ed.). Governance and insecurity in South-East Nigeria. CLEEN Foundation. pp. 58-82.
- Madubuike-Ekwe, N. & Obayemi, O.K. (2019). Assessment of the role of the Nigerian Police Force in the promotion and protection of human rights in Nigeria. Annual Survey of International & Comparative Law, 23(1), 19-31.
- Meltzer, B.N., Petras, J.W. & Reynolds, L.T. (2005). Symbolic Interactionism: Genesis, Varieties, and Criticism. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Njoku, L., Udejah, G., Osibe, O., Nzeagwu, U., Jimoh, A.M. & Akubo, J. (2021). Again, twin attacks rock police divisions in Abia, Anambra. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng/news/again-twin-attacks-rock-police-divisions-in-abia-anambra/>

- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (2014). Small arms and light weapons (SALW) and mine action (MA). NATO Report, 1, 1-3. Retrieved from [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_52142.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52142.htm)
- Nte, N.D. (2011). The changing patterns of small and light weapons (SALW) proliferation and the challenges of national security in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Africa Studies*, 1(1), 5-23.
- Okafor, F. N. & Emesibe, V. (2015). Small arms and light weapons proliferations, the youth and electoral violence in Nigeria: South east in perspective. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities Reviews*, 5(3), 108-116.
- Okeke, V. O. S. & Oji, R. O. (2014). The Nigerian state and the proliferation of small arm and light weapons in the northern part of Nigeria. *Journal of Educational & Social Research*, 4(1), 415-428.
- Oli, N.P., Ibekwe, C.C. & Nwankwo, I.U. (2018). Prevalence of herdsmen and farmers conflict in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Studies in Sociology & Humanities (IJSSH)*, 3(1), 30-39.
- Omomia, A.O. (2015). Religious Fanaticism and “Boko Haram” Insurgency in Nigeria: Implications for National Security. *Journal of Advocacy, Research & Education*, 2(1), 58-73.
- Onuoha, F. C. (2013). Porous borders and Boko Haram’s arms smuggling operations in Nigeria. *Al Jazeera Center for Studies*, 2-8.
- Onuoha, F.C. (2014). Small arms and light weapons proliferation and human security in Nigeria. South Africa: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) Pub.
- Rothwell, L. V. (2011). The Relationship between attitude towards Deviance and Deviant Behaviour: The Influence of Science, Individualism, Social Bond and Deviant Peers. Ph.D. Dissertation in Sociology, submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Retrieved From: <http://scholar.hb.vt.edu/these/available/etd-091>.
- Sahara Reporters (2021, March 3rd). Revealed: Policemen in South-East Abandon Stations, Uniforms, Lobby For Redeployment Due To Insecurity. Retrieved from <http://saharareporters.com/2021/05/03/revealed-policemen-south-east-abandon-stations-uniforms-lobby-redeployment-due-insecurity>
- Ushe, U.M. (2015). Religious Conflicts and Education in Nigeria: Implications for National Security. *Journal of Education & Practice*, 6(2), 117-129.
- Vanguard (2021). We still can’t wear our uniform in public, our morale is very low — Policemen. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/03/we-still-cant-wear-our-uniform-in-public-policemen-2/>