

EFFECTS OF PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS ON WOMEN'S SECURITY IN NORTHERN KENYA

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Abstract: This article outlines the effects of proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) on women's security in Northern Kenya. The article seek not only to illustrate women as victims of the proliferation of the small arms and light weapons but also to understand their role as actors who can bring about active change against the vice in communities that they live in. These efforts may then contribute to sustainable peace in Northern Kenya. The article presents the gendered cost of proliferation of small arms and light weapons including the direct and indirect ways in which women are affected by the influx of the small arms ad light weapons in their communities. The article assesses how SALW contribute to gender based violence, the impact of proliferation of SALW on women's productive activities and finally the contribution of SALW to the displacement of women. The article also reviews the legal tools against trading of small arms as well as how the increase in women's voice in the region is guiding the formulation of both local and national legislation. The article also surveys some of the promising practices guarding them against the negative effects of proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Keywords: Small arms proliferation, light weapons, women's security.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to (Mulinzi and Kurantin, 2016) 'small arms and light weapons (SALW) proliferation' is a phrase used by organizations and individuals who campaign for the management or restrictions and trade of small arms to and by private citizens in conflict areas. There organizations include among others the United Nations (UN) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Illicit flows of small arms and light weapons threaten security and the rule of law. They are often a factor behind the forced displacement of civilians and massive human rights abuse (UNDOA, 2017).

According to description provided by the United Nations Security Council, small arms include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns. Light weapons on the other hand are described to as, machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems; portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems ; and mortars of calibres of less than 100 mm (Small Arms Survey n.d.).

Women's security are conditions necessary for women to enjoy good health, a secure society and opportunities for women in Northern Kenya explore their development potential. The lack of women insecurity with reference to this topic is perpetuated by challenges posed by availability and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

The characteristics of Small Arms include: their low cost, they are readily available and increasingly lethal (meaning their fire power is often increasing for instance the sub machine gun and AK47), increasing direct and indirect costs due to technological progress, they are easy to maintain, training thus enabling anyone to operate. Again, it is difficult to trail the use of these weapons, therefore making them quite easy to smuggle across borders.

The main purpose of this paper is to interrogate and explore the effects of small arms and light weapons proliferation on women security in Northern Kenya. The key objectives of the paper is to assess the dynamics of small arms in Northern Kenya, to establish how small arms are affecting women security in reference to conflict related gender based violence, displacement and finally its impact on the productivity of women in terms of economic, societal and individual advancement.

2. INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LAWS AND AGREEMENTS GOVERNING PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

There is a wide range of legal resources that are available on a national, regional and global level. They govern the use and trade of small arms and light weapons. With reference to Africa, one of these laws is the Nairobi Protocol on Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons of 2004. This protocol was signed by 11 countries. It is a legally binding document that reinforces the Nairobi Declaration of 2000. The protocol commits all signatories to: compulsory gun registration and civilian gun ownership ban of military assault rifles (RECSA/UNODA, 2004). The signatories also committed to resolve the problems of small arms in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions.

This protocol requires signatory states to integrate: a ban on civilian ownership of automatic and semiautomatic rifles, the registration of all guns; restrictions on how many guns can be owned by an individual as well regulation of gun storage and competency testing for potential owners, universal minimum standards on manufacturing, control, possession, import, export, transit, transport and transfer of small arms as well identification of small arms (RECSA/UNODA, 2004). Finally the protocol seeks to regulate security, universal regulations on sentencing for unlicensed gun possession and pawning guns. The Protocol is monitored and implemented by a Secretariat Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) secretariat and civil society.

Another legal provision is the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons of 2006 which entered into force in September 2009. This convention seeks to control the spread and misuse of small arms in Africa (ECOWAS, 2006). The conventions have limitations on international small arms transfers. However, it allows the transfers only for legitimate self-defence, security needs and for peace support operations. The convention also prohibits transfers of small arms to non-state actors not authorized by the importing member state, including procedures for sharing information. Additionally, a rigorous regulatory scheme is in place to control the possession of small arms and management of stockpiles (ECOWAS, 2006).

Additionally, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Firearms, Ammunition and Related Materials of 2004 provides another legal avenue on control of flow of small arms and light weapons in the region. The protocol's goal 'is to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of firearms, ammunition and other related materials, and regulate the import and export of legal small arms'(SADC, 2004). Its requirements include destruction of surplus state weapons, standardized legislation on private ownership and coordinated record-keeping of state-owned guns.

Finally, the United Nations Programme of Action conference of 2001 also has similar prescriptions as those of Nairobi (2004), ECOWAS (2006) and SADC (2004). This, however also provides for measures of disarmament and reintegration of ex combatants and issuance of end user certificates for export / transit. On the other hand the prescription weaknesses include, not recognizing state non state actors and state officials misuse of arms, detained process of arms control as well as gender and human rights considerations (UNDOCS, 2016).

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) of 2006 assumed the protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition and other related materials which would be used to combat the illicit trafficking of weapons that could assist organized crime. On 8th December 2005 the UNGA also adopted international instruments for the rapid and reliable identification and tracking of illicit light weapons. Additionally, years later the General Assembly resolution 69/61 of 13th July 2016 commended member states for adopting equal opportunities and women representation of women in decision-making processes of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (UNDOCS, 2016).

According to (Religions of Peace, 2007) the above legal tools are only effective when states individually legislate them nationally and adopt harmonized laws between regional and international systems. A key development is the discussion on the role of the woman in negotiations and discussions on control of influx of the weapons as well as mitigation of SALW impact in the community.

3. DYNAMICS OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN NORTHERN KENYA

This section will study the various issues of why small arms and light weapons. The rapid movement of small arms across the world is increasingly complicated to trace and has long-lasting effects on human security. Often small arms become available in a region for compelling and legal reasons related to national security, peacekeeping or law enforcement. In fact, much of the trade in arms is legitimate and accounted for; it is an entrenched and prosperous industry. Like other industries, it has become increasingly globalized. Most weapons are now assembled from components supplied from many countries. The result of this swift global expansion is that these weapons, their parts and ammunition are more easily diverted from their intended destination. More often than not, they end up in countries that have hardly any controls over how they will be used. Excess, poorly secured, or stolen military armaments find markets in war-torn or post-conflict nations, and end up with non-state armed groups or terrorists. Dishonest brokers are able to facilitate this by taking advantage of the existing irregularities and loopholes that exist in national arms trade laws. Small arms can cross from the state to private owners many times over (UNIDIR 2006).

Small arms increase has been particularly overwhelming in Africa, where machine guns, rifles, grenades, pistols and other small arms have killed and displaced many civilians across the continent. These weapons have been used in deadly conflicts in Sudan, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and other African countries (UNDP 2011). They are frequently recycled from country to country, and their ownership is shifted among fighters, security forces, and war profiteers.

Kenya has struggled with insecurity for a long time, largely as a consequence of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Both internal and external issues contribute to the firearms-related challenges facing the country.

Domestically, socio-economic, and political aspects such as electoral violence, cattle rustling, poverty and insecurity have greatly contributed to the demand for and large number of small arms. Continued local political instability in Northern region of Kenya and armed conflicts in the countries bordering the region have also contributed to the small arms challenge facing Kenya, given its long and porous borders. This is especially so for communities in the North Eastern, Upper Eastern, and North Rift areas, which tolerate excessively high levels of illicit firearms and insecurity (Muchai 2005).

Geographically, Northern Kenya borders the conflict affected countries of South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. The (Mulinzi and Kurantin, 2016) research report revealed that some weapons were made locally by the native communities, others weapons were also revealed to be stolen from security personnel while others were imported from the above mentioned neighbouring countries. The effortless movement of small arms has been enabled by the poor state of borders.

The colonial borders are poorly demarcated hence the easy and frequent movement of tribes like the Oromo of Kenya and Ethiopia or the refugees from Somalia and south Sudan. This movement makes small arms smuggling quite easy. They then trade the weapons for food. These borders allow for other aliens whom are not refugees to gain access to the country and deliver the small weapons to their customers.

Additionally due to porous borders and rampant corruption of security officers, small arms and illegal items gain easy access into Kenya in exchange of bribes. Due to the influx of small arms some border towns are reputed to be distribution points. For instance Isiolo once hosted a small arms market (Mulinzi and Kurantin, 2016).

It is therefore evident that Northern Kenya is the main pathways for most illegal small arms into Kenya. Studies also reveal that these arms were later purchased by local elders, security officials and politicians from other regions (Mulinzi and Kurantin, 2016). The main use of the small arms is crime, inter-ethnic resource conflict, banditry, clan conflicts, terrorism activities such those witnessed at the Garissa University on 2nd April 2015 and Westgate Mall attack on 21st September 2013. The following section details the Kenyan contexts enabling the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

4. CAUSES OF SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION IN NORTHERN KENYA

Weak and sometimes corrupt security plans compounded by inadequate border control mechanisms and minimal police presence in vast parts of northern Kenya creates a favourable environment for illicit small arms trafficking, possession and use (Kimaiyo and Nthiga, 2009). Kenya is ranked 154th worldwide and 35th in Africa Transparency International's 2010 corruption perceptions index. Kenya only beats Burundi in the East African Community (Transparency

International, 2010). While Kenya recorded an improvement in the 2011, the East African Bribery Index ranked Kenya as the fourth least corrupt country in East Africa. The Kenyan police was ranked as the most corrupt institution in the country and the fourth most corrupt in East Africa.

While the variables used to conclude these rankings are not explicit to small arms, the fact that Kenyans do not perceive their police to be transparent is a basis for concern. This is because the law enforcement agency is essential to enforcing security and arms stockpile management, among other roles (Kamenju, Singo and Wairagu, 2003).

Poor policing in vast parts of Kenya has catalyzed the permeation of a 'gun culture', especially among pastoral communities. The implication is that the Kalashnikov assault rifle has ceased to be just a gun and has become a compelling symbol of conflict and violence, as well as power. In northern Kenya, the gun culture or the value of firearms as a necessary asset among groups has entrenched many people's view that firearms possession is an essential right. This has resulted in inter-ethnic arms races (Kamenju, Singo and Wairagu, 2003).

Communities' marginal subsistence in underdeveloped parts of the country creates a demand for small arms as groups compete for scarce resources and protect their livelihoods (Mkutu, 2008). This coupled with inter-ethnic rivalries that turn violent. For instance, violence is experienced through cattle-rustling raids, pushes communities to self-arm for security. Worse still, the government's failure to enforce its presence through service provision and enhancing law and order in northern Kenya has intensified communities' essential need for firearms. Weak governance structures influence insecurity and small arms proliferation. For instance, in listing the several factors contributing to the demand for small arms among pastoralist communities, argues that the primary cause is poor governance, while among then secondary causes are weakening customary governance institutions, diminishing numbers of cattle, the need to pay bride price, and unemployment. However, there are other independent triggers, like cattle rustling, which are treated as a cultural problem among most pastoralist communities in Kenya and the Eastern Africa Region (Mkutu, 2008)

Communities' marginal existence in underdeveloped parts of the country creates a demand for small arms as groups compete for scarce resources and protect their livelihoods. This, coupled with inter-ethnic rivalries that turn violent, for instance, through cattle-rustling raids, pushes communities to self-arm for security. Muchai argues that government failure to provide sufficient security makes local community armament for self-protection necessary. Worse still, the government's failure to impose its presence through service provision and enhancing law and order in northern Kenya has cumulatively fed communities' essential need for firearms. In fact, Kamenju et al observe that poor policing in vast parts of Kenya has catalyzed the permeation of a gun culture, especially among pastoral communities.

In northern Kenya, the gun culture or the value of fire arms as a necessary possession among groups has entrenched many people's view that firearms possession is an essential right. This has resulted in inter-ethnic arms races. On the contrary, Kimaiyo and Nthiga argue that feelings of insecurity may not be the cause of arming among civilians. On the other hand, Nguli holds that insecurity is a consequence not a cause of arms proliferation (Nguli, 2008). However, there are other independent triggers, like cattle rustling, which are treated as a cultural problem among most pastoralist communities in Kenya and the Eastern Africa region. Poverty and unemployment are root causes of self-armament in these areas.

On the contrary, there are indications that the arms economy and its attendant profits to gun runners and agents fuel the proliferation of arms in the country. Also one of the feeders of arms ownership among local pastoralist communities is their systematic response to their perceived minority status and marginalization. These communities' lack of power in numbers means they cannot influence policies and political decisions, hence their search for autonomy and independence through arms. Such groups usually reassert their claims and rights through the use of the force of arms Mkutu holds that an exploration of reasons for armament reveals that illicit gun possession in most urban areas has a criminal economic drive, as illegal gun owners use the guns in armed robberies, carjacking, and other crimes.

However, Hartford holds that the crime factor does not apply in pastoral areas since though many pastoralist households have small arms; the rate of crime and violent incidents is not high in their community (Hartford, 2004). Human Rights Watch contends that political instability in some of the neighbouring states continues to catalyze the threats posed by the illicit proliferation of SALW. The problem is compounded by the easy entry of illicit arms through porous borders. Many of the illicit SALW in Kenya originate from beyond the sub-region, and indeed, the African continent (Watch, 2002).

It is with no doubt that the continued use and illicit trade, including the continued proliferation of small arms and light weapons negatively affects the society. Despite the fact that SALW results to regional insecurity, contribution to

underdevelopment, and escalation of both local and regional conflicts, below is a discussion of how proliferation of SALW affects the security of women. To provide a detailed description and illustration of this, the article dissects the issue of women's security from three angles which include; its contribution to gender based violence, its contribution to women's productivity in Northern Kenya, including how it promotes displacement of women during armed conflicts.

5. THE CONTRIBUTION OF PROLIFERATION OF SALW TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

The United Nations describe violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life". Gender based violence undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims, yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence (UNFPA, 2017). The United Nations estimates that 35% of women and girls experience sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in their lifetime (World Health Organization, 2013).

WHO then defines **Sexual violence** as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other acts directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting". For the purpose of this paper the content will be based on 'conflict-related sexual violence' According to the (UN Security Council, 2016), "conflict-related sexual violence" refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked (temporally, geographically or causally) to a conflict.

The United Nations Security Council 20th April 2016 further defines the perpetrator as often being affiliated with a State or non-State armed group and the victim as one who is frequently a member of a persecuted political, ethnic or religious minority, in an climate of impunity associated with state collapse, displacement or trafficking in persons and/or violations of the terms of a ceasefire agreement. Attacks by violent extremist and terrorist groups excessively affect women and girls, who are often targeted as the 'repositories of cultural identity', 'the relatives of perceived fighters' or the 'bearers of future generations who will populate disputed territories'. The perpetrators of these acts are often emboldened by the power of possessing small arm and light weapons.

According to (South hall and O'Hare, 2002) the trading of arms, both legal and illegal, is highly detrimental to the health of mothers and children in the states where there is armed conflict. The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is recognized as an obstacle to development (Bjerten-Gunther, 2017) whereby it facilitates criminal and armed violence as well as facilitates sexual and gender-based violence and to reinforce violent, gendered social norms. The latter is evidenced by April 2014 abduction of the 276 Chibouk girls from their secondary school in Chibok, Borno State Nigeria.

The consequences of these heinous acts are perpetual in nature. According to 2016 United Nations Council there are many children born as a result of rape in Kenya and many other countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, and Rwanda. These children are however rarely accepted by society and often viewed as both a "bad memory" and a future threat.

6. EFFECTS OF PROLIFERATION OF SALW ON WOMEN'S PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES IN NORTHERN KENYA

Northern Kenya is an area that has been for decades plagued by traditions and customs which have for the longest time propelled gender inequality. This in turn has prevented women from actively participating in developmental issues that not only affect their communities, but those that affect them directly. Issues such as food security, economic growth, peace and security have for the longest time been left in the hands of men and even boys. Despite the fact that men and boys are the direct users and victim of small arms and light weapons, women are more often than not impacted by proliferation of small arms in gender specific ways (Masters, 2011). For example, in terms of direct threats to their security, small arms can facilitate and exacerbate violence against women and girls whether in conflict or in peace (Masters, 2011). Additionally, even if they are not primarily gun wielders, their victimization is facilitated with the aid of these weapons (Masters, 2011).

Additionally, women are the weapons of choice in domestic violence, in political violence and sexual violence in armed conflict situations (Masters, 2011). The psychological trauma of small arms, as well as their actual disruption of social cohesion and family safety, often impacts women much more profoundly than men, given their roles in society and in the family and women's often limited access to policing and justice services.

According to Harvard researchers, the peaceful nature of a country is not based on its political alignments, economic and ethno-religious status but on how its women are treated. Based on this research which analyzed 174 countries, violent conflict tended to be more frequent in and around countries that had wider gender gaps in their political, economic and social statuses. In Northern Kenya for example, women living in communities can play a vital role in both disarmament and reintegration programs. In Sierra Leone for example, women played a major role of restoring peace to the community. Through re-integration efforts such as providing post-combat moral guidance and advice, and acting as health care providers, women have the power to facilitate both reintegration and disarmament programs as they have the ability to either welcome or ostracize the fighters (O'Neill, 2015). Women's role as facilitators of peace however continues to be undermined by the continued trade and proliferation of SALW in the region. Despite initiatives both from the government and various non-governmental organizations in the region, proliferation of SALW in the region continues to persist as a result of porous borders, corruption and increased insecurity that exists in the region.

Additionally, proliferation of SALW in Northern Kenya prevents women from influencing both domestic and international policies that affect their security. As mentioned earlier, Northern Kenya is an area troubled by immense gender inequalities where gender roles are adhered to the latter. Disarmament and reintegration initiatives will result to a more peaceful Northern Kenya, thus providing women with an opportunity to transition out of the gendered roles and take part in moulding topics that were traditionally considered male dominated. With substantial efforts of controlling the illicit trade and proliferation of SALW in the region, there has been a significant amount of women taking part in community-based politics which in one way or another influence domestic politics. Inclusion of women not only empowers them, but brings a sense of legitimacy to the government, as they are viewed as both inclusive and gender conscious.

It is also an important fact to note that controlling illicit circulation and proliferation of SALW in Northern Kenya will greatly contribute to women empowerment, by creating an opportunity and a more conducive environment in which girls of school going age are able to attain an education. Proliferation of small arms and light weapons tends to decrease crime rates around communities, thus making it safer for girls to attend school. Another aspect of women empowerment that is being achieved through proliferation of SALW in the region is dependency on oneself. Through initiatives of weapon control, women no longer have to depend on their male counterparts for protection. Additionally, this will also translate to economic dependency as women will be able to go out and participate in income generating activities such as livestock rearing.

Lastly, proliferation of SALW in the Northern parts of Kenya denies a safe working environment for women. Due to the increasing number of SALW in the area, women are unable to take part in economic activities that can contribute not only to their development, but also that of the community. Women are therefore not able to go out and take part in income generating activities such as pastoralist where they cannot engage in livestock trading, including various other forms of business that can yield income.

7. DISPLACEMENT OF WOMEN AS A CONSEQUENCE OF PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS

Another consequence of conflict is human displacement. According to (Southall and O'Hare, 2002), in 1997, 13.2 million people were refugees and 4.9 million were internally displaced. Of the total displaced, strangely more were women and children. In Rwandan refugee camps child mortality was as high as 300 per 100 000 per day (Southall and O'Hare, 2002). Furthermore, massive differences in the health of mothers and children exist between the 10 poorest countries under going conflict in 2000 and the predominantly rich countries that exported arms to the poor countries (directly or indirectly). Arms exports cannot be said to have directly caused this disparity (Southall and O'Hare 2002), but to believe that they have not contributed would be idealistic.

Kenya's border with Somalia is 682 km. The regions surrounding this area have for the past two decades been involved in civil conflict (Menkhaus 2014). Some of the consequences of this conflict are the flow of refugees and in turn the flow of

small arms into the border counties (Waqo 2003). These regions/counties relevant to the topic are Wajir, Isiolo, Garrisa, Marsabit and Mandera. These regions are directly and indirectly accessible to longest conflict ridden country of Somalia. This therefore means that there has been a steady flow as well as illegal flow of refugees (UNICEF 2017).

There is no updated empirical data or qualified information on the impact of small arms and light weapons proliferation and precisely the displacement of women in the Northern Kenya. Much of the worst communal and political violence in both regions can be traced back to ‘violence entrepreneurs’, including some individuals in positions in the government and others in the Diaspora, who start communal tension and incite violence to advance their own political and economic interests. Pastoral poverty, urban drift, and high urban unemployment in both eastern Somaliland and northern Kenya contribute to social frustrations that can facilitate recruitment of young men into armed criminal, tribal, or insurgency groups. The enormous refugee population in northern Kenya is an additional site of social frustration and recruitment. However even the silence in the topics will not negate that women from Northern Kenya experience directly or indirectly the effects.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is urgent need for empirical research on the direct and indirect effects of small arms and light weapons in perpetuating gender based violence in northern Kenya. Additionally research on the contribution of use of small arms in the displacement of women needs to be documented. This data is necessary in gendered policy making and development processes.

It is also vital to reintegrate regions in Northern Kenya to both the Kenyan political and social spheres. Northern Kenya has for the longest time been left to survive harsh conditions with very little governmental considerations. Regional leaders of the area including the non-profit organizations that operate in the area should strive to integrate the agenda of Northern Kenya into the Kenyan agenda, as the region is quite often than not viewed as a separate entity from Kenya. This in the long run will bring out developmental aspects in the region in terms of the economy, society and politics.

Monitoring the effectiveness of regional initiatives where the civil society can play a role in tracking cross-border collaboration, strengths, weaknesses, and progress as part of a co-operative venture to improve regionalization of SALW initiatives.

Additionally, the insecurity that is prevalence in the region should be tackled. Through deployment of various security forces in the region, peace can be sought after. Security personnel in the region such as the police will not only protect the civilians but also mean the porous borders that exist in the region. This will not only result to a more peaceful environment but also a more secure Northern Kenya. Again, the porous borders that exist in the region can through governmental efforts, including those of the non-governmental organizations that operate in the region.

The national government should strive to develop the regions of Northern Kenya so as to reduce their dependence on livestock as their sole source of livelihood and income. By diversifying sources of income and food, a reduction of cattle rustling in the region will decrease the illicit trade and proliferation of SALW thus promoting security and particularly women’s security in the region.

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear that the continued illicit trade and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Northern Kenya has contributed and continues to contribute negatively not only to the locals in the region, but to Kenya as a country. With proliferation of SALW resulting to increased insecurity in the society and more so to the lack of security of women as discussed in the article, it is with no doubt that there is need to reintegrate both regional and national actors, such as governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and local community leaders and members, so as to encourage and implement strategies and initiatives that contribute to disarmament, and reintegration in the region. This in the long run will facilitate increased security in the region and particularly that of women in the region. The article proffers that the role of women in this spectrum must not be seen as less important, feeding into the traits of male dominance, but it may be made prime and given a perspective of its own as one of the secondary pillars of small arms conflicts in northern parts of Kenya.

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