Chapter 7

Combating Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse after Conflict

Adedeji Ebo

Introduction

In the aftermath of violent conflict, large numbers of small arms and light weapons (SALW) often remain in the hands of government forces, warring parties, and civilians. The flow of illicit arms contributes to an atmosphere of insecurity which further increases the demand for arms. Ex-combatants and criminals also take advantage of the lack of effective and functional security institutions to perpetuate crime and revenge attacks. The result is a cycle of violence which is a direct legacy of conflict and which presents significant challenges for post-conflict peacebuilding. Small arms proliferation and misuse undermines post-conflict reconstruction and development; hampers the delivery and distribution of humanitarian and developmental aid; and has the potential to destabilise neighbouring states and societies. Thus, the removal of weapons from circulation after conflict, usually through disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes, is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for successful post-conflict peacebuilding.

This chapter seeks to understand the impact of small arms proliferation and misuse on post-conflict peacebuilding, and the particular opportunities and constraints (for combating SALW) inherent in states emerging from conflict. The central questions posed include: which are the key issues in addressing SALW after conflict? Who are the principal actors engaged and what mechanisms are employed in the framework of security governance? Given the inherent inability of post-conflict states to exert effective security governance, how beneficial are external interventions in this area? How can local ownership be enhanced to enable long-term sustainability?

The chapter begins with an overview of the challenges posed to peacebuilding by small arms proliferation. It then argues that, from a peacebuilding perspective, combating proliferation extends beyond the state, which in many post-conflict contexts, is hardly existent. The challenge of addressing proliferation after conflict is therefore one of *governance* rather than *government*, reflecting a multiplicity of actors, levels and mechanisms. The third section of the chapter identifies and discusses these actors, levels and mechanisms, and the accompanying governance challenges and responses. In the fourth section, an examination is made of the Liberian experience, as well as the lessons which can be drawn from this case. The ensuing discussion is therefore focused on the West African subregion. The chapter concludes that long-term strategies which focus on the root causes of conflict are indispensable. As such, the Liberian experience does not manifest such a holistic peacebuilding agenda. The empirical evidence, it is argued, is one of qualified, compartmentalised successes in the technical processes of removing small arms after conflict, without necessarily addressing the root causes of conflict and the motivations for illicit small arms possession, or linking small arms control to other peacebuilding strategies.

The Challenge of SALW in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

Small arms are revolvers and semi-automatic pistols; rifles and carbines; automatic rifles and submachine guns which are designed for personal use and can usually be carried and operated by one individual. Light weapons are heavy machine guns, handheld and mounted grenade launchers, man-portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, recoilless rifles, portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of less than 100mm bore. Despite the nomenclature, 'light weapons' are usually too heavy for one person to carry and require a small team to operate.[1] For the purpose of this chapter, the term 'small arms' (or SALW) is used to refer to both categories. It is estimated that there are some 639 million small arms in circulation worldwide.[2]

The peacebuilding dimensions of small arms proliferation are numerous and interrelated.[3] The flood of weapons which typically follow conflict inhibits post-conflict peacebuilding, as the availability of weapons tends to increase in immediate post conflict periods.[4] It has been demonstrated that numbers of civilian deaths from firearms either remain unchanged or increase in post-conflict environments.[5] This comes from the absence of effective and legitimate statutory security actors after conflict, a permissive environment for crime, and the widespread possession of small arms as a means of self-protection.

A peacebuilding perspective on small arms proliferation is not *as such* concerned with the availability (total numbers) of SALW, but rather with their impact on individuals and their communities. To be sure, human security is a major casualty of small arms, and the damage done by small arms is deep. Small arms have been aptly described as holding development hostage,[6] and the ransom is often paid in lives and livelihoods. Granted that available data are only gross estimates, some 90% of deaths in post-Cold War conflicts have been by small arms, and in the past decade alone they have, by some estimates, caused more than 3 million deaths.[7] In addition to inflicting death and injury, international peace and stability are undermined, political conflicts in individual states are transformed into armed conflicts, and communities within states are weaponised.[8]

The sharply increased role of small arms as instruments of violence since the end of the Cold War is due to several factors, including the changing character of conflict itself. The post-Cold War period has departed significantly from the *Westphalian* assumption about the nature of war as emanating from, and fought across, borders. In fact, most conflicts are now fought within, rather than between, states.

Nor are the conflicts that result fought by professional military forces as has been historically the case. Many of the 'new' wars are fought by non-statutory forces and other non-state actors. Correspondingly, while the protection of civilians – particularly women, children and the elderly – was a feature of traditional warfare, these most vulnerable groups have become 'legitimate' targets, judging by the frequency with which they are attacked.

Small arms proliferation causes great damage. Even though it is widely acknowledged that small arms do not by themselves cause war, they do have a catalytic effect on conflict – intensifying violence and armed crime, and hindering stability, democracy and good governance.[9] In post-conflict environments, the atmosphere of insecurity created by small arms proliferation lessens the prospects for stability and order, conditions which are essential for recovery.[10] Small arms also represent a significant factor in inducing displacement, making the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees more difficult. In addition, small arms make it less safe for international relief and peacebuilding personnel to function in the post-conflict environment. Humanitarian and development agencies are exposed to, and made vulnerable by, the widespread availability of small arms: In 2001, the rate of death by firearms for UN civilian staff was around 17-25 per 100,000.[11]

The causes of small arms proliferation are many. Even though there is a legal trade in small arms, legally-purchased weapons may end up in criminal hands or be (mis)used by state security personnel for illegal acts. Thus, the line between licit and illicit arms is often blurred. The original

stockpiles of SALW were usually acquired as part of 'technical military assistance' programmes during the Cold War. One of the consequences of the end of the Cold War was, in general, a considerable downsizing of armed forces. As a consequence, 'a huge labour pool of potential security entrepreneurs, mercenaries, and arms merchants has been created, particularly in South Africa and Eastern and Central Europe'.[12] Armsbrokers have an extensive network of contacts, front companies, intermediaries, and off-shore financial institutions which are used to exploit loopholes in national and international arms control regulations. Corrupt government officials can provide and use fake End-User Certificates to channel arms illicitly.[13] Particularly in post-conflict environments, where stockpile management is weak, theft also feeds the proliferation cycle. In addition, local manufacture (craft production) of small arms is increasingly contributing to proliferation. In West Africa, for example, there is an emerging military industrial complex, with its own network of regionally-focused, locally-based arms dealers and manufacturers.[14]

Whether from local or external sources, small arms are only tools within complex social and political processes. They do in fact complicate, prolong and intensify conflict, but they are by no means the cause of conflict. Especially in the case of developing regions, the proliferation of SALW is attributable to a lack of effective governance. In other words, the lack of good governance often empowers and encourages violent resistant movements, rebel groups, and militias – all of which turn to SALW to redress socio-economic and political exclusion. As R.T Naylor has noted, small arms proliferation is a 'surrogate for the demand for social justice and the firearm is the capital good intended to bring about that objective'.[15]

In post-conflict environments, the inability of the government (or what is left of state institutions) to provide public security drives the citizens to adopt self-help measures by arming themselves in self-defence, and thus, further heightening insecurity and small arms proliferation. When and where DDR programmes fail or are incomplete, unemployment persists and the resulting unrest reinforces this insecurity and the need to be armed.

Table 7.1: Approaches to Combating SALW Proliferation and Misuse

Level/Actor	Function	Mechanism	Activities
		Global	
United Nations	Norms and standards Setting	Programme of Action (UNPoA) Firearms Protocol	Biennial Meetings Review Conferences
Civil society	Advocacy and research	Programme of Action; institutional objectives	Conferences; workshops; seminars
		(Sub)Regional	
African Union	Regional norms and standards setting	AU-NePAD Peace and Security Agenda: (1) ensure efficient and consolidated action for combating small arms; (2) improve security sector and capacity for good governance Bamako Declaration (African Common Position on UNPoA)	Summits and ministerial meetings

ECOWAS	Sub-regional norms and standards setting	Moratorium / Convention; Code of Conduct; ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme (ECOSAP)	National Commissions; harmonisation of laws, regional arms register/database, Culture of Peace programmes
	National		
Government	Provision of security	DDR; legislation; SSR, enhancement of border controls	Arms collection and destruction, training of security personnel
Armed groups/warring parties	Enhanced government monopoly of SALW	DDR	disarmament
Private Military Company	Implementation of SSR	Bilateral contract	Restructuring; Training
	Local		
Community Associations and organisations	Promotion of local ownership and participation	Weapons for development projects	Voluntary weapons surrender; monitoring of possession

SALW as a Security Governance Challenge in Peacebuilding

Addressing small arms after conflict is a multi-layered exercise, involving global, regional, subregional, national, and community actors. Table 7.1 identifies some of the key actors involved in governing the proliferation of SALW, along with the corresponding governance mechanisms and related activities. It has to be noted, however, that the table is not necessarily limited to, or focused on, post-conflict situations but is intended as a heuristic device, which attempts to capture the multi-layered and multi-actor character of addressing small arms proliferation. The specific post-conflict context receives particular focus in the treatment of Liberia in the next section. Though global and regional norms, instruments, and frameworks do support and effect national dimensions of the issue, national governments remain the primary agents of delivering and administering control measures and policies. As Krause has noted, the sovereign state remains the primary institution for providing security for their citizens and most of the practical measures for dealing with small arms take place at the local and national levels.[16]

The challenges posed by small arms to peacebulding reflect, and are complicated by, the fragmentation of political authority and the emergence of new actors in small arms issues. The state has become an increasingly insufficient, albeit crucial, actor in addressing small arms proliferation, particularly after conflict when state capacity is weak. The fight against small arms proliferation has grown beyond the sole responsibility of government institutions, structures and processes, and there has been a marked increase in the number and profile of non-state actors involved in addressing what should be described as the ‘small arms crisis’.

Global Governance Approaches

While there has been a increase in global efforts to control small arms since the end of the Cold War, governance regimes for small arms have not really existed in the sense of a comprehensive framework of control requiring uniform compliance by state and non-state actors. However, multilateral involvement in addressing small arms availability and misuse received increased support following the Cold War, just as small arms proliferation surged due to surplus weapons and personnel. In 2001, the UN Conference on ‘The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light

Weapons in All Its Aspects' (hereafter the 2001 Conference) was held in New York. Resulting from this conference was the *Programme of Action To Prevent and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects*. Known widely as the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA or PoA), this normative document has emerged as 'the only authoritative international consensus statement of the nature of the problem and the proposed solution'.[17] It is a politically binding document which has become 'the central global instrument for preventing and reducing trafficking and proliferation of SALW'.[18] The UNPoA is significant because it captures the way in which states have negotiated the response to the small arms scourge. It is also significant for what it provides, and for what it omits. The UNPoA calls on states to, among other things:

- Establish a national coordinating agency on small arms;
- Identify and destroy stockpiles of surplus weapons;
- Keep track of officially-held guns;
- Issue end-user certificates for export/transit;
- Notify original supplier nations of reexportation;
- Disarm, demobilise and rehabilitate ex-combatants;
- Support regional agreements and encourage moratoria;
- Mark guns at point of manufacture;
- Engage in information exchange;
- Ensure better enforcement of arms embargoes.

To be sure, the UNPoA does not deal with all the dimensions of the problem, nor has it enabled the degree of global consensus achieved on landmines. Certain significant dimensions and issues are conspicuously absent from the PoA. Against the protestations of civil society groups and several states, the document failed to cover the prohibition of small arms transfers to armed non-state actors, to negotiate an instrument on brokering, or to establish a code of conduct for exports. In particular, that the failure of the UNPoA to address regulation of civilian weapons was due mainly to U.S. opposition is a stark reminder of the political limitations and the power context of small arms governance. The US was by no means the only culprit. A number of other governments (Russia, China, and Pakistan, for example) were prepared to discuss illicit transfers only, and were not disposed to introducing internationally accepted norms. Israel was one of those states reluctant to regulate brokers. The global governance regime for small arms and light weapons also reflects a focus on supply, as opposed to the demand dimension of proliferation.[19] Yet, it is the demand dimension that essentially links SALW with broader governance issues.[20] Indeed, and as it becomes evident in the following discussion, there is a disconnect between the normative provisions of international instruments and the needs of post-conflict reconstruction on the ground. Given the supply focus of these normative instruments and the demand driven character of the small arms crisis in post-conflict states, it becomes problematic to operationalise international instruments on the ground. The PoA is therefore worthy of discussion in this context, not so much because it is directly responsible for getting the guns off the streets of Monrovia, but because it helps to illustrate the plethora of actors which attempt, albeit in a rather disarticulated manner, to govern small arms proliferation.

Three types of actors have been central to the evolution of the PoA: 'like-minded states, a small set of relatively large transnational NGOs, and several key individuals…playing roles of bridges, gateways and routers'. Civil society and non-state actors played a crucial role in at the 2001 Small Arms Conference, in addition to their traditional roles of advocacy, research and analysis, and watchdogs of small arms flows between states – NGOs and key individuals were 'themselves often directly inserted into the policy process', and responsible for drafting aspects of the PoA.[21]

Among global and multilateral actors, donor states play a particularly important role in dictating the pace and direction of post-conflict reconstruction in general, and in addressing small arms in particular. One specific area in which this has become evident is in the reintegration and rehabilitation (RR) components of DDR programmes, which is dependent on voluntary contributions. In the case of Liberia, for example (as illustrated below), the RR components were stalled due to a funding shortage until the European Union, the United States and Sweden made financial commitments. Donors can also have a direct bearing on those sectors which should receive priority attention. For example, despite the decay of the Liberian judicial system and the desire of the Liberian government to redress the situation, progress could not be made because, at the February 2004 donor conference, no financial commitments were received for judicial reform.

The UN's role in addressing small arms availability, however, has evolved beyond norm-building and standard-setting. Particularly in post-conflict environments such as Liberia, in which state capacity is weak, traditional state functions of providing security are often the direct responsibility of the UN mission.

Regional and Subregional Governance Approaches

There have also been regional and subregional initiatives on normative frameworks and confidence-building measures in various regions of the world. The most significant among these is the OAS Firearms Convention, known formally as the Inter-American Convention Against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking In Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other related Materials (CIFTA), adopted in November 1997, and stands out as the first legally binding regional agreement on illicit firearms trafficking. The 'Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms' was agreed by the EU Council in 1997, while the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports was agreed in 1998. The OSCE Document on SALW was adopted in 2000 and outlines how the organisation would provide assistance to participating states, and has resulted in a series of workshops on SALW.

At the African regional level, out of the eight items on the Peace and Security Agenda of the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), two relate directly to small arms and democratic governance of the security sector: (1) ensuring efficient and consolidated action for the prevention, combat and eradicaton of the problem of illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of SALW; (2) improving the security sector and the capacity for good governance as related to peace and security.[22]

A major regional normative instrument on small arms in Africa is the Bamako Declaration, which evolved out of the need for a Common African Position at the 2001 UN Conference. Following a Ministerial Conference in Bamako in late 2000, the declaration recommends the following actions by African states:

- Creation of national coordinating agencies for small arms;
- Enhancement of capacity of law enforcement and security agencies and officials, including training and upgrading of equipment and resources;
- Destruction of surplus and confiscated weapons;
- Development and implementation of public awareness programmes;
- Conclusion of bilateral arrangements for small arms control in common frontier zones.

In this regard, it can be argued that the African region was a direct beneficiary of efforts to develop a global instrument on small arms (the UNPoA), as it was the UN Conference that necessitated the Common African Position. The effect of the Bamako Declaration is added

legitimacy for the UNPoA and the codification of a set of regional priorities concerning small arms.

The West African subregion has been a pioneer in addressing the plague of small arms proliferation. This phenomenon, featuring militarised societies arising out of protracted military rule, has been overwhelming and alarming even in states ostensibly at peace,[23] Estimates of the number of illicit small arms circulating in West Africa range between 7 million and 10 million.[24] The conflict in Liberia starkly illustrates how the prospects for good governance and political stability are hampered by small arms proliferation. Warlords converted the region's natural resources into a curse, carrying out illegal exploitation in exchange for small arms. One of the first challenges of post-conflict reconstruction therefore is to return locations rich in natural resources to legitimate government control.

Until the 1990s, addressing small arms in West Africa occurred within the framework of Cold War rivalry. By 1996 however, the search for a viable and sustainable peace in the Malian civil conflict between the Tuaregs in the North and the Malian government necessitated a regional approach. Building on the success of the Malian peace process, President Konare proposed a regional freeze on the import, export and manufacture of SALW in West Africa. This proposal was the basis for a number of meetings, consultations and conferences culminating in the adoption of a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, signed in Abuja on 31 October 1998. Despite official proclamations to the contrary, various governments have undermined the efficacy of the Moratorium by working against its objectives. Togo and Burkina Faso, for example, were named by the UN as being implicated in facilitating weapons flows to UNITA in Angola and dealing in 'blood diamonds'.[25] The Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars were grave challenges to the Moratorium and exposed its failure to address the role of non-state actors in the proliferation of small arms. Yet in other states, there appears to be a higher degree of political will, with governments lending support to the creation of National Commissions and other structures for the implementation of the Moratorium. There is however widespread lack of knowledge among the populace about the Moratorium, even in states with demonstrated political will. Overall, the effect of the Moratorium on small arms proliferation in West Africa has been more evolutionary than revolutionary.[26]

Addressing small arms availability and misuse at the level of individual states has necessarily been conditioned by domestic realities. Overall, however, domestic legislation and control measures have operated within the framework of the UNPoA and the ECOWAS Moratorium. In post-conflict states in particular, there has been a complex web of multilateral intervention, regional and subregional normative frameworks, civil society engagement, domestic legislation and community action. In such contexts, DDR programmes have served as major mechanisms for addressing small arms proliferation, within the framework of UN peace operations. However, while multilateral intervention led by the UN presents an opportunity for third party involvement to rebuild security after conflict, addressing small arms after conflict must also confront the need to ensure that such interventions respond to local needs and advance local ownership if security is to be sustainable.

National and Community Governance Approaches

At the national level, most governments use institutional and administrative arrangements to comply with global and regional/subregional normative frameworks, such as the designation of a national point of contact for small arms, as required by the UNPoA. In West Africa, the ECOWAS Moratorium demands that states establish a National Commission on Small Arms. All West African states, except Liberia, have complied with this provision, though with varying levels of effectiveness. Governments also put in place legislation which set out to define eligibility criteria for firearm possession and importation, together with a regime of penalties for

breaching the law. For most states in post-conflict contexts, DDR is particularly useful in removing weapons from circulation and providing peaceful alternatives to ex-combatants. SSR also serves not only as a means of achieving increased efficiency in the provision of security, but also of placing security institutions under democratic civilian control. Thus, security personnel are less predisposed to putting firearms to personal and illegal use.

Armed non-state groups which were warring parties during conflict also have a direct role to play in addressing small arms proliferation, following the cessation of hostilities.[27] Their contribution to the small arms governance process is through disarmament, thus enhancing the government's monopoly of coercive force. In the particular case of Liberia, the approach has been to incorporate the armed groups into the state, making them part of the transition government. Private military companies (PMCs) have also emerged as actors in addressing small arms proliferation through SSR, with Liberia serving as a pilot case in West Africa.

DDR programmes, no matter how effective, have a limited lifespan and are often focussed on disarming warring factions. Thus, they cannot ensure the removal of weapons from local communities on a systematic, longer-term basis. Community-based approaches to disarmament are therefore necessary in order to build on the gains of DDR. Thus, while various normative policy frameworks may be prescribed at various levels, governance at the community level is crucial for achieving sustainability through local participation and ownership. A focus on the Liberian case will illustrate how societies deal with the governance of small arms proliferation after conflict.

Lessons from the Case of Liberia

By the time the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed[28] in Accra, Ghana, on 18 August 2003, the 14-year war had led to a collapse of not only the state, but of the economy and society as well.[29] Some 250,000 died during the war, of which half were civilians. About 500,000 were internally displaced. Poverty is endemic, with 75% living on less than a dollar a day. More than 8 in 10 persons are unemployed, and literacy is a very low 37%. Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction context is therefore one of deprivation and lack of opportunity arising largely out of an absence of good governance.

Impact of SALW on Peacebuilding Efforts in Liberia

Prior to the civil war, civilian possession of SALW was limited largely to the governing elite and the licensing system governing possession was fairly effective. Even though there was a tradition of hunting in the hinterland, Liberia could not be described as a country with a gun culture.[30] Small arms proliferation is not merely a legacy of conflict, but has a major impact on the post-conflict reconstruction context in terms of power relations among the various stakeholders in the peacebuilding process. The dilemma of post-conflict reconstruction very often is to devise a realistic and sustainable peace agreement which does not appear to reward violence, as there appears to be a direct correlation between a warring party's record in brutalising and terrorising the population and the concessions the group is awarded through the peace process.

Beyond the negotiation table, small arms define interpersonal and inter-group relations after conflict. Those who possess arms attract respect and fear in proportion to what they possess, those who lack it feel disempowered and vulnerable, and therefore seek to possess arms. With SALW in their possession, warlords, armed militias, and criminal gangs have been able to dictate the pace and scope of, and act as an obstacle to, post-conflict reconstruction programmes. In post-conflict environments therefore, whoever has the gun has power. In addition, Liberia was for many years, and arguably remains, the hub of small arms proliferation in the West African subregion, feeding weapons into conflicts in Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire.

SALW have had a complicating and debilitating impact on peacebuilding in Liberia. Liberia has emerged as a prime source of young fighters who are willing to fight for any cause. Liberian ex-combatants are reportedly participating in the on-going conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, representing a continuing source of public insecurity. Exiled former Liberian leader Charles Taylor is reported to be funding, training and arming a small loyalist military force led by his former commanders. Elements of this force are reported to be operating in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria. He is also reported to be financing candidates in political parties registered to participate in the forthcoming Liberian elections.[31]

Responses to Small Arms Proliferation after War

(a) Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration. UNMIL initially grossly underestimated the number of ex-combatants that needed to be disarmed and demobilised. Thus, when UNMIL launched the DDR programme in December 2003, it suffered setbacks as estimates of the total of ex-combatants to be disarmed had been set at 38,000. The actual figure turned out to be over 100,000. The decision to commence the disarmament exercise despite the lack of adequate preparation and data resulted in a violent reaction by the ex-combatants, the death of nine persons, and the injury of several more. This has been attributed to 'the rush to disarm in order to show donors that UNMIL was making progress'.[32] By November 2004 when the process was officially declared ended, according to the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR), 103,018 persons had been disarmed. 11% of these were children. 27,000 weapons, 6,153,631 rounds of ammunition and 29,274 pieces of heavy munitions had been collected.[33] Disarmament and Demobilisation attracted a total of US$300 (known as Transitional Safety Allowance or TSA) per ex-combatant, with half the amount paid prior to discharge and the remaining half after. Child combatants, and indeed anyone who turned in a serviceable weapon, was qualified to receive TSA. In the case of child combatants however, TSA was only paid once they were reunited with their parents or guardians.[34] Despite the official declaration of the end of disarmament and demobilisation however, there are reports that the exercise was far from comprehensive.[35]

The lack of accurate records and baseline data on Liberia's weapons stock render an assessment of the level of success of the disarmament programme difficult. However, the UN Panel of Experts on Liberia has provided accurate data on weapons transported from the former Yugoslavia in 2002 to Charles Taylor using fake Nigerian End-User Certificates, in defiance of a UN arms embargo. Using this particular consignment as a basis, the DDR programme appears to have had significant impact:

> By 3 October, 2004, ex-combatants had turned in a total of 3,175, or 64%, of the original 5,000 rifles. UNMIL undertook a similar count of 200 missile launchers (RB M57)…. Of these, it appeared from the serial numbers that ex-combatants had turned in 184, or 92%. Further analysis also showed that, of an estimated 791 RPG-7 rockets, a total of 459, or 58% were collected. Combined, these figures show that 64% of the weapons…were collected.[36]

Disarmament in Liberia has left significant fire power, in terms of heavy guns, in the hands of the former warring factions. Very few of the larger weapons, such as those used in the August 2003 siege on Monrovia were handed in. Only 3.3% of weapons collected by UNMIL were mortars, anti-aircraft guns or large calibre machine guns. It has been suggested that 'most mortars and other heavy weapons returned to Guinea (in the case of LURD) and Côte d'Ivoire (in the case of MODEL) between November 2003 and February 2004, before UNMIL was fully deployed'.[37]

The discrepancy between the initial estimated caseload of 38,000 ex-combatants and the actual figure of over 103,000 disarmed ex-fighters led to a budgetary shortfall of $58 million. Moreover, while disarmament and demobilisation are provided for in UNMIL peacekeeping

budgets, reintegration and rehabilitation are funded by voluntary donations. There are, however, encouraging signs that donors are responding to the deficit. By June 2005, the UN Secretary General reported that this shortfall had decreased to $39 million.[38] More recent information provided by the Acting Head of UNMIL indicates further progress, with the deficit standing at $10 million, following payments of $15 million from the United States, $3.6 million from Sweden, and $8.8 million from the European Union.[39]

(b) Civilian Disarmament. The Liberian disarmament process, under pressure from the warring factions, yielded to a policy of multiple ex-fighters to one weapon. Allowing multiple persons to one weapon (as opposed to a policy one fighter per weapon) vastly increases the number of beneficiaries in the disarmament process. This largely explains the disproportionate ratio of arms to ex-combatants (1:4). It also contributes to the suspicion that there are still many weapons in the hands of the population and outside government knowledge and control.[40] Therefore, UNDP initiated a Small Arms Control and Community Micro-Disarmament Project which remains largely at a preparatory stage, and will work within the programmatic framework of the Recovery and Reintegration programme of UNDP.[41] The programme aims at removing residual arms from circulation. Working through District Development Communities (DDC), the project introduces a voluntary weapons collection scheme, which would be rewarded with specific projects such as clinics, schools and solar energy, and others as may be determined by the communities themselves. The collected weapons are then destroyed in ceremonies, while the remnants are used to fabricate productive tools.[42]

Community small arms governance in Liberia appears to be responding positively to the demands for local ownership, and empowerment of local populations. However, legitimate concerns arise with regard to the sustainability of these initiatives in the absence of material incentives. Moreover, the objective of a weapon-free community may not only be utopian, but out of sync with the socio-economic and cultural practices of the communities. For example, locally-made shotguns have been part and parcel of social and economic life in Liberia. Disarmament needs therefore to be better situated within local contexts. It is not an unlikely scenario that focusing on removing hunting rifles from these societies would distort the socio-economic habits and patterns of the population and drive local arms fabrication further underground.

(c) Small Arms Control Measures. Liberia remains under a United Nations arms embargo. Liberian law permits private possession of firearms, which must be registered with the police. Such private possession was however very restricted before the war, and limited largely to the ruling elite. Registration of private firearms is currently suspended. The pre-war legal framework remains in force, though there is an on-going effort to review firearm legislation, supported by UNDP. Police capacity for data collection and analysis collapsed during the war. The Liberian Action Network on Small Arms (LANSA) was launched in 2004, and has, with UNDP support, held sensitisation workshops and issued statements on small arms proliferation issues, led by the Centre for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE). However, Liberia remains the only country in West Africa which is yet to establish a National Commission on Small Arms as required by the Code of Conduct of the ECOWAS Moratorium.

(d) Security Sector Reform (SSR): The Liberian armed and security forces have historically served regime interests, often at the expense of the populace. Indeed, their brutal methods made them threats to the population. The use of armed and security forces to oppress the population reached its peak during the regime of Charles Taylor. Salaries of uniformed personnel went unpaid and small arms often served as the instruments with which uniformed personnel looted civilians.

A major response to small arms proliferation therefore has been through SSR with the objective of providing security in a more effective and efficient manner, and within the

framework of civilian democratic control. It is envisaged that a more professional outlook which is under democratic oversight would change the mindset of security personnel, with particular regard to the use of firearms, and with regard to stockpile safety and management. It would also limit the use of firearms in society through better enforcement and would demonstrate to the citizens that self-help security measures are no longer necessary. In this regard, Part 4 (Articles VII and VIII) of the CPA is centred on SSR and provides that 'all irregular forces shall be disbanded' (article VIIa); the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) shall be restructured under a new command (article VIIb). Efforts are underway to build a new army of 4,000 (down from the post war strength of 14,000), and a police force of 3,500.

Local Ownership

While external intervention is essential, local ownership is a no less necessary condition for sustainability. Inadequate attention to local participation in responses to small arms proliferation may therefore limit the success of the programme to the lifetime of the intervention. In the case of Liberia, there has been disquiet among the populace that the international community (particularly UNMIL) has failed to emphasise local ownership of the reconstruction process. Liberians feel excluded from the planning and implementation of key programmes such as DDR and police reform. According to an independent assessment

> While UNMIL provides office space for the national Commission for DDRR (NCDDRR) and pays the salary of its Executive Director, there is real concern that the blueprint for DDR did not contain significant Liberian input and that the NCDDRR was virtually sidelined in the development of the DDRR programme.[43]

However, though valid, the case for local ownership must be set beside gross governance deficits – which are at the root of Liberia's development crisis and represent the major structural demand factor for small arms.

Liberia is far from transcending the cleavages and social conditions which were, in the first instance, the root causes of conflict, centring around a lack of good governance. The character of the state itself shapes social behaviours and the Liberian transitional government, which was intended to lay the groundwork for the establishment of an enabling environment for good governance, has itself been caught in a web of scandal and has evidenced a lack of transparency and accountability. The socio-economic and political cleavages between descendants of freed slaves on the one hand and the indigenous population on the other continues to resonate in many aspects of life in Liberia. Popular participation, accountability and transparency in governance are the core principles whose absence in the Liberian political economy continue to represent major gaps in the attempt to address the small arms problem on a sustainable basis. In the face of socio-economic and political exclusion, lack of employment and economic opportunities, sections of the population will continue to look for violent paths to participation. This is particularly evident in the face of widespread corruption among the governing elite. The pervasiveness of corruption in the transition government has led to the United Nations, the European Commission, World Bank, IMF, and ECOWAS to establish 'an economic governance action plan'.[44] The Liberia Economic Governance and Action Plan (LEGAP) would give the power to veto government economic policies, would contract awards, and would exercise strict control over government finances. The National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) is indeed afflicted with a de facto crisis of legitimacy. In order to address the root causes of conflict, and thus the primary motivation for small arms proliferation, the governance framework in Liberia needs to depart from past practice and should be accountable, transparent and participatory.

A major gap that remains to be addressed in the Liberian peacebuilding process is the lack of an integrated and comprehensive peacebuilding strategy. Transformation, rather than reform, is necessary. The lack of an integrated approach is reflected in the DD-RR gap discussed above, the emphasis on police reform without corresponding reform in the correctional services, and the failure to factor in the implications for other peacebuilding initiatives in the subregion. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire ex-combatants were offered $970 for disarming. In Liberia they were offered $300. This disparity raises the danger of combatants from Liberia crossing into Côte d'Ivoire to get a better deal.[45]

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This chapter sought to investigate the impact of small arms proliferation on post-conflict peacebuilding. It was argued that combating small arms extends beyond the reach of the state, particularly in post-conflict environments where state capacity is weak. Though still crucial, the state has become one of many actors, which explains the number and profile of non-state and regional actors.

Addressing small arms after conflict is, more accurately, a multi-layered exercise involving global, regional, state, and substate actors and predicated on several interlinked mechanisms for which no single actor is adequate. The role of the UN has extended beyond norm-building and standard-setting to include the provision of security in post-conflict environments through mechanisms such as DDR, SSR, and support for civilian disarmament. In so doing, it works with regional and subregional organisations, national governments, local and international NGOs, and local communities. Regional and subregional organisations have been the bridge between the normative functions of the UN at the global level and local contexts and realities, while also promoting confidence building measures such as the ECOWAS Moratorium. Though operating within normative frameworks set by global and regional actors, the state remains the principal organ for the provision of security and for implementing the standards set by other actors. In post-conflict contexts, however, the UN, as is the case in Liberia, assumes a major role in governing the proliferation of small arms and functions as the midwife of stability by removing weapons from circulation and reforming the security sector.

A major challenge of peacebuilding in Liberia is the presence of too many guns within the context of too few economic and employment opportunities, and a failure to address the root causes of what is essentially a governance crisis. The Liberian case demonstrates that, devastating as they may be, small arms are merely instruments for redressing governance deficits. The chapter therefore argued that good governance remains the long-term solution for addressing the demand for small arms. The guns need therefore not only be removed, but structures and processes also need to be put in place to ensure that there is no compelling need to be armed. This means the provision of employment and economic opportunities for Liberia's teeming youth population (more than 50% of population are under 30 years). It must also include a responsible and responsive government, and political dialogue and reconciliation to address wartime injustices and the question of national cohesion.

The following specific recommendations are put forward:

- A holistic approach to addressing small arms proliferation after conflict requires the provision of non-violent alternatives. For example, with Liberia's youthful population structure and high unemployment rate, a comprehensive youth programme is needed as a means of socio-economic empowerment;
- The UN's *modus operandi* since the end of the Cold War is characterised by a sequence of activities in the order of peace agreement, followed by deployment of peacekeepers, a

DDR programme, SSR, and ending with elections. There is a need to balance such generic approaches to post-conflict peacebuilding with the imperatives of local context and ownership;

- The entire DDR programme should form part of the UN peace mission. Reintegration and rehabilitation should not be subject to voluntary contributions;
- Encourage more community-based approaches and Weapons-for Development programmes;
- Involvement of community in small arms governance beyond DDR processes. Civil education and school curricula should be used build a culture of peace;
- Capacity-building and empowerment of civil society in post-conflict environments;
- Community Small Arms registers should be developed and integrated, building on voluntary disarmament schemes:
- More focus on addressing local arms production in terms of research and analysis;
- Mainstream SALW governance into UN reform initiatives, including Peacebuilding Commission/Support Office.

Combating the scourge of SALW is a function of a multiplicity of actors and mechanisms. In the final analysis success will depend on the extent to which governance mechanisms and interventions enhance social empowerment through local ownership, based on accountability and broad participation of the target population. The long-term and sustainable path to addressing the small arms crisis lies in addressing those factors which drive the demand for small arms, such as socio-economic and political exclusion. This would require rebuilding the nation so that all segments of society have a sense of ownership and belonging. No one seeks to destroy what they consider to be theirs.

Notes

1 United Nations General Assembly, Report of the Governmental Experts on Small Arms (1997).
2 Small Arms Survey, 'Red Flags and Buicks: Global firearms Stockpiles' (2002), chapter 2.
3 See Frey, B., 'Small Arms and Light Weapons: the Tools Used to Violate Human Rights', *Disarmament Forum* no. 3 (Geneva, 2004), pp. 37-46; Muggah, R., Batchelor, P., 'Development Held Hostage: Assessing the Effects of Small Arms on Human Development' (UNDP: New York, 2002); Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, *Small Arms and Human Security: A Snapshot of the Humanitarian Impacts* (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue: Geneva, November 2003); Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2003*, (Geneva, 2003), chapter 4.
4 George, P., *An Operations Framework for Micro-Disarmament and Peacebuilding* (Canadian Agency for International Development: Hull, 2001), pp. 3-4.
5 Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2001* (Geneva, 2001), p. 210; Goodfellow, M., *At Arms Length: Human Security In Post Conflict Environments*, paper delivered to ISYP Conference ('Advancing Human security') (Halifax, 15-17 July 2003), p. 8.
6 Muggah, R., Batchelor, P., *op. cit.*; Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, *op. cit.;* Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2003* (Geneva, 2003), chapter 4.
7 Ploughshares, 'Small Arms and Peacebuilding', *Ploughshares Briefing* vol. 98, no. 3 (Project Ploughshares: Ontario), p. 1.
8 Ibidem.
9 Behera, A., *op. cit.*, p. 3.
10 Goodfellow, M., *op cit.*, p. 8.
11 Muggah, R., Berman, E., Humanitarianism Under Threat: The Humanitarian Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Small Arms Survey/Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue: Geneva, July 2001), p. ix. See also ICRC, Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict (ICRC: Geneva , 1999).
12 Musah, A., 'Small Arms: A Time Bomb Under West Africa's Democratization Process', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* vol. IX, issue 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 243-244.
13 See Wood, B., Peleman, J., *The Arms Fixers: Controlling the Brokers and Shipping Agents*, PRIO report 3/99 (PRIO: Oslo, 1999).

14 Ebo, A., 'Illicit Small Arms Brokering in West Africa: Beyond the Victim Paradigm', paper presented at the ECOWAS-Dutch Norwegian Conference ('Combating Illicit Small Arms Brokering and Trafficking') (Abuja, 22 March 2004).
15 Donald, D., Olonisakin, F., 'Security Sector Reform and the demand for Small Arms and Light Weapons, *Ploughshares Briefing* vol. 1, no. 7, available at URL <www.ploghshares.ca/content/BRIEFINGS/brf107.html>.
16 Krause, K., 'Facing he Challenge of Small Arms: The UN and Global Security Governance', Price, R., Zacher, M. (eds.), *The United Nations and Global Security* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2004), pp. 22-37.
17 *Idem*, p. 4.
18 Ceesay, A., 'Small Arms, Civil Society and the UN Process', *West Africa Magazine* (7-12 July 2003).
19 Weiss, T., 'A Demand Side Approach to Fighting Small Arms Proliferation', *African Security Review* vol. 12, no. 2 (Institute of Security Studies: Pretoria, 2003), available at URL <www.iss.co.za/Pubs/ASR/12No2/F1.html>.
20 Donald, D., Olonisakin, F., *op cit.*
21 Krause, K., *op cit*, pp. 10-11. For analyses of the role of NGOs at the 2001 Conference, see Batchelor, P., 'NGO Perspectives: NGOs and the Small Arms Issue', *Disarmament Forum* no. 1 (2002), pp. 37-49; Ceesay, A., *op. cit.*
22 Available at URL <www.saferafrica.org/Programmes/Nepad/NEPADProgramme.asp>.
23 Forty military coups were recorded in West Africa in the period 1963-1999. See Kandeh, J., 'Civil Military Relations', Adebajo, A., Rashid, I. (eds.), *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region* (Lynne Reiner: Boulder, 2004), p.148.
24 Musah, A.-F., 'Africa: The Political Economy of Small Arms and Conflicts', *DPMN Bulletin* vol. VIII, no. 1 (July 2001), p. 2.
25 See United Nations, *Press Release*, UN Doc. SC/7018 (22 February, 2001), accessible at URL <www.un.org/news/press/docs.2001/sc7018.doc.htm>.
26 For an assessment of small arms control measures in West Africa, see Ebo, A., *Small Arms Controls in West Africa (MISAC)* (International Alert: London, 2003), available at URL <http://www.international-alert.org/publications/75.php>.
27 Armed groups are 'groups equipped with small arms that have the capacity to challenge the state's monopoly of legitimate force.' For a detailed discussion, see Florquin, N., Berman , E. (eds.), *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns and Human Security in the ECOWAS Region* (Small Arms Survey: Geneva, 2005).
28 The agreement was made between the Government of Liberia (GoL), Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), civil society representatives and 18 registered political parties.
29 For details of the generall state of decay in Liberia following the war, see ICG, 'Rebuilding Liberia: Prospects and Perils', *ICG Africa Report* no. 75 (ICG: Brussels, 30 January 2004); Lowenkopf, M., 'Liberia: Putting the State Back Together', Zartman, I.W. (ed.), *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Lynne Reinner: Boulder, 1995).
30 Interview with Mr Conmany Wesseh, Chair, West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) (17 August, 2005).
31 Global Witness, 'A Time for Justice: Why the International Community, UN Security Council and Nigeria should help facilitate Charles Taylor's Immediate Extradition to the Special Court for Sierra Leone', *A Global Witness Briefing Document* (June, 2005), pp. 5-8.
32 ICG, 'Rebuilding Liberia: Prospects and Perils', *ICG Africa Report* no. 75 (ICG: Brussels, 30 January 2004), p. 15.
33 NCDDRR, DDRR Consolidated Report Phase (as at 1/16/2005), 1, 2 & 3, available at URL <http://humanitarianinfo.org/liberia/coordination/sectoral/DDR/index.asp>.
34 Nichols, R., 'Disarming Liberia: Progress and Pitfalls', Florquin, N., Berman, E. (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 118.
35 The Analyst, 'NEC's False Start' (20 May 2005), available at URL <www.analystnewspaper.com/nec_false_start.htm>.
36 Nichols, R., *op. cit.*, p. 124.
37 ICG, ICG Report No 87 (2004), p. 11.
38 United Nations Secretary General, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
39 IRIN, 'Liberia: UN Still needs $10 million for ex-combatants' (UN OCHA: 29 June 2005), available at URL, <www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=4759>.
40 As recently as August 2005 UNMIL was still discovering weapons in Liberia. See 'UNMIL Discovers Hidden Weapons', *The News* (Monrovia, 4 August), p. 1.
41 UNDP and the National Transitional Government of Liberia signed the Community Based Recovery and Integration project on April 15, 2004. The three main components of the projects are (i) establishment of a National Commission on Small Arms, (2) awareness raising and education, and (3) Community Micro-Disarmament for Development. Focus here is on the community micro-disarmament component of the project.
42 Government of Liberia/UNDP, Small arms and Community Micro-Disarmament in Liberia Preparatory Assistance Project (October 2004), p. 9.
43 The author was a member of the DCAF-CSDG Liberia Consultations Team which visited Liberia from 28 July-01 August 2004. The Consultations were part the *Liberia Action Research Project* (LARP), under partnership of the

Conflict Security and Development Group (CDSG), King's College, University of London, and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Foces (DCAF).

44 United Nations Secretary General, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

45 Bernath, C., Martin, S., 'Peacekeeping in West Africa: A Region Report', *Refugees International* (Washington, June 2004).