

Arms Proliferation, Insecurity, and the Sustainable Development Goals in West Africa: An Interconnected Challenge

Munachi Victoria Chidebelu, Somkenechukwu MG. Ojukwu

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Nigeria

Abstract

West Africa faces significant security challenges due to the proliferation of arms, exacerbated by weak governance, religious/ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and other criminal vices. This situation threatens progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 5, 8, 10, and 16. This paper examines the interplay between arms proliferation, insecurity, and SDGs implementation in West Africa. It highlights regional initiatives and national strategies to curb the flow of illicit small arms and light weapons (ISALWs), strengthen security, and promote sustainable development. It shall employ the sustainable security theory and the social exclusion theory in strengthening its views on the core drivers of these insecurity caused by the proliferation of arms and light weapons. This secondary data collection template will be used, sourcing data from official government and non-government institutions, journal articles, internet sources, etc.. These materials will be analysed using qualitative/descriptive method. The paper concludes with recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to address these interconnected challenges and strengthen regional security in West Africa.

Keywords: Arms Proliferation, Insecurity, Sustainable development Goals, Regional Integration