

# An Appraisal of Security Implication of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Kaduna State

Jibrin Ubale Yahaya

Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi  
E-mail: jibrinubaleyahaya@gmail.com

**Received:** April 7, 2019; **Accepted:** April 14, 2019; **Published:** April 18, 2019

**Abstract:** In this contemporary Nigeria democratic situation, conflict, violence and all such other kind of insecurity has over dominated the country from the North East issues of Boko Haram Insurgent, Herdsmen and Farmers conflict in Zamfara, Benue, Nasarawa and Kaduna. The issue of violent communal and religious conflicts have become regular feature of social life in Nigeria. These conflicts result from different value systems, aggressive competition for land, water and political resources, and unhealthy competition of some leaders. There is hardly a year when there is no major violent conflict. Conflict in this respect, especially in Northern part of the country varied in scope, intensity and nature, and has taken immeasurable toll on human lives, leaving many dead, maimed and numerous others displaced, as a result of the involvement of small arms illegally acquired. To this end, this study seeks to examine the nature of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis, to find out the sources of illegal small arms and examine its impacts on ethno-religious conflicts. In collecting data for this study, two complementary modes of data collection – survey and in depth interviews were used, and the data generated were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The data revealed that, there are frequent ethno-religious conflicts in the State. The conflicts are usually between the two major ethnic and religious groups, and most often these involve the use of illegal small arms. The study also found out that smuggling from neighboring States/countries, politicians, local manufacturers, arms dealers, theft of security forces arms constitute the major sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis. The essence of reveling the prevalence of internal conflicts in Kaduna State is responsible for continued proliferation of illegal small arms in the State. It was also found out that, illegal small arms destroy lives and properties, cause injuries and maiming, displacement of people and creates general sense of insecurity. In conclusion, the study recommended the need to take decisive measures to reduce the spate of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis in particular and Nigeria in general as a way of arresting the illegal use of small arms.

**Keywords:** Ethno-Religious Conflict, Small Arms, Youth Violence, Insecurity.

**Citation:** Jibrin Ubale Yahaya. 2019. An Appraisal of Security Implication of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Kaduna State. International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research, 3(4): 135-162.

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## Introduction

Conflict is part of several movement of history. On this premise, Francis (2006:20) remarked that “conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence”. Consequently, he

defines conflict as the pursuits of incompatible interests and goals by different groups. In similar vein, Igwe (2002:84) quoted in (Ikejiani-Clark, 2010:54) conceives conflict as:

A universal and permanent attribute of nature, life and society, necessary dialectics they serve to advance the positive evolution of phenomena, and unnecessary and avoidable when irresolvable and their consequences are negative for society and man. These definitions above clearly demonstrate that conflicts are largely the expression of opposing interests. Thus, conflict means a state of open, prolonged fighting, confrontation, hostility, strife, struggle, war, warfare, etc. A state of disagreement and disharmony; clash, contention, difference, dissonance, friction, faction, schism, variance, etc (Ikejiani-Clark, 2010:54).

The manifestation of conflict and outburst of violence can be seen in different dimensions – political, economic, ethnic and or religious, etc. Almost all countries of the world have experienced one or more of these dimensions of conflict. From Europe to America, and Asia to Africa, these dimensions are common phenomena. Some of these conflicts have been successfully managed, but others have brought about devastating consequences such as whole scale killing. However, the concern of this study is on ethno-religious conflict.

Ethno-religious conflict, occurs when the ultimate goal of conflict is of ethnic and religious nature. This refers to disputes arising from ethnic and religious differences. Such conflicts are often associated with ethnic or religious sentiments. Thus, the usage of the concept denotes the fact that all crises that have religious and ethnic undertones are ethno-religious conflicts (Yakubu, 2005:19). Ethno-Religious conflicts thus, are those conflicts emanating from ethnic and religious differences, attachment or sentiments which divide the conflicting parties along ethnic and religious lines in the quest to ascertain or defined their identities and assert their influence.

### Statement of the Problem

In the last two decades, the West African sub-region has been plagued with intra-state conflicts. Political, ethnic and religious clashes were common in most countries in the sub-region, with some escalating to full scale civil war as in Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, etc, bringing with them death, destruction and despair to the citizenry. The trend seems to suggest that intra-state conflicts have not only remained violent and protracted, they seem to defy existing policy responses and peace building efforts of civil society groups.

Violent communal conflicts are a regular feature of social life in Nigeria, especially since 1960s. These conflicts according to Otite and Albert (1999:86) result from different value systems, aggressive competition for land, water and political resources, and unhealthy competition of some leaders. There is hardly a year when there is no major violent community conflict in Nigeria. As observed by Best (2006:422), one could be alarmed of the multitude of conflicts that need to be solved in our polity. Conflict in this respect, especially in Northern part of the country varied in scope, intensity and nature, and has taken immeasurable toll on human lives, living many dead, maimed and numerous others displaced. The nature, scale and dimension of conflicts vary according to the issues involved in relation to the cultures concerned. That is to say, conflicts take different forms depending on their specific contexts. This is central to many cases of conflicts in Kaduna State. For instance, “the struggle of ethnic minorities framed by their experience of domination, tends to be targeted primarily against the Hausa/Fulani, and indirectly against the Nigerian state” (Best, 2006:422). Best pointed out that, conflicts of this nature which have turned Kaduna city and rural locations within the state into killing fields seem to have been fought by minority groups who perceive their relationship with the majority group at state and local levels, the former

seeing their relationship with the later as 'internal colony' . Consequently, demands have centred on issues of access to power and opportunities as well as demands for cultural autonomy.

More often than not in Kaduna State, when conflicts of this nature erupt and spread, they tend to assume religious dimension, given the long time antagonism between the major religions in the state. Kaduna more than any city in Nigeria, seems to have become what Agbese (2002:12) referred to as 'hot bed' constantly generating religious crises of high magnitude. In this vein, it may be right to say that in Kaduna State, the two major religions that have always been in constant crises and conflicts are Islam and Christianity, especially as their beliefs and religious practices seem to run counter to each other. In the quest to assert their relevance, there are bound to be skirmishes which naturally end up in violent religious crises. These struggles for relevance have tended to pose a mortal challenge to the state and its structures. They have also led to destruction of lives and properties and displacement of people. Most of the injuries and deaths recorded in these conflicts are caused by small arms and light weapons illegally acquired.

Nigeria given its strategic position and role in West Africa sub-region has become a receptacle of arms flowing from war-torn West African countries. The sources and level of these illegal small arms in circulation in Nigeria can hardly be ascertained. It is believed that the frequency of political and ethno-religious violence has led to arms build-up in the country. Police records show that between 1990 and 1999, 12,000 people were arrested in different parts of the country in possession of prohibited fire-arms. In Aba for instance, it was estimated that one in ten adults in the town owned a gun either for self-defence or for criminal purposes. In Lagos, more than 6,000 rifles, pistols as well as about 20,000 rounds of ammunition were seized by security agents between 1996 and 1999 (Obasi, 2002:80). As from January to September 2007 alone, the Inspector General of Police, Mike Okiro, revealed that about 1,582 arms and 6,614 rounds of ammunition were recovered from various parts of the country (NTA Network News, 4 September 2007). Local observers have estimated that few thousand weapons melted down from the cameras is only a fraction of the number of weapons in circulation.

The sources of these illegal small arms remain a mystery. As Okiro (2004:12) observes: If the interactions between legal and illegal small arms markets are intricate and complex, identifying their sources are even more nebulous. Even when the transaction is done through licensed manufacturers and distribution is legal, the movement of arms is often shrewd in secrecy.

Given this observation, it is also difficult to say categorically the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna State. If it is so, the question then is, how can we identify the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna State? Some people are of the view that ethnic/religious groups and politicians might have equipped their followers and thugs with various weapons (Olorunfemi, 2006:34), which are either smuggled into the country or produced locally to perpetuate violence. This may not be unconnected with the fact that most of the crises in the state are either fought along ethnic or religious lines.

### Research Questions

The research has following questions to answer:

1. What is the nature of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis?
2. What are the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis?

3. What are the impacts of proliferation of illegal small arms on ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis?
4. What possible measures can be taken to reduce ethno-religious in Kaduna State

### **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to find out the causes of ethno- Religious conflict in Kaduna State and identifying means to address the problems through the following research objectives:

1. To examine the nature of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis.
2. To identify the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis.
3. To ascertain the impacts of proliferation of illegal smalls arms on ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis.
4. To suggest ways in which incidences of ethno-religious violence, and proliferation and use of illegal small arms can be reduced to ensure peace and security of the State.

### **Scope or delimitation of the study**

This study covers the period between 2015 and 2017. It was limited only to Kaduna State, particularly Kaduna metropolis given the frequent occurrence of ethno-religious violence in the area, and the fragile relationship and pent-up tension culminating in residents living in perpetual fear and expectation of likely outbreak of violence at any time. While in the metropolis, attention was limited to the police whose duty is to curtail crises and violent crimes, and the general public who are at the receiving end. Consequently, the research focused mainly on perception of people on proliferation of illegal small arms and its impacts on ethno-religious conflicts.

Furthermore, research of this nature is usually threatened by certain problems, such as time factor and economic problems, as regard obtaining vital information, that is, in terms of data gathering. For these reasons, this study was limited to the available information (primary and secondary data) at the disposal of the researcher. However, the results obtained were generalized.

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

#### **Conflict**

Consensus is achieved by scholars that conflict is an inevitable part or process of social life. It is a continuing reality of social existence. Necessarily, conflict involves two or more parties that have, or perceive incompatibility in either interests and or values, or in strategy of achieving the ends desire (Akpuru-Aja, 2007) in Bassey and Oshita (2007:12).

Conflict is a strain in a relationship that goes with emotion. The higher the emotion, the high the tendency of intensity of conflict.

The concept conflict has been defined to mean “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals” (Gyong citing Coker 1968:8, in Bassey and Oshita 2007:63). For Durumoye (1998), conflict means a type of interaction that is often characterized by antagonistic encounters or collision of interests, ideas and policies. Similarly, Alemike (1998) sees conflict to represent antagonistic interests between two or more opposing forces or groups. Consequently, conflict is the struggle for dominance or control of one person or group by the other in such a way as to subjugate or even eliminate the opponent. Conflict is, in fact, a design aimed at resolving some kinds of unity even if it be through the annihilation of one of the antagonistic parties (Bassey and Oshita, 2007:63).

The common sense understanding of conflict is in the negative. It is a setback. It is disintegrative. In this regard, Bassey and Oshita (2007:63) observe that:

For most people, the mere mention of conflict sends down cold sweat down their system. This sometimes creates unnecessary fear, insecurity and discomfort to the extent that such people become apprehensive in carrying out their desired socio-economic and political activities. To such people, conflict is seen as an aberration.

### **Ethno-Religious Conflict**

A cursory look at the world map showing areas of conflicts and armed clashes will easily convince one that, today peace in the world is increasingly becoming elusive. We are threatened with imminent extinction. The threat to peace emanates from the various clashes between neighboring countries, and between factions within the same country.

While the reasons for these clashes are numerous, it is not worth the efforts of this work to go into them in detail. The point to take cognizance of is the enormous quantity of resources, both human and materials that are destroyed in this conflicts. The unfortunate issue here is that some of the countries in which these conflicts or wars are fought are among the least developed. The consequences are that the existing social amenities are destroyed; commercial activities halted and by extension, arrest development. What exacerbates the situation is that the prevalence of hunger, refugees, diseases and illegal small arms proliferation take their tolls on the unfortunate citizens and the resources of these countries.

This section of this work therefore, dwells on ethno-religious conflict in Kaduna State. This will enable us understand the extent ethno-religious conflict has become a permanent phenomenon in the state, leading to illegal acquisition of arms. Before proceeding to discuss ethno-religious conflict, clarification of key terms is necessary.

### **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity denotes the identification usually attached by a certain group to their peculiar traits such as language, culture, folktales, etc, which are summed up into a given nationality (Yakubu *et al.*, 2005:19).

In defining ethnicity, Rosel sees the term “as groups which see themselves as constituted by real or imagined bonds of common descent, religion, language, culture or ideology” (Rosel, 1995:123). According to Egwu in Okoye (1998:21), ethnicity is a phenomenon which could be deciphered by five major characteristics which he listed as contextual discrimination i.e. “we versus them” syndrome, conflicts generation, political phenomenon with the attendant “authoritative allocation of values” close interaction between ethnicity and religion, and lastly flexibility and situational character.

In spite of Egwu’s analysis, which gives the impression that largely ethnicity has major negative tendencies, one cannot close eyes to the fact that ethnicity as a concept may have its own positive values in the sense that there is the need to be conscious of one’s background, environment, situational challenges and on the whole assessment of one’s base before aspiring to be a patriot. Late Obafemi Awolowo puts it in a clear perspective when he was reported to have said that to be a good Nigerian; he first had to be a good Yoruba man (Alemika and Okoye, 2007:74). Thus, ethnicity here, similar to Rosel’s view point above, implies the perpetration of nationalism based on language, culture and historical linkages as obtainable in the present Nigerian state.

## Religion

In conceptual term, religion will be viewed from sociological perspective. The truthfulness or falsity of religion is not the concern here, but its social consequences. Religion has been defined in various ways. Isokun defined religion as “ a regulated pattern of life of a people in which experiences, beliefs and knowledge reflects or repeated in man’s conception of himself in relation to others, his social world, the physical as well as metaphysical world” (Isokun, 2000:21). Religion thus, is a unification of being with his creator. It reflects on the organization of his worldly, when individual realizes that he has duty to account for his deeds on earth in the here after. This position will ordinarily put man on his toes and make him perpetually subservient to the creator.

People chorusing Karl Marx have described religion as the opium of the masses. However, Agbese (1987:7) observed that:

Religion is essentially harmless and has none of the heady intoxicants of opium, although, there may be some who short in rational thought and long in blind dogma present the pitiable sights of drunkards, religion is a product, a dangerous invention of the consuming fear that rules men and women turning them into horrendous case studies of those full of hearts empty of brains. Religion, therefore, is the opium of the masses.

This view may be fairly correct; but cannot be completely discarded when atrocities perpetuated in the name of religion are considered. To this end, religion here can be escribed as ‘an issue, identity which is about solidarity and setting of boundaries between those who are considered to be believers and those that are not. These deal with issues of sentiments, feelings and norms that may be a result of shared experiences’ (Abdul, 2002:146).

Ethno-religious conflict therefore, occurs when the ultimate goal of conflict is of ethnic and religious nature. This refers to disputes arising from ethnic and religious differences. Such conflicts are often associated with ethnic or religious sentiments. Thus, the usage of the concept denotes the fact that all crises that have religious and ethnic undertones are ethno-religious conflicts (Yakubu, 2005:19).

## Nature of Ethno-Religious Conflict

In recent times, Nigerian has been facing a resurgence of several forms of identities. Some of these identities manifest in ethnic and religious forms, all competing to occupy the political space. In fact, the past ten to fifteen years were characterized by some of the most deadly conflicts to occur among several ethnic and religious communities in different regions and some states of Nigeria” (Best, 2003:7). Hardly was any region spared of some of these conflicts, even though the conflicts differ either in prevalence and intensity, or their protracted or non-protracted nature. In the far North, for instance, conflicts of religious nature even though sometimes over non-religious issues, continued to break out at locations like Kano, Katsina, Kaduna among other places. In the Southwest, there were violent communal conflicts at Shagamu, Lagos; Ife – Modakeke, etc. in the Southeast, the Umulari – Aguleri conflicts were most noticeable. The communal and oil-induced conflicts of Niger Delta also increased in scope and intensity. “Not even the transition from military rule to democratic governance in 1999, with the accompany assumption that democracy provides alternatives to violent methods of conflicts transformation, could slow down the prevalence of such conflicts (Best, 20003:7). These struggles for relevance have tended to pose a mortal challenge to the state and its structures, destroyed lives and properties and displaced whole communities and ethnic nationalities.

Perhaps, the larger part of the conflicts occurred in the North-central region of the country, otherwise called Middle-Belt. Ethnicity and religion have become powerful instruments of mobilization. They can also serve as an instrument of demobilization or destabilization. They are powerful because, people can easily be galvanized around issues concerning their ethnic or religious identities (Okoye, 2000: xi).

Although Kaduna State is now known to be volatile when it comes to ethnic and religious conflicts, Kaduna metropolis was not susceptible or prone to crises, until the spill-over effect of Zango Kataf crises in 1992 which resulted in selective destruction of lives and properties in some areas, particularly high density areas in Kaduna metropolis. Apart from that, Kaduna metropolis did not witness any serious ethnic or religious crises until the event of February 21 to 23, 2000 (Abdul, 2002:117).

Kaduna State, unlike most states in Northern Nigeria, is much more complex. The heterogeneous composition of the state provides a veritable ground for conflicts. Ethnic and religious crises started in Kaduna State in the 1980s. Since then a number of conflicts with specific ethno-religious character were recorded in the state. One of the very first serious religious crises that wrecked quite an unimaginable havoc on both lives and economy of the state was in May 1980 in Zaria city when properties belonging mainly to Christians were destroyed without any iota of regrets. Still, in 1980 in Kasuwar Magani, 1984 in Zango-Kataf and Gure-Kanugu.

Another similar incident occurred in March 1987, this time from College of Education, Kafanchan when Christian students had to clash with Muslim students who were openly against Christian students who organized a crusade on campus. This led to the killing of people and burning of some mosques by Christians and some native Kajes. These crises involved the Hausa-Fulani Muslims and the Christian ethnic minorities from southern part of the State.

In yet another religious crisis in Katsina, Funtua, Zaria, Gusau and Kaduna, there were waves of religious riots extending from across the state that resulted in the burning of churches and damaging property belonging to Christians. Lives were also involved. In February 1988, Kaduna State also witnessed another religious disturbances in Kaduna polytechnic where some Muslim students destroyed the foundation walls of Christian Chapel.

The other very notorious religious crises, which wrecked the city of Kaduna precisely in May 1992, was the Zango-kataf riot. This later spread to Zaria, Kaduna and Ikara all in Kaduna State. This simply arose as a communal feud between the Kataf Christians and Zango Muslims (Hausa). It later assumed a new dimension spreading to other parts of the state. It was recorded that several lives and property were lost in the episode (Gofwen, 2004: 65-67). Again in February 2000, religious conflict seized the city as the crises between Christians and Muslims metamorphosed into inter-religious war leaving the state in a state of helplessness as several lives and property were destroyed. The next was in 2002 occasioned by Miss World controversy but was not too severe compared to 2000 crises.

The immediate cause of the 2000 crises was an attempt to introduce Islamic Judicial and administrative system (Shariah). After almost two months of tensed political atmosphere in Kaduna, a violent ethno-religious 'war' erupted; thousands of people were allegedly killed. Property estimated at several hundred millions were destroyed, and thousands of people were displaced (Alemika Okoye, 2002:117-118).

Although Shariah is not new in Nigeria politics, it has become part of the politics of the country since 1978. Nevertheless, the 1978 to 1979 and 1989 Shariah debates were on the establishment of Shariah Court of Appeal and administration of justice under Shariah Courts. The situation took a very different dimension in 1999 Shariah controversy. This time around, the debate and politics were on the full application of Islamic jurisprudence as provided by the Quran, Hadith and other authorities of Islam (Alemika and Okoye, 2002:121). According to them, amidst this controversy, attempt towards the adoption of Shariah moved to Kaduna State.

In December 1999, the Kaduna Legislative Assembly constituted an 11 man committee to look at the applicability of Shariah or otherwise in Kaduna. This singular action polarised the house of assembly across religious line. There were a lot of misgivings and mutual suspicions among the members of the house.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Kaduna branch, protested to the house on the issue, and expressed their fears on the attempt to islamise the state and the possibility of such action generating crises in Kaduna. The committee began its sitting in January; memorandum was demanded from various groups and individuals. However, before this period, there were series of demonstrations by both Muslims and Christian groups in Kaduna for and against Shariah. Muslims and Christians also organised lectures and rallies on the issue.

While the sitting continued, thousands of Muslims from various local governments in Kaduna state trooped into the House of Assembly in support of Shariah and submitted memorandum. The Christians became apprehensive, apparently because of the controversy surrounding the composition of the committee and the suspicion that a hidden agenda was harbouring by the Muslim members of the House.

After the completion of the 11 member committee's assignment on Thursday 17 February, 2000, rumour began to go round that Christians were going to demonstrate against Shariah in Kaduna. Information went round on Sunday in almost all the churches in Kaduna metropolis, calling on all Christians to come out enmass to gather at various designated points for peaceful protest. The demonstration started on Monday. What started as a peaceful demonstration resulted into violent crises spanning two to three days. It spread all over Kaduna and spilled over to other local government areas like Kachia and Brinin-Gwari. Many lives and property destroyed.

Though, the first crises in the city was the spill-over of 1992 Zango Kataf. This like most of the crises that took place in other parts of the state before, had ethnic coloration but when the crises spread to Kaduna city, it assumed religious dimension. However, the crises of February and May 2000 marked the first serious crises in Kaduna metropolis and had more religious than ethnic concern. After almost two months of tense political atmosphere in Kaduna, a violent ethno-religious 'war' erupted, thousands of people were allegedly killed, property estimated at several hundred millions were destroyed, and thousands of people displaced. This crisis was reported to be the worst since the civil war in 1967 – 1970, and the most destructive in the history of Nigeria (Abdul, 2002:124). It was three days of agony for the people of Kaduna and the entire nation.

The nature of the crises and its intensity was a reflection of the complex character of Kaduna State. Unlike most cities in Northern Nigeria, Kaduna has its peculiarities; it was a creation of colonial government and served as the capital of the defunct Northern Nigeria. Against the



exclusive nature of most old cities of Northern Nigeria, like Zaria, Sokoto, etc where the indigenous communities are separated from settler communities through the “Sabon-Gari” and “Tudun-Wada” system, in Kaduna there is serious inter-penetration across ethnic and religious lines (Alemika and Okoye, 2000:124). It is however possible to find places where Christians or Muslims predominate. There is also differentiation and settlement across economic and political status: high-density areas, with higher level of jobless youths and miscreants and low-density government reserved areas occupied by high status elites. The crises was more in high-density areas with overwhelming presence of uneducated, unemployed youths and social miscreants such places include Rigasa, Tudun-wada, Sabon-Tasha, Television, Kakuri, Barnawa, Narayi, Hayin-Banki, Badarawa, Ungwar- Dosa, Abakpa, etc. Incidentally, in these high-density areas some have predominance of one religious group against the other. Those found in the southern part of Kaduna metropolis are predominantly Christians such areas of majority Christian population include: Kakuri, Narayi, Sabon-Tasha, Ungwar-Boro, Television, etc. In these areas, Muslims were overwhelmed and many of them were killed and their properties destroyed. In Northern Kaduna, particularly in areas like Rigasa, Tudun-Wada, Abakpa, Kawo, Hayin-Banki, Badarawa etc, Christians were attacked, killed and their properties destroyed. The extent of the destructions was made possible due to the availability and use of illegal small arms.

The causes of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria, and particularly Kaduna are numerous. While it is not the concern of this project to go into detail analysis of the causes of these conflicts, but to determine the impacts of illegal small arms in these conflicts, it is important to note that they are not unconnected with the maladministration and imperfection of Nigeria’s Federalism, though the Sharia issue was seen as the immediate factor.

In Kaduna State, the rivalry and animosity can be traced to the pre-colonial political structure of Hausa land and the politics of colonialism. In recent time, the intelligentsia of southern Kaduna argued that the underdevelopment of their communities is the result of deliberate and persistent neglect by the emirate official who until 1976 Local Government reforms also dominated the system of native administration. The communities have been complaining of perceived domination by the Hausa/Fulani. The differences over political control, culture, religion and resources distribution have predictably often escalated into violent agitation and confrontations (Alemika and Okoye, 2002:130).

This historical condition coupled with the economic crisis and the introduction of harsh economic measure of structural adjustment programme and its resultant implications led to series of crisis in Kaduna. The perceived political domination by a group considered as “external or illegitimate” and control over land and power and resistance by indigenous groups against their domination by an ‘alien’ or imperial ethno-religious group constitute the remote causes (Alemika and Okoye, 2002:131).

Though the Kaduna crisis of February 2000 and the subsequent ones can be seen from these spates of crisis between Muslims and Christian in the State, frequently, religious differences have been evoked to explain these bloody clashes in which thousands of lives were lost and people displaced.

### **Proliferation of Illegal Small Arms**

Arm in its widest sense both literally and metaphorically, cover any thing that can be used in fighting (Goad and Halsey, 1982:1). However, small arms or light weapons have defied a universal definition. According to Obasi (2002:2), such arms have been defined by different

scholars and schools of thought, some of whom draw no distinction between the two but simply refer to them as small or firearms. Consequently, the two terms will be used interchangeably to mean the same thing in this study.

Small arm is a generic term covering weapons, which may be carried by a man. The broad expression, 'Infantry Weapons' has been used in the past, but it is no longer descriptively accurate in the sense because modern infantry also use such weapons as anti-tank guns and mortars which are pieces of ordnance (Report of Institute of Armament Technology).

The Webster's Dictionary defined small arms or light weapons as "Fire arms of small calibre, held in the hand or hands when fired, as pistols, riffles, etc".

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) defines small arms to include, "all crew – portable direct fire weapons of a calibre less than 5mm and which will include a secondary capability to defeat light armour and helicopters (Okiro, 2004:10). The ECOWAS convention on small arms and light weapons (Abuja 2006), attempts to establish distinction. According to the convention, light weapons include portable arms designed to be used by small persons working together in a term and which include:

Heavy machine guns,  
Portable grenade launchers, mobile or mounted,  
Portable anti – tank missile launchers or rocket, launchers Portable anti – aircraft cannons,  
non recoil guns  
Portable anti – aircraft launchers and  
Mortars with caliber of less than 10mm.

Similarly, the report of the United Nations Panel of Government Experts on small arms (in Obasi, 2002:3) defines small arms as ranging from clubs, knives, and machetes to those weapons just below those covered by the United Nations regulation of conventional arms. These include "revolvers and loading pistols, riffles and carbines, sub – machine guns, assault riffles and light machine guns. The report defines light weapons as designed for use by several people as a crew. These include "heavy machine-guns, hand-held, under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti- aircraft guns, portable launchers of anti-craft missiles system and mortars of calibres of less than 100mm (Obasi, 2002:3).

What ever the contentions in the above definitions, small arms and light weapons have common characteristics:

a. They are lethal and are generally used by military and paramilitary.  
b. They are man-portable or transportable light vehicles.  
c. They are easy to maintain, can function without much logistic backup and require little training to use.

d. They are in frequent use by military, politicians, armed robbers, etc, and can easily kill. For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopts the definition of the United Nations Panel of Government Experts on small Arms above, which defines small arms as ranging from clubs, knives, and matches to those weapons just below those covered by United Nations regulation of conventional arms. They include revolvers loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machines guns, assault rifles and light machine guns. This is because, most violence in the country is characterized by the use of both sophisticated and non – sophisticated weapons which are all offensive and destructive.

### Illegal small arms

Talking about small arms, it is difficult to distinguish between legal and illegal because the terms do not lend themselves to any universal definition. This is because, in the context of arms transfer or proliferation, different countries interpreted international laws relevant to small arms differently. Some scholars regard any arms transfers that are authorized by the national government authorities as legal sales (Okiro 2004:11). While Lumpe, as quoted by Obasi (2004:2) defined legal transfer as “those that fully observed the national laws of arms exporting, transit and importing, to countries as well as all applicable international law”.

For Obasi, illegal may be defined as; “all arms being transferred, procured or used in violation of the national laws of the country’s export transit and import as well as any applicable international laws” (Obasi,2004:2). They include any weapon sold by private dealers who knowingly, contravene the arms sales laws of place of source, transit, delivery or use, arms sales to government or gorillas that have been placed under legally binding arms embargos by the United Nations or other international organizations and arms supplies which though authorized covertly by an exporting government being shipped through the approval or indeed against the wishes of the transit recipient state.

### Sources of illegal small arms

If the interaction between legal and illegal small arms market are intricate and complex, identifying their sources is even more nebulous. Even when transaction is done through licensed manufacturers and distribution is legal, the movement of arms is often shrewded in secrecy (Okiro, 2004:12). This makes it difficulty for any observer or researcher to say categorically the sources or quantity of illegal arms moving into a particular country or state. Therefore, to say with precision and certainty the sources of illegal small arms in Nigeria, and particularly Kaduna State, is as well hazardous given its large size and complex nature.

Many nations, procured arms and ammunitions for their armed forces, and also approved the legal importation of firearms for licensed civilian owners, using this channel. Legitimate transfer between arms producing nations and the Nigerian Government accounts for the primary (Legal and illegal) sources of small arms. This is so because, “arms that are exported legally may fall into circulation through diversion, theft and capture of security forces arms and may go into black market supply”. Through these “arms can transfer from legal to illegal and from licit to illicit status vice-versa”(Okiro, 2004:12).

Obasi (2002:17) stated that Nigeria’s involvement in the wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone (and other African Countries) “has provided the Nigerian black market with ready source of assault weapons”. He went further to say, “Many people point to returnee ECOMOG soldiers from peacekeeping duties in Liberia, Sierra Leone and other places”. Citing Leo Okafor, President of Alaba International Market, Lagos as reported by (Tell magazine of 6 August 2001:35), Okiro (2004:12) accused ECOMOG soldiers as a ready source of arms. He alleges many of them to have returned with guns, which they sold to people.

Other sources include smuggling, activities of multinational Corporations, local production, internal war, and thefts from individual licensed owners and security agencies. Nigeria shares borders with some African countries such as, Niger, Benin, Chad, and Cameroon. The borders between Nigeria and these countries, given their porous nature provide channels for smugglers to bring in assorted firearms. Oke (2002:26) confirmed that “smuggling of arms and ammunitions has become rampant as arms and ammunitions are sometimes concealed in second-hand clothes and vehicles that are smuggled into the country”.

Apart from the border with Benin Republic, another major corridor through which illegal arms are smuggled into Nigeria is the Niger Delta. Warri has been acknowledged as the hub of gun trade in Niger Delta. Gun trading is not a new phenomenon. It has been known that foreign sailors used to trade in some quantity of arms through Warri. Using fast boats, smugglers cruise to the ships anchored in the high seas and buy the guns. Some prominent men in the community buy these guns and resell them to the youths (Obasi, 2002:75).

The North Eastern part of Nigeria shares boundaries with Niger Republic, Cameroon and Chad Republic. There is a large scale of smuggling of arms into Nigeria through these frontiers and as a spill over effect from the informal conflicts in Chad, Niger and nearby Sudan. Guns come into the country with ease through Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States because the vast border region is not effectively patrolled by Nigerian customs and other security agencies (Obasi, 2002:75).

The Table below shows some selected cases of seizures of illegal small arms and ammunition smuggled into the country in 1993–2001 alone

Year	Arms/Ammunition	Qty	Place
Mar 1993	Live ammunition	1000	Kano Airport
1998	Live cartridges packed in 15 boxes	15,412	Seme border
Jul 1999	Live ammunition	72,500	Lagos Bar Beach
Jun–Oct 2000	Live ammunition	19,675	Seme border
Apr 2001	Live ammunition	2,252	Ibadan
Jul 2001	Shotguns/cartridges	26,500	Ogun State

Source: (Obasi, 2002:72–74)

This may be so because of the porous nature of our borders. This tends to indict the capability and effectiveness of our security agencies whose responsibilities it is to man the country's borders. According to Nwizu (2004:138), the coastal area until recently was characterized by private owned jetties and beaches with little or no governmental control. There is no doubt that effective patrol of such large expanse of land mass and coastline amidst controversial border demarcation and sensitive border population is highly challenging.

Associated with problem of ill-defined borderline, are that of improper location of control posts and corruption of security agents at the borders. Nwizu observes that, "Some of our control posts are located some distance into the hinter land thereby creating a stretch of land often referred to as 'no man's land'. This stretch of land invariably becomes an entry and gathering point for illegal immigrants and a breeding ground for all sorts of anti-social and criminal activities" especially arms trafficking (Nwizu, 2004:139). The incidence cited above are just a tip of iceberg as many more consignments of small arms and ammunitions have filtered into the country undetected since then.

Discussing the source of illegal arms in the country, activities of local manufacturers and the Nigerian Defence Industries Corporation cannot be undermined. "Many villages have developed small armouries as general level of armaments has increased" (Olorunfemi, 2006:32). The local manufactures whose workshops are located in remote areas produce single and double barrel guns for hunters and night watchmen and local pistols and revolvers of various kinds for armed robbers, assassins, vigilante groups, militias and those seeking self protection from robbers (Okiro, 2004:13). These manufacturers are those that have worked and have acquired the skill in DICON, and have retired into private business of arms manufacturing.

### Impacts of Illegal Small Arms on Ethno-religious Conflict

The presence of arms affects behaviour and attitudes in a society. The easy availability and accessibility to arms could increase cases of violence. Incessant conflicts have turned the country into dumping ground for surplus arms, either smuggled into the country or manufactured locally. This helps to escalate conflicts and have a vital impact particularly on ethno-religious conflicts. As Okiro (2004:18) observes, “due to prevalence of conflicts, communities that are prone to attacks and perennial conflicts armed their youths in preparation for any attack or self-defence. And due to sense of insecurity, even individual have acquired arms”.

In Nigeria such numerous conflicts include Niger-Delta crisis, Urohbo, Ilaje and Istshekiri crisis, ethnic violence in Plateau, Nassarawa, Benue, Taraba States, and ethnic and religious violence in many parts of Northern Nigeria. As pointed out by Ariaahu (2005:36), since the enthronement of democracy in 1999, it is estimated that over 100,000 persons have been killed in over 50 ethno-religious conflicts across the country. Such conflicts have progressively acquired wider dimensions and greater intensity, resulting in higher levels than would have been expected of such local disputes if illegal small arms are not available for use.

Religious differences culminating in religious riots and disturbances like those of the maitatsine riots in 1981, Kano riots in 1984 in which an estimate number of people between 1,000 and 5,000 died. More importantly these crises were further precipitated by introduction of Sharia Islamic legal code system in some Northern States of the country such as Zamfara, Kano and Kaduna States. The clash between Moslems and Christians over the implementation of Sharia has resulted in massive loss of lives and property. The accompanying religious riots in Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Minna, Jos, and other places in the country are still fresh in our memory (Omada, 2005:186).

The proliferation of arms in the Niger Delta region has been held responsible for the bloody conflicts among the three major ethnic groups in the area – Ijaw, Urhobo and Isekiri who are contesting for political and economic power. For instance, in June 1999, there was a bloody and destructive conflict between these three major ethnic groups involving the use of small guns, automatic rifle, pump action guns, Napalm bombs, Dynamites and Bazookas (Ariaahu, 2005:37).

The clash between Tiv/Jukun escalated into full-blown hostilities between the Tivs and Fulanis in Wukari Local Government Area, which claimed 22 lives, 49,264 herds of cattle and 2,226 houses. The conflict later spread to include Jukuns against the Tivs their historical enemies, and engulfed six Local Governments Areas. A detachment of soldiers was deployed to the area to restore peace, but in a bizarre twist of events, the peace makers (soldiers) were massacred by one of the warring factions.

### Theoretical Framework

The vicious circle of ethno-religious conflicts and violent crimes in Nigeria, resulting in the proliferation and use of sophisticated weapons illegally acquired to redress perceived anomalies or press home demands persuades one to suggest conflict / radical approach to present this study.

Prior to the 1960's, the prevailing ideology, which dominated theory and research in criminology, was liberalism. The liberal approach did not assume a state definition of crime

or even rationalize the existing political and socio-economic arrangement of the society. However, the social and political turmoil in the United States during the 1960's and 1970s created a renewed interest in Marxist theory. The conflict theory is based on Marx's ideas, though he wrote very little about crime, "Marx was concerned with how the working class could become an organized political force, capable of overthrowing capitalist relation" (Hirst in Danbazau, 1999:27). Among the first criminologist in United States to employ Marxist theory to explain crime and justice were scholars like Richard Quinney, William Chamblis, Anthony Platt, Ian Taylor, etc.

The conflict and radical theorists argued that the criminal law that defines certain acts as crime or delinquency, do not represent the consensus of society. Laws, they argue, are instruments, which the ruling class employ to protect their interest (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2001:23). As a result, criminal laws prohibit the behaviours of the poor and the powerless that threaten the interests of the ruling class while excusing or condoning equally or even more injurious behaviours of the rulers or those who control the politics and economy of the society that harm the majority of the citizens (Quinney, 1970:169).

Conflict theorists explain crime and delinquency in terms of inequality in the distribution of socio-economic opportunities and political power. It is this inequality that is reflected in criminal laws and actions of the criminal justice agencies and officials. Crime and delinquency are products of socio-economic inequality and injustice as well as the political oppression that sustain them. In this light, Taylor et al (1973) accepts that the key to understanding crime is in the material basis of society. They believe that capitalist societies are characterized by inequality in wealth and power between individuals, and that these inequalities lie at the root of crime and conflict. Crime therefore, "is a rational response to the circumstances in which people found themselves in the competitive class struggle to acquire material wealth" (Bohn, 2002:101). According to Gills (1974:131) in Alemika and Chukwuma (2001:24).

The troubles of the children of the poor were deeply imbedded in the economic and demographic structure of society. The growing tendency to treat as psychological and therefore as subject of clinical, rather than political or economic solution was at least as disturbing as the phenomenon itself.

Conflict theory has made several contributions to the analysis of conflict. It will be difficult to capture the entire debate in this study. This section, however, only attempts to highlight the aspects of conflict theory that best suit and explain the conflict between ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria vis-à-vis the phenomenon of illegal arms in such conflicts (i.e conflicts that take dangerous and violent dimensions). This will not only contribute to knowledge but also provide a guide to those who might be serious in tackling the problem of illegal arms proliferation. Complex processes of change and development are at the core of the problematic connected with conflict. The questions of groups perceiving themselves as neglected or excluded from terrain of political power, and in the sharing of the benefits of the resources and wealth of a country, are central. The problematic of contestations in conflict permeates central issues of class relation, ethnicity, religion, gender, justice, social equality/inequality, citizenship rights and governance.

### **Research Methodology**

Kaduna metropolis was the major research location and source for the collection of survey data as well as in-depth interviews. The primary data were collected through survey

questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The study populations from which they were drawn are the police, the general public and an NGO based in Kaduna State. The survey questionnaire were designed to cover members of the Nigerian Police Force, and the general public that were selected from the crises endemic areas of the metropolis.

The divisional commands in the metropolis served as the main research sites for the conduct of the survey, while the state Police Headquarters and the Headquarters Area Command served as major sites for the in-depth interviews with some selected special key informants. To complement these, a country-based non-governmental organization (NGO) concerned with illegal small arms proliferation (NANSA) was included in the study for in-depth interviews.

The secondary data were collected from relevant materials as they relate to this study. Such materials were collected from the police records in the Area Command and State Command Headquarters in Kaduna. Additional relevant secondary data this study depended include textbooks, magazines, projects reports, seminar papers, official publications, etc as they relate to illegal small arms proliferation and ethno-religious violence.

### Population and Sampling

Every research problem has its own corresponding population which serves as the testing ground for the research work. Thus, in carrying out this research, Kaduna Metropolis was chosen as the population of study. To facilitate the selection of the respondents, the population was broken into two categories. The first category is the police personnel within Kaduna Metropolis Area Command. The second category consists of members of the public in selected research sites in the metropolis. The target portion of this population (i.e. members of the public) consists of all adults who lived and witnessed some of the crises in Kaduna. This category of people was identified through the assistance of agents who are either community or religious leaders.

For the purpose of selecting the respondents, the researcher used a combination of stratified – systematic and cluster-purposive sampling techniques. For the police personnel, the metropolis Area Command was stratified into the existing 15 divisional commands namely, Tudun Wada, Kawo, Angwan Sarki, Sabon Tasha, Kakuri, Sabon Gari, Angwan Rimi, Malali, Gabasawa, Barnawa, Kurmin Mashi, Kabala West, Rigasa, Rigachikun, and Kajuru. Out of these, 4 Divisional Commands (Kawo, Kakuri, Tudun Wada, and Sabon Tasha) were selected through simple random sampling. In the bid to administer the questionnaire, sample frame for each of the division selected was determined, and 20 respondents were disproportionately selected from each Divisional HQs through systematic sampling techniques (making a total of 80 respondents). This was adopted because of the relatively homogeneous nature of the population. The procedures for selecting the respondents are shown in the table below.

Divisional Commands	SF	%	SS	Interval
Kawo	346	5.7	20	17
Tudun Wada	149	13.4	20	7
Kakuri	444	4.5	20	22
Sabon Tasha	421	4.7	20	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-</b>

#### Key:

SF = Sample Frame (Total number of police in Divisional Command)

SS = Sample Size (Number of police sampled from each frame)

SF/SS = Interval (This determine the interval at which SS was selected from each SF)

To select respondents from the members of the public for survey schedule, cluster-purposive sampling techniques was used. This is to ensure that the resultant sample reflect the characteristics of different individuals and the crises endemic areas in the metropolis (i.e.Settlements/towns that crises occur most frequently and at high degree).

Thus, the metropolis was clustered into 10 crises endemic areas namely, Rigasa, Kawo, Angwan Rimi, Tudun Wada, Hayin Banki, Sabon Tasha, Narayi, Kakuri, Angwan Sarki, and Barnawa. Out of which 4 areas (Kawo, Sabon Tasha, Hayin Banki and Kakuri) were selected through simple random sampling technique. For convenience, 30 respondents were selected from each of the 4 areas or settlements (making a total of 120 respondents) through purposive sampling techniques. These people were identified and selected through the help of community and religious leaders in the areas. Consequently, a total number of 200 questionnaire items were drawn to cover both the police personnel and the members of the public.

For the in-depth interview, 7 key informants were purposively selected. That is, 2 from the Nigerian police (one each from State Headquarters and Area Command) in Kaduna, 2 community leaders (one each from Kawo and Sabon Tasha), 2 religious leaders (one each from Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN and Jamaatu Nasir Islam), and one from a country based NGO (NANSA) in Abuja on the basis of the position they occupy and their knowledge of the issue under investigation.

**Views of Respondents on the Nature of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Kaduna Metropolis**

To determine the nature of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis, views of respondents were sought, and their responses presented on the table below.

**Table 1. Nature of ethno-religious Conflicts in Kaduna Metropolis**

	Items	SA 5	A4	UD3	D2	SD1	TL
1	There are incidences of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis.	64 32.0%	95 47.5%	11 5.5%	20 10.0%	10 5.0%	200 100%
2	The frequency of ethno-religious conflictis increasing.	28 14.0%	102 51.0%	33 16.5%	24 12.0%	13 6.5%	200 100%
3	The conflicts are between ethnic groups and/or religious groups.	28 14.0%	103 51.5%	26 13.0%	31 15.5%	12 6.0%	200 100%
4	The conflicts usually involve the use of illegal small arms.	39 19.5%	101 50.5%	21 10.0%	34 17.0%	5 2.5%	200 100%
5	The conflicts have increased the feelings of insecurity in the metropolis.	72 36.0%	90 45.0%	13 6.5%	18 9.0%	7 3.5%	200 100%

**Key:** SA: Strongly Agreed; A: Agreed; UD: Undecided; D: Disagreed; SD: Strongly Disagreed; TL: Total

Table 1 shows that out of the 200 respondents, an overwhelming majority of 79.55 respondents agreed that there are incidences of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis, while 15% respondents disagreed. It is therefore not surprising that Kaduna has



been described as a hot-bed of ethno-religious crises (Agbese, 2002:12). About 65% of the respondents affirmed that the level of ethno-religious conflicts is increasing, while 18.5% disagreed. This has created a serious concern given its implication for security of lives and property.

The analysis of the in depth interview shows that there is consensus among the respondents on the incidences and frequency of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna State. For instance, an informant who is a religious leader in this study has it that:

We are always faced with incidences of ethno-religious crises in the state. However, there are always deliberate efforts by religious leaders to stop escalation. Recently, there were attempts by some people to ferment trouble in some parts of the state, but these were controlled with the efforts of some Christian leaders and Muslim clerics.

In similar vein, a police informant reacted this way:

We keep on experiencing crises every day. Recently, there was a minor issue in certain area of Tudun Wada that could have escalated to fill crises if not for the timely intervention of the security men. Infact, it is like that everywhere in the state, but we are not resting.

Another informant who is a traditional leader also pointed out that the frequency of crises in Kaduna metropolis has assumed a disturbing level. According to him, "if you take cursory look of states in northern Nigeria with cases of violence, you will discover that Kaduna may top the list. This is not good peaceful coexistence".

Lamenting on the incidences and frequency of ethno-religious conflicts in the state, another informant who is also a traditional leader pointed out that:

It is not an exaggeration to say that Kaduna has become a centre of crises in the north. Crises keep on occurring all the time. This has forced the residents to move to areas they think they are more safe. Infact, the presence of security men everywhere in the town should tell one that that the city is not safe.

The table also indicates that 65.5% agreed that these conflicts are often between the two major ethnic and religious groups in the state, while 21.5% disagreed. This is not surprising because most of the crises have either ethnic or religious coloration.

A police informant reacted this way:

Conflict has become a common phenomenon in Kaduna State. The disturbing aspect of these conflicts is that, when it erupts, in which ever form, they always manifest in religious forms. For instance, crises that started one time in southern part of the state over the so called indigene-settler issues later assumed religious status, spreading to almost every parts of the state.

The findings further show that the crises are usually religious in nature mainly between Christians and Muslims. This was confirmed by one of the informants who is a traditional leader.

The crises in Kaduna are usually between the two major ethnic and religious groups in the state. For instance, that of College of Education Kafanchan started between Christian and Muslim students over place of worship. And the 2000 crises as you may be aware, was between Christians and Muslims over the implementation of Shariah, which even polarised the State House of Assembly along religious line.

Another informant who works for an NGO corroborated this observation as thus; The long-age religious sentiments between the two major religions in the state deepened during the introduction and implementation of the Shariah. This seemed not to have given the non-Muslims sense of belonging. The argument was that state resources should not be used to propagate one religion to the detriment of the other. Disagreement and confusion caused by this finally resulted into violence, which claimed many lives, and property destroyed.

The disturbing aspect of these conflicts is that, they usually involve the use of arms illegally acquired as indicated by 70.0% of the respondents, while 19.5% disagreed with the opinion of the majority. This may be true because of the degree of destruction recorded during many of these conflicts.

On the involvement of arms in these conflicts, the in-depth interview respondent also agreed with the survey respondents. An informant who is a religious leader puts his feelings this way:

We don't have to allow crises to happen. This is because people have now developed culture of violence. Careless use of dangerous weapons in crises is now alarming. Internal misunderstanding of this nature should not involve arms. But regrettably, today's conflicts people are trigger happy. They kill their fellow citizens without iota of concern.

In similar vein, another informant who is a traditional leader also shared the same view. According to him:

I tell you the fact. Our society is no longer safe. People no longer have respect for human life. We say we are brothers in this country, but when there is a crisis, you see people carrying arms and killing each other. This is very unfortunate. I think something more seriously has to be done to curtail this situation.

Another traditional leader who is of the same view, observed that arms have become a lucrative business because of incessant conflicts. According to him:

Peaceful demonstration is no longer the language, but arms demonstration. No matter how little the misunderstanding may look like, people prefer using arms to settle scores than peaceful resolution. This should not be allowed to continue.

Consequently, overwhelming majority 81.0% of the respondents agreed that there is an increasing feeling of insecurity in the metropolis, while 12.5% disagreed. This opinion of the majority of the respondents may not be unconnected with the frequency of ethno-religious conflicts and the flagrant use of illegal small arms during the conflicts, which have resulted in movement of people to where they perceived as 'safe heaven', where their ethnic or religious groups are dominant.

The informants of the in depth interview also agreed with this findings. On the level of insecurity created as a result of the involvement of arms in these conflicts, the informant from the NGO pointed out that the dangerous aspect of these conflicts is the extent of destruction resulting from the use of arms illegally acquired. According to him:

Regrettably, the frequency of crises in the state has heightened feeling of insecurity. The seemingly helplessness of the law enforcement agencies and corruption in the face of these developments, have led many citizens to procure arms for self-protection and use in event of crises.

In similar vein, another informant who is a religious leader pointed out that:

Because of insecurity, fear of possible attacks and outbreak of violence, people continue to be busy arming and preparing themselves....Even when crises are brought under control, weapons are largely left to those who acquire them, insisting on hiding them in case of a relapse.

A police informant also shares the same view;

To be frank, there is a general feeling of insecurity in the state, though we are doing our best to protect lives and properties. But the society is not helping matters. The atrocities perpetuated in the name of ethnic and religious differences are worrisome. Situation where one has to sleep with one eye closed and the other opened is bad.

He went further to say;

Let me tell you, Kaduna would have been more populated and developed than this by now if not for the killings and destructions during the several crises. These have forced many to leave the city for their home towns or relocated to safer places, like Abuja, because they believe their safety is not guaranteed.

### Views of Respondents on the Sources of illegal Small Arms in Kaduna Metropolis

To ascertain the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis, the table below shows the responses of the respondents to that effect.

**Table 2. Sources of Illegal Small Arms in Kaduna Metropolis**

	Items	SA 5	A4	UD3	D2	SD1	TL
6	There are illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis.	63 31.5%	124 62.0%	6 3.0%	5 2.5%	2 1.5%	200 100%
7	Politicians provide illegal small arms	84 42.0%	82 41.0%	14 7.0%	19 9.5%	1 0.5%	200 100%
8	Religious groups provide illegal small arms	44 22.0%	71 35.5%	26 13.0%	39 19.5%	20 10.0%	200 100%
9	Ethnic groups provide illegal small arms	31 15.5%	72 36.0%	24 12.0%	41 20.5%	32 16.0%	200 100%
10	Military returnees from peace keeping	35 17.5%	72 36.0%	39 19.5%	39 19.5%	15 7.5%	200 100%
11	Sales by security agents (police and soldiers)	41 20.5%	95 47.5%	31 15.5%	25 12.5%	8 4.0%	200 100%
12	Theft of security forces arms	49 24.5%	102 51.0%	24 12.9%	19 9.5%	6 3.0%	200 100%
13	Smuggling from neighbouring states/countries	84 42.0%	87 43.5%	14 7.0%	12 6.0%	3 1.5%	200 100%
14	Arms dealers provides illegal small arms	53 26.5%	100 50.0%	27 13.5%	14 7.0%	6 3.0%	200 100%
15	Defence Industry Corporation (DIC) provides illegal small arms	17 8.5%	49 24.5%	48 24.0%	54 27.0%	32 16.0%	200 100%
16	Local manufacturers (Black smiths) provide illegal small arms	53 26.5%	104 52.0%	22 11.0%	15 7.5%	6 3.0%	200 100%

The survey data and the in depth interview informants for the study revealed the existence, and complex sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis, except on items 9, 10 and 13 which some informants disagreed. Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents in their responses reported that 93% agreed that illegal small arms exist in kaduna metropolis, while 4% disagreed.

An informant for this study who is a traditional leader has it that:

It is obvious that illegal small arms are everywhere in the country. It is not the issue of Kaduna alone. You can see that crises and violent crime have assumed a terrifying dimension. People are being kidnapped, killed and robbed of valuables. All these are made possible because people can easily access arms. Our society is no longer safe, except government do something urgently (traditional leader).

Weapons believed to be in circulation included locally made and sophisticated ones. An informant (religious leader) revealed that, “locally made guns noticed to have been used during the crises include single/double barrel guns, dane guns, bows/arrows, daga, and traditional weapons called ‘gariyo’”. Another religious leader also pointed out that, “some people were firing and shooting guns that were not locally made, such as machine guns and rifles. “Indeed many arrests and seizures of both sophisticated and locally made weapons have been made. But I am not in position to give the details now” (police informant).

Another informant who is a traditional leader reacted this way:

We cannot rule out the possibility of existence of illegal small arms in the state, considering the magnitude of all the crises, especially the 2000 crises. Though I have not been opportune to see any arms, but during the crises there were sounds of gun shots all over the places. This gives the impression that small arms are also in Kaduna like other parts of the country.

**Table 3. Ranking of findings on sources of illegal small arms**

Item	Variable	Score	Rank
15	Smuggling from neighbouring states/countries	85.5%	1 <sup>st</sup>
8	Politicians provide illegal small arms	83.0%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
18	Local manufacturers (Black smiths)	78.5%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
16	Arms dealers	76.5%	4 <sup>th</sup>
13	Theft of security forces arms	75.5%	5 <sup>th</sup>
12	Sales by security agents (police/military)	68.0%	6 <sup>th</sup>
9	Religious groups provide illegal small arms	57.5%	7 <sup>th</sup>
11	Military returnees from peace keeping	53.5%	8 <sup>th</sup>
10	Ethnic groups provide illegal small arms	51.5%	9 <sup>th</sup>

Class limit > 70.0%

Rank-ordering of findings in the table above revealed that item 15 with the highest score of 85.5% indicates the strongest feelings of the members of the public on the sources of illegal small arms. While item 10 with 51.5% score assumes the least position.

However, items 15, 8, 18, 16, 13, and 12 (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>) can be considered as the strongest feelings of the respondents on sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis having obtained

scores above the class limit of 67.5%. This means that majority of the respondents have common opinions or feelings on the items as against items 9, 11 and 10 with scores below the class limit.

### Views of Respondents on the Impacts of illegal Small Arms on Ethno-religious Violence

Table 4 sought to examine the role illegal small arms play in ethno-religious violence and the likely consequences. The responses of the respondents to this effect are presented below.

**Table 4. Impacts of Illegal Small Arms on Ethno-religious Violence**

	Items	SA 5	A4	UD3	D2	SD1	TL
17	Fuel ethno-religious violence	59 29.5%	103 51.5%	16 8.0%	16 8.0%	6 3.0%	200 100%
18	Perpetuate culture of violence	66 33.0%	81 40.5%	21 10.0%	25 12.5%	7 3.5%	200 100%
19	Destruction of lives	103 51.5%	76 38.0%	8 4.0%	9 4.5%	4 0.2%	200 100%
20	Destruction of properties	99 39.5%	90 45.0%	3 1.5%	3 1.5%	5 2.5%	200 100%
21	Cause injuries and maiming	91 45.5%	91 45.5%	11 5.5%	5 2.5%	2 1.0%	200 100%
22	Displacement of people	74 37.0%	98 49.0%	13 6.5%	8 4.0%	7 3.5%	200 100%
23	Create general sense of insecurity	84 42.0%	98 49.0%	8 4.0%	5 2.5%	5 2.5%	200 100%

Table 5 contains question items that attempt to examine the impacts of illegal small arms on ethno-religious conflicts. The responses of the respondents on the table revealed several impacts, and possible consequences.

On item 31, out of the 200 respondents, an overwhelming majority of 81.0% respondents reported that availability of illegal small arms fuels ethno-religious violence and insignificant number of 11.0% disagreed. This information implies that little provocation or peaceful protest can easily become violent if large amount of illegal small arms exist in a crises endemic society. Also, about 73.5% agreed that illegal small arms perpetuate culture of violence, 16.0% disagreed.

While 91.0% of the respondents agreed that availability of illegal small arms creates general sense of insecurity as against insignificant number of 5.0% who disagreed. This is closely related to the above.

It implies that the easily affordability and accessibility of small arms within various local communities in Kaduna has greatly trigger the escalation conflict as a result small arms availability in the hands of various categories of criminals.

**Table 5. Ranking of findings on the impacts of illegal small arms on ethno-religious conflicts**

Item	Variable	Score	Rank
35	Causes injuries and maiming	91.0%	1 <sup>st</sup>
43	Create general sense of insecurity	91.0%	1 <sup>st</sup>
33	Destruction of lives	89.5%	3 <sup>rd</sup>

38	Displacement of people	86.0%	4 <sup>th</sup>
34	Destruction of property	85.0%	5 <sup>th</sup>
31	Fuel ethno-religious violence	81.0%	6 <sup>th</sup>
32	Perpetuate culture of violence	73.0%	7 <sup>th</sup>

Class limit > 85.2%

The above table shows the rank-ordering of findings in table 4.3.4. It revealed that item 34 with 94.5% score indicates destruction of properties as the strongest role of illegal small arms, while item 39 with 73.5% score came least.

However, the table revealed that the strongest opinions of the respondents on the role of illegal small arms are items 34, 35, 43, 33, and 38, which obtained scores equal to, and above the class limit of 84.5%. On the other hand, items 31 and 32, with scores below the class limit indicate the lowest impact. Thus, given these overwhelming opinions, it can be implied that the role of illegal small arms in ethno-religious violence are destruction of lives and properties, injuries and maiming, sense of insecurity, violent crimes and displacement of people.

### Summary of major findings

The major findings regarding the nature of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis are that: there are incidences of ethno-religious conflicts in the state, the frequency of ethno-religious conflicts is increasing, the conflicts are usually between the two major ethnic and religious groups in the State, the conflicts usually involve the use of arms illegally acquired, resulting in increasing feeling of insecurity in the state. The major findings in respect of the second objectives, which is to identify the possible sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis are that smuggling from neighbouring states/countries, politicians, local manufacturers, arms dealers and theft of security forces arms constitute the major sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis.

On objective three, which is on the impacts of illegal small arms on ethno-religious conflicts, this study revealed that illegal small arms proliferation and particularly, their use result in destruction of lives, destruction of property, causes injuries and maiming, displacement of people, and creates general sense of insecurity.

### Discussion of findings

Research objective which is on the nature of ethno-religious conflicts has been determined. The questions derived from the research objective to ascertain the nature of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna metropolis have shown that, in recent years, Kaduna has recorded several conflicts that are of ethnic and religious nature. The findings also revealed that ethno-religious conflict is a common phenomenon in Kaduna given its frequency. The conflicts are usually between the different ethnic and religious groups especially that their beliefs and religious practices seem to run counter to each other. The struggle for relevance between these ethnic and religious groups has led to destruction of lives and properties, and displacement of people, given the involvement and use of arms illegally acquired.

This situation as revealed by the findings has heightened serious feelings of insecurity among the citizens of the state. The works of (Abdul 2002:117, Alemika and Okoye 2000:124, Alemika and Okoye 2002:121, 130 and 131, Okoye 2000: xii-xiv, Best 2006:422, Agbese 2002:12, and Ikejiani-Clark 2007:526) tend to be consistent with these findings. For instance, the work of Okoye (2000: xii-xiv) in particular shows that, there have been conflicts of ethnic

and religious nature leading to loss of lives and destruction of properties in Kasuwa Magani in 1980, Kaduna/Buruku in 1992, Gure/Kahugu in 1986, Kafanchan in 1987, Kaduna in 1987 and Zango Kataf in 1992, Kafanchan in 1999, and Kaduna, Kachia and Birnin Gwari in 2000; and again in Kaduna in 2002. The frequency of these conflicts has resulted in the description of Kaduna as a hot bed of ethno-religious conflicts (Agbese, 2002:12 and Ikejiani-Clark, 2007:526). As a result, Kaduna has been described as a hot-bed of ethno-religious crises, as the metropolis and other rural locations within the state have been turned into killing fields (Agbese 2002:12 and Ikejiani-Clark 2007:526).

The transactions between legal and illegal small arms market are intricate and complex. As a result, identifying their sources is even more nebulous. Even when the transaction is done through licensed manufacturers and distribution is legal, the movements of arms are often carried out in secret. This makes it difficult for any observer or researcher to say categorically the sources of arms in any particular of the country or state. In similar vein, it may be difficult to say with certainty the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis. This notwithstanding, information gathered from this study (public perception) indicate that the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis are to a certain extent not different from other parts of the country as identified in the literature.

From this study, research objective which is on the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis has been ascertained. The demonstration by this study, that the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis include smuggling, politicians, local manufacturers, arms dealers, and theft of security forces arms are in conformity with the works and reports of (Ariahu 2005:25, Obasi 2002:17,75 and 78, Oke 2002:27-28, Okiro 2004:12,13 and 14, Oke 2002:26-28, Nwizu 2004:138 and 139, Olorunfemi 2006:32, Vanguard Newspaper 17 Apr 2007:16, Post express 29 July, 2001:33, and Daily Trust 13 Apr, 2007:3)

For instance, the work of Okiro 2004:13 and Daily Trust of 13 April, 2007:3 revealed that, “most of the guns recovered from robbers (and unwarranted people) and traced to the police are those that were stolen or taken away when a police is killed”. These however, clearly indicate the negligence and incapacitation of the security agencies, particularly the police to effectively fight crime, as members of the public perceive the police as conniving with hoodlums, under the pretence of being attacked and overpowered.

Though the findings suggested arms dealers as one of the sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis, there is no clear evidence from studies to buttress this claim. However, owing to the fact that the movement of arms is shrouded in secrecy, and arms that are imported legally may fall into illegal circulation through diversion, theft, etc, and may go into black market supply or fall into wrong hands, one cannot completely rule out the possibility of arms dealer’s involvement in the proliferation of illegal small arms in Kaduna like other cities in Nigeria.

The findings on the objective which is on the impacts of illegal small arms on ethno-religious conflicts have been determined. The study found that arms used in ethno-religious conflicts cause injuries and maiming, create general sense of insecurity, destruction of lives and properties, and displacement of people. These findings are in consonance with the literature, particularly the works of (Abdul 2002:124, Alemika and Okoye 2002:117 and 118, 127 and 128, Ariahu 2005:36 and 37, Gofwen 2004:65 – 67, Okiro 2004:10, Okoye 2000: xiiixiv, 21 and 77, Omade: 186, Report of Committee on 1987 Crises: 55, New Nigerian Weekly, 5 December 2003:2, and Nigerian Tribune 16 January 2008:1 and 4). For instance, during the

1987 crises in Kaduna, 19 lives were lost, while damage to properties was valued at N78,537,768 (Report of Committee on 1987 Crises: 55). While in the 2000 crises, official record of the extent of damage to lives and properties has it that 1,295 persons died and properties estimated at N6,373,187,754.00 were destroyed (White Paper on Report of Commission of Inquiry, April 2001:15).

However, according to Alemika and Okoye (2002:128), it is generally believed by the public that nothing less than 5,000 people died during the 2000 crises. The gravity of the destructions recorded (i.e. in term of maiming, destruction of lives and properties, and the displacement of people) during the crises, and other crises that followed were made possible due to availability of illegal small arms in circulation.

Easy availability and accessibility to arms therefore, could increase cases of violence or contribute to the culture of violence, a circle that is difficult to break.

### Conclusions

Kaduna metropolis has registered several crises of ethnic and religious nature. The conflicts have been fought by ethnic and religious groups in the State, which have turned the city and the rural locations into killing fields. More often than not, when conflicts of this nature erupt and spread, they assume more religious dimension than ethnic, making the city a hot bed constantly generating religious crises of high magnitude. The violent nature of these conflicts has led to destruction of lives and properties, given the involvement of arms illegally acquired.

The sources of illegal small arms in Kaduna metropolis cannot be completely detached from the sources in the country, which include smuggling, politicians, local manufacturers, arms dealers, and theft of security forces arms.

The presence of arms affects behaviour and attitudes in a society. The easy availability of, and accessibility to illegal small arms have increased cases of violence across the country, resulting in destruction of lives and properties, increasing general sense of insecurity, cause injuries and maiming, facilitating violent crimes, displacement of people and contributes to culture of violence.

It is therefore the opinion of the researcher that, if the spate of ethno-religious conflicts is not quickly brought under control as a way of arresting the illegal use of small arms, the fact cannot be ignored that in the nearest future, Nigeria as a whole will become a country of street gangs and will increasingly continue to witness unprecedented rise in lawlessness and anarchy, where organized and unorganized groups and armed militias will erode and undermine government's monopoly of arms, and even the relevance of security forces.

The most important contribution of this study to knowledge is its demonstration that, it is the quest for better conditions of living by the people who had been exposed to years of neglect, deprivation and injustice that precipitate conflicts which is responsible for the demand, acquisition and use of arms. The need to take this into account when devising strategies to curb and control proliferation of illegal small arms cannot be over-emphasized.

### Recommendations

1. No meaningful research can be conducted without some underlining purposes; this research work makes the following recommendations. The recommendations range from



short term to long term based on temporal order that their implementation should take. The expected urgent measure the government should take to address proliferation of illegal small arms is on conflict resolution.

2. Given the finding that incessant conflicts is one of the major factors precipitating the demands for illegal small arms, the government should take pro-active measures to resolve conflicting issues. To this end, white paper reports of past commissions of inquiry into communal and religious conflicts (like that of 1987 Zango Kataf, which spread to Kaduna and the Sharia crises of 2000) be visited and reviewed by the government with the view to implementing them.

3. Our borders are porous and the security agents are poorly equipped to face the challenges. Therefore, as an urgent measure to combat smuggling, the government should take step to ensure proper security of our borders and seaports. To this end, the police and other security agencies should be well funded, and need overhauling of its equipment, training of personnel, and attitudinal change.

4. There are legislations to control the acquisition and use of fire-arms. These laws have become obsolete and insufficient to ensure deterrence in relation to penalties for breaching them. The current penalties of 4 years imprisonment or a fine of N100, 000.00 or both (Ariahu, 2005:45) no longer justify the present realities. Therefore, punishment for those who breach the laws prohibiting illegal importation, acquisition and use of illegal small arms be made more stringent. Offenders should be made to face life jail without option of fine.

5. In addition, government should develop proper programmes for raising public awareness on control of illegal small arms. It should use its media organizations and other informal media to educate the public on the danger of illegal small arms. To achieve this, engaging civil society organizations and other relevant bodies and agencies to sensitize the public on the implications of imbibing culture of violence is imperative.

6. As a measure to check ease lost of arms, theft of security forces arms, the security agencies keeping stockpiles of small arms should build more secure armouries and develop effective internal systems to ensure regular and accurate accounting for all weapons in their custody and those issued for use to reduce theft and recycling of arms by corrupt officials. Most of the arms found to be used during the crises were manufactured locally. To check the increasing production and use of arms, activities of the local manufacturers should be closely monitored. Only credible people who cannot compromise their integrity should be licensed to produce local weapons. Since the workshops of these manufacturers are located in the hinterland, the government should collaborate with community leaders to achieve this.

7. The above, though short term measures, have the potentials of becoming mutually reinforced and sustaining. If well implemented, their effects will endure for sometimes to come. However, there is also need to embark on long term measures.

8. In the long term, and in line with the position of the theory of this study, structural reforms towards economic efficiency and equity, democracy, popular participation in public policy formulation, social justice and equity between individuals and groups, observance of the rule of laws, transparency and accountability are therefore required. In this direction, the government should address the issues of poverty, social inequality, injustice, oppression and lopsided development among social, ethnic and religious groups to avoid situations that create communal and religious conflicts that precipitate the acquisition, accumulation and use of illegal small arms. These conditions will enhance better resource management, improve social, economic and political conditions, and thereby reduce not only pressures towards crime, but also incidence and prevalence rates of conflicts that are instrumental to acquisition of illegal arms. This is important because, to combat proliferation of illegal small arms in the country without up-rooting or restructuring the socio-economic and political structures which are at the base of conflicts will be a fruitless effort.

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