REGIONAL CENTRE ON SMALL ARMS

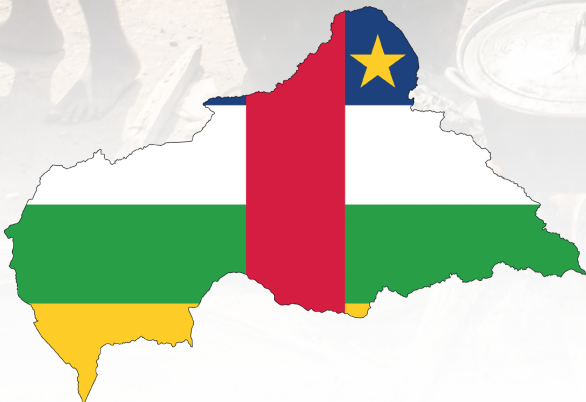*Co-operating to Disarm*

AN ASSESSMENT OF ILLICIT SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS
PROLIFERATION AND FRAGILITY SITUATIONS

THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

VISION

"A safe and secure sub – region in a peaceful continent free from arms proliferation"

MISSION

To coordinate action against Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation in the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa

CORE VALUES

Flexibility
Gender Sensitivity
Integrity
Professionalism
Partnership
Team Work
Transparency

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACL-	Authority, Capacity and Legitimacy
AFDB –	African Development Bank
APRD –	ArméePopulaire Pour la Restauration de la Démocratie
CAR-	Central African Republic
CEMAC-	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CSOs –	Civil Society Organizations
DDR –	Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration
DRC –	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECCA-	Economic Community of Central African States
EITI –	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EU –	European Union
FACA –	Forces Armées Central Africaine
FGD-	Focus Group Discussion
FIDH –	International Federation for Human Rights
HIV/AIDS –	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Syndrome
HRW-	Human Rights Watch
IDPs –	Internally Displaced Persons
IRC-	International Rescue Committee
MINUSCA -	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central Africa
MISCA-	International Support Mission to the Central Africa
NGOs –	Non-governmental Organizations
OSAPG-	include United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide
RECSA-	Regional Centre on Small Arms
SALW-	Small Arms and Light Weapons
TNC-	Transitional National Council
UFDR –	Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement
UN –	United Nations
UNDP-	United Nation Development Program
UNHCR-	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF –	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

Proliferation of illicit SALW in the Central African Republic (CAR) has for many years undermined possibilities for state stability, and contributed to continual political crisis in the fragile state. Since its independence from France in 1960, CAR has experienced violent conflicts. The country was recently ranked the third most fragile State in the 2015 Fragility Situations Index by The Fund for Peace.

This study examined the relationship between fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW as well as the implications of the two for the development and livelihoods of the people of CAR.

The study found that fragility situations in CAR are manifested by the presence of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and ungoverned spaces. The study established the following as major drivers of fragility situations in the country: weak governance 85%, proliferation of illicit SALW 78%, protracted conflicts 75%, collapsed economy 74% and porous borders 70%.

The impact of fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW on development and livelihoods has been dire. Populations have been displaced, lives lost and the provision of social services disrupted during the conflicts. Further, unemployment has left populations vulnerable and prone to mobilization into armed criminal gangs thereby creating a vicious cycle of insecurity. Economic paralysis and political uncertainty have increased poverty levels and hampered direct foreign investments.

To build resilience, the study recommends the following: strengthening of governance institutions, management and control of SALW, security sector reforms, and disarmament of ex-combatants and civilians. In a nutshell there is need for a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction that will integrate human security.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Central African Republic (CAR), a country spanning 623,000 square km with 16 provinces and 71 sub provinces, has experienced turmoil since gaining independence from France in 1960. It has an estimated population of 4-5 million people.

It is rich in natural resources, which include diamond, timber, uranium, and potential oil and gas deposits. However, it is among the poorest countries in the world, currently ranked at 187 out of 188 countries in *The 2015 Human Development Report*.[1] The political map of CAR below shows the different administrative provinces.

Figure 1: Political Map of Central Africa Republic

Source: Ephotopix[2]

In the last three decades, CAR has experienced a number of armed conflicts, which have occasionally precipitated political coups.

The fragility situations as shown in Figure 2 below has been increasing over the years due to intermittent conflicts.

Figure 2: The trends of fragility situations in CAR
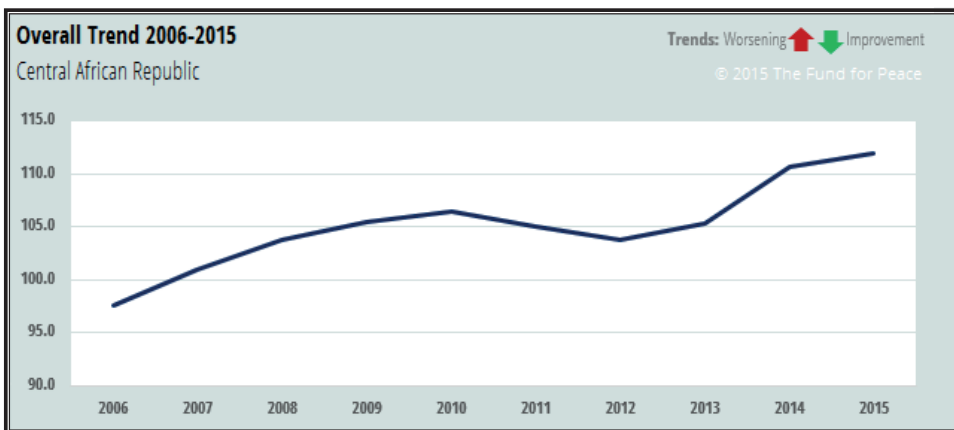
Source: Fund for Peace, 2015

[1]UNDP, 2015 Human Development Report. UNDP: New York, 2015.
[2]Ephotopix, available at: http://www.ephotopix.com/image/africa/central_african_rep_prefecture_map.gif

The chart above demonstrates CAR's long-term trend of fragility situations, year-to-year. The conflict that begun in 2012 was mainly between the Seleka, largely Muslim and the anti-balaka with members from mainly Christian and traditional religious faiths. The rebel groups instrumentalized religion to justify their grievances and sustain the conflict. The Seleka rebel group, largely from the northern part of the country deposed President François Bozizé on 24 March 2013. The coup was followed by systematic acts of looting, killing and torturing of populations. Civilians and defectors from the ousted regime accessed government's armoury and stockpiles. This led to extensive proliferation of illicit SALW that weakened the government's capacity to ensure security and order in the country.

Multiple internal and external actors competing for the country's natural resources, control of political and military power exacerbates the fragility situations of CAR. The persistent conflict in the country had by 2015 resulted in the death of at least 6,000 people, internal displacement of 643,000 persons, and an additional 300,000 refugees who fled to the neighbouring countries.[3]

1.2 Conceptualizing fragility situations and illicit SALW proliferation in CAR

Due to the diverse experiences of countries in fragile situations, scholars have noted that there is no generally accepted definition of fragility because of the political motives associated with the concept.[4] However, the African Development Bank defines fragility as characterised by "low capacity and poor state performance with respect to security and development" which is exemplified in a state's inability to provide for the security and development of its citizens.[5]

In this report, fragility is conceptualized in its broadest form as a situation where states exhibit vulnerabilities in their authority capacity and legitimacy (ACL) mandates.[6]

[3]Enough Project, "Central African Republic." Available at: http://www.enoughproject.org/conflicts/car (Accessed on 20/4/2016)
[4]Finn Stepputat, and Lars Engberg-Pedersen. "II. Fragile States: Definitions, Measurements and Processes." Fragile Situations: Background Papers 31 (2008).
[5]African Development Bank. Africa Development Bank Group strategy for addressing Fragility and building resilience in Africa. Abidjan: Africa Development Bank, 2014.
[6]This conceptualization is borrowed from David Carment, Stewart Prest and YiagadeesenSamy. 2007. "Assessing fragility: theory, evidence and policy". Revue Trimestrielle De PolitiqueÉtrangère, p. 14

This model was used to measure the extent of the state's authority, capacity and legitimacy to its citizens in delivering good governance, ensuring security, guaranteeing inclusivity through citizen participation in social organization and providing basic services such as in health, education, infrastructure and employment. Fragile states show weakness in delivering these core functions of human security and consequently fail to attain sustainable development for most of their population.

Authority is the capability of the state to protect its citizens from any form of violence and criminality including provision of security for their lives and property. Within the hierarchy of public goods delivered by states, the most important public good that modern states are required to provide to the citizenry is security, and most importantly human security, which holistically address the basic requirement of the citizens. It also involves having in place judicial systems that dispense justice fairly while prosecuting against breaking of the law. In relation to CAR, state authority was measured by considering the extent to which the government had ensured human security to the citizens.[7] State authority also included assessing the functionality and effectiveness of security forces in protecting the citizens against internal and external aggression.

Capacity refers to the ability of a state to effectively provide basic services such as health, education, food, water, and sanitation as well as basic communication and transport. In other words, the state needs to guarantee the basic needs of its citizens through provision of infrastructural support, partnership with public and private sectors and encouragement of community initiatives. Fragile states often struggle to realize these basic needs to their citizens and in some cases; this space is filled by NGOs and international development agencies. The capacity of the state of CAR was assessed by considering the extent to which the government has adequately and effectively provided basic public entitlements including health, education, and infrastructure.

Legitimacy refers to the ability of the state to influence public loyalty to its government as well as garner support for government's institutions of governance, legislations and policies.

[7]Robert Rotberg, I. "The new nature of nation-state failure." Washington Quarterly. Vol. 25, No. 3 (2002): 83-96.

Governments need functional institutions but at the same time require effective legislations and legislative structures like the judiciary, parliament and presidency or the executive, which are critical for the implementation of policies.

Fragile situations tend to weaken state institutions often leading to a state of lawlessness further diminishing the state legitimacy. While conflict-affected states are by definition more susceptible to fragility situations, some but not all fragile states are marred in deep-rooted conflicts and violent transitions that have postponed peace. Their inability to control high levels of corruption and their propensity to revert to conflicts and political instability after periods of peace is also higher.

In CAR, legitimacy was assessed by examining the ability of the state to command public loyalty to the governing regime and to generate domestic support for government legislation being passed and policies being implemented.[8] Legitimacy was further assessed by considering the extent to which major legal institutions dispense (or are seen/perceived to dispense) justice freely and fairly.

Fragile states can thus, be defined as those that are caught up in any or all of the following traps: conflict, natural resource competition, poor governance, weak institution; violence and widespread poverty. The World Bank notes that such states are likely to fall behind in meeting commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[9] Fragility situations affect the majority of the population. However, this is not a uniform experience for all states experiencing fragility situations. Those most vulnerable in situations of fragility are often women, youth, children and the elderly. This is because in most cases, they are subjected to displacements, rape, and insecurity, recruitment into militia groups and political manipulation that often targets the youth.

Countries in fragile situations often record high rates of poverty. Moreover, scholars note that fragile situations in one country often have destabilizing, spill over effects on its neighbours.[10] In addition, they note that fragile states play a critical role in the proliferation of illicit SALW.[11]

The easy availability of weapons in turn tends to weaken state capacity, further fuelling wars and fostering crime and impunity in the neighbouring states. However, this does not imply that countries with large caches of arms are more fragile than those with fewer weapons. Rather, a highly fragile state with armed populations is more likely to show signs of reduced state legitimacy, authority, and capacity to prevent and deal with resource, ethnic and political violence, thus exacerbating situations of fragility. This has been the case for CAR.

The Fragile state Index 2015 indicates that the majority of the top 20 most fragile states are located in Sub-Saharan Africa. Country indicators on foreign policy indicated that in the year 2015 the Central Africa Republic (CAR) was ranked third most fragile Sub Saharan African country.[12]

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The overall goal of this study was to establish the nexus between fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW proliferation in CAR and how this correlation impacts on livelihoods and human development. The study was guided by the following objectives:

i.   to document manifestations of fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW in CAR;
ii.   to identify drivers of fragility situations in CAR;
iii.   to assess the role of proliferation of illicit SALW on fragility situations in CAR;
iv.   to explain the impact of fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW on development and livelihoods in CAR; and
v.   to identify existing national, regional and international intervention mechanisms addressing fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW

[8]NaudeWim, Amelia U, Santos-Paulino and McGillivray.Fragile States: Causes, Costs and Responses. Oxford University Press,2011 p. 48
[9]World Bank, 2016.“Fragility Violence and Conflict.” http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview#1 (Accessed on 3//3/2016).

[10]Siân Herbert, NathaliaDukhan, and Marielle Debos.State fragility in the Central African Republic: what prompted the 2013 coup.University of Birmingham: GSDRC,2013.
[11]Patrick, Stewart. “Weak states and global threats: Fact or fiction?.” Washington Quarterly 29, no. 2 (2006): 27-53. explains the link between such states , proliferation of arms and the transnational threats they pose.
[12]The indicators are based on research carried out by a non-profit independent organization known as Fund For Peace whose aim is to prevent violent conflict and promote sustainable security through research. It also compiles the yearly fragile states index. See Fund for Peace: Fragile States Index 2015 at www.fund for peace.org (accessed 19.4.2016)
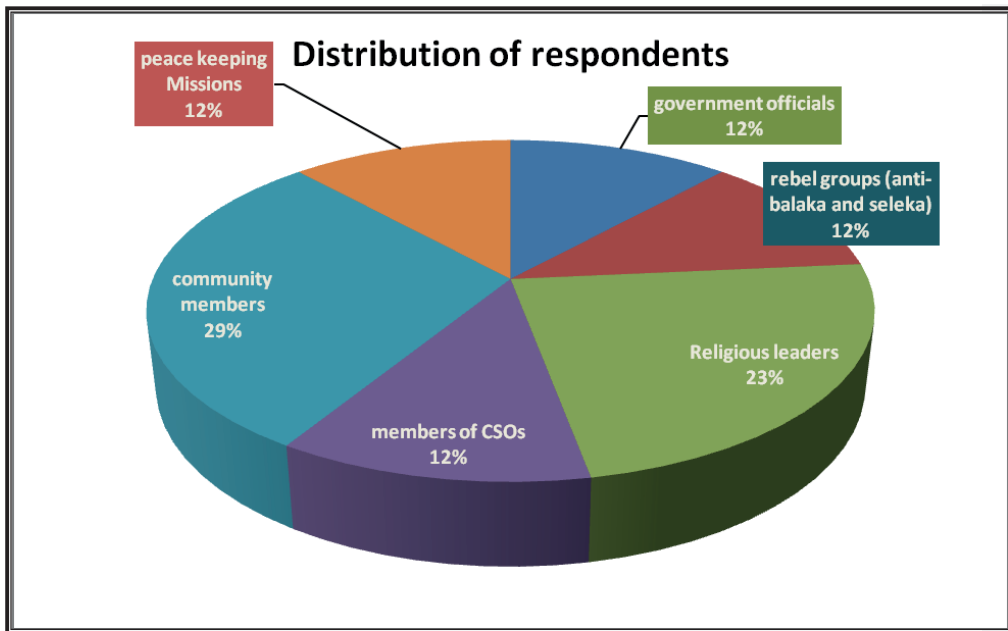
2.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design and Sampling

This study applied a cross-sectional study design. This involved collecting data from different sectors of the society and triangulating emerging opinions and perceptions from the respondents. To realize this, mixed-method approach, which was exploratory and inclusive was relied on.

Purposive sampling was used to ensure that specific key informants were reached for the relevant information. Informants included; government officials, CSOs and NGOs, peace missions, religious leaders, rebel groups, health workers, teachers,

community leaders and the general populace. The information sought was both qualitative and quantitative from primary and secondary data.

The key informants were identified based on their roles in the society on matters relating to fragility situations and SALW, their level of knowledge, and organizational representation. They represented government officials (government bureaucrats, security personnel, and civil servants), general public (religious leaders and ordinary citizens), peacekeeping missions, armed groups (seleka and ante-balaka) and civil society organizations (CSOs) (both national and international). The pie chart below shows the distribution of respondents in percentages across categories.

Figure 3: Distribution of the respondent population

2.2 Data Collection and Management

Primary data collection was done through face-to-face, phone and Skype interviews as well as through the filling of online questionnaires. Secondary data was reviewed from published books and journals, reports from government, online reports from the Small Arms Survey, International Crisis Group, United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nation Development Program (UNDP), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Africa Development Bank (AfDB), RECSA, and from other publicly available materials.

Collected data was stored electronically, in recorders and in notebooks. Files were opened for each of the groups interviewed. Questionnaires were also sorted and stored in files for ease of reference and to avoid loss. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the removal of names where they had been indicated, unless otherwise allowed by the respondents.

Descriptive statistics was used to summarize categorized variables. Both quantitative and qualitative data were generated. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics (means, percentages) while qualitative data was analysed by use of content analysis.

Data was presented in figures, tables, and narratives while guided by the thematic representation of the objectives of the study.

2.3   Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

A study on SALW is generally a sensitive one due to its association with security and political issues. The researchers, however, created rapport to get information on the topic. During the process of data collection, violent conflict erupted making it difficult for the researchers to move freely in some parts of the country. To mitigate against this, the researchers were able to conduct phone and Skype interviews, as well as follow-up email questionnaires.

3.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

Fragility situations in CAR are multidimensional and manifest themselves politically, economically, and socially. The situations must be understood within the context of CAR's neighbours and history of conflicts. CAR borders the DRC, Sudan, Chad and Republic of Congo all of which have had histories of conflicts and cases of proliferation of illicit SALW. Historically, CAR has also had its own share of internal conflicts and the attempts at disarmament have largely been unsuccessful. As a result, the country is one of the lowest-ranked countries in terms of government effectiveness, provision of social services, regulatory quality, security, and the rule of law.[13]

3.1   Manifestations of Fragility situations and illicit SALW proliferation in CAR

Protracted conflicts: CAR has had many conflicts since its independence. The recent outbreak of violence following the insurgency by the Seleka in March 2013 has been described as a near-genocidal situation not witnessed before.[14] This is attributed to the military advantage that CAR's armed groups have had over CAR's army. Some of the members of Forces Armees Central Africaines (FACA), CAR's national army, joined rebel groups following the overthrow of President Francois Bozize.[15] This left the country open to violence from diverse armed rebel groups.

Humanitarian crisis: Since the coup in 2013, the humanitarian crisis facing CAR has heightened. It is characterized by the burden of internally displaced person (IDPs), serious and repeated human rights violations, massacres, and assassinations. CAR has experienced estimated deaths of between 3000-5000 people, displacement of more than 800,000 people with more than 500,000 at the capital of Bangui, while half of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance.[16] According to the International Crisis Group Report (2015), the humanitarian situation has been worsened due to the inability of aid workers to distribute supplies to affected groups.[17] In some areas, NGOs faced attacks and extortion by armed groups.[18]

Ungoverned spaces: Prior to elections in CAR in February 2016, the government was hardly accepted outside of Bangui. Different armed rebel groups controlled areas outside of the capital city, thereby compromising state legitimacy. For example, the constitutional referendum conducted on 13 December 2015 and the general elections of 30 December 2015 with a re-rerun in February 2016 witnessed violence from the rebel groups.[19] The factions collected taxes and offered services, which the state was unable to provide. To date, the government is yet to establish its presence in many parts of the country.

Poor infrastructural development: Poor development of physical infrastructure including roads, sanitation and railway systems are manifestation of fragility situations in CAR. The state of hospitals and health centres, schools, educational institutions, has deteriorated, and in some cases, they are non-functional.[20] Health care facilities are generally very poor and where they exist, the majority of the population cannot afford the cost of treatment.[21]

[15]International Crisis Group, 2015. Central African Republic: The roots of Violence Africa Report.No. 230.ICG: Washington.
[16]Kalidou Diallo, 2015. Central African Republic - African Economic Outlook. Available at: http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/aeo/2014/PDF/CN_Long_EN/Republique_Centrafricaine_EN.pdf (Accessed on 2/20/2016)
[17]International Crisis Group, 2015. Central African Republic: The roots of Violence Africa Report.No. 230.ICG: Washington.
[18]Ibid
[19]Al Jazeera, "Central African Republic: Touadera wins election."http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/02/central-african-republic-touadera-wins-election-160221044730048.html (accessed 17 March 2016)
[20]UNICEF 2013 reported that 7 out of 10 children in CAR did not go back to school and 65% of the surveyed schools were unusable for learning therefore, CAR populations have to seek education in neighbouring Chad. UN News Center, 2013. "UNICEF: 70 per cent of children in Central African Republic still not in school." Available at: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46285 (Accessed on 18/03/2016).

[13]UNDP, 2015.2015 Human Development Report.UNDP: New York.
[14]Kane Mouhamadou. "Interreligious violence in the Central African Republic: An analysis of the causes and implications." African Security Review 23, no. 3 (2014): 312-317.

3.2   Drivers of fragility situations in CAR

a) Poor and weak governance: This is a major driver to fragility situations in CAR. Weak governance is characterized by authoritarian regimes, lack of a unified army and impunity in policy and legislation enforcement, transitional justice and peace agreements implementation.[22] Governments that have acquired power through the bullet rather than the ballot have over the years run CAR.[23] Notably, each changeover of governments in CAR has been characterized by changes in the composition of the FACA, which subsequently meant that the country has always lacked a unified army.[24] For example, former André-Dieudonné Kolingba, after ousting Jean-Bédel Bokassa in 1980s, is said to have changed the entire outfit of the FACA by recruiting and promoting soldiers from his Yakoma ethnic community.[25]

b) Proliferation of illicit SALW: Fragility situations in CAR are also attributed to the proliferation of illicit SALW. This has mainly been linked to many conflicts that the country has experienced as well as the instability in the neighbouring countries.[26]These include Chad to the North, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Congo-Brazzaville to the South, Sudan to the East, and Cameroon to the West.[27] Hence, the trail of sources of arms into CAR over time is linked to firstly, the 1996 FACA mutiny, which resulted into the looting of the arms depot in Kassai barracks in Bangui and police stations elsewhere. Secondly, Chad's instability in 1982

where part of its army was exiled in CAR. Lastly, the 1997 overthrow of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko, and the movement of the rebel group of Jean-Pierre Bemba into the forests in CAR. With the instability in the region, there were movements of refugees into CAR some of whom brought with them illicit SALW, which they traded with the locals. Notably, a limited emphasis on controlling authorized transfers of ammunitions obscures the dynamic landscape of armed violence across the continent, which often extends beyond the war zones.[28]

The consequence of the above events is captured by the Small Arms Survey, which indicated that by the end of 2008 there were nearly 40,000 illicit arms in the hands of civilians.[29] However, the events of 2013 swelled the cache of arms in CAR, following the overthrow of President Bozzize. Today locals and international peacekeepers assert that, with the increase of rebel groups and communal conflicts, there are between 50,000-100,000 illicit SALW in the country, unevenly distributed in urban and rural.[30]

c) Management of public resources: Poor management of the country's public finances has also contributed to political instability in the country. Given that the country has to bear the cost of domestic and foreign debt with large arrears on payments, the economy is on a downward trend. The negative balances in the table below demonstrate this. Further, over-reliance on external aid, which is often times poorly managed, has meant that only a small percentage of elite controls CAR's economy.

Table 1: CAR's macroeconomic indicators

	2012	2013	2014(e)	2015(p)	2016(p)
Real GDP growth	4.1	-36.0	1.0	5.4	4.0
Real GDP per capita growth	2.1	-38.0	-1	3.4	2.1
CPI inflation	5.9	6.6	11.2	4.1	3.9
Budget balance % GDP	0.0	-6.3	-3.2	-3.8	-3.7
Current account balance % GDP	-5.6	-3.0	-5.2	-8.2	-6.4

[21]Eric Berman .G. and Louisa N. Lombard.The Central African Republic and small arms: a regional tinderbox. Small Arms Survey,[c/o] Graduate Institute of International and development Studies, 2008.
[22]Carayannis, Tatiana, & Lombard, L. (Eds.).2015. Making sense of the Central African Republic.London: Zed Books.And Herbert, Dukham, &Debos, (2013).Op cit.
[23]Ibid.
[24]Ibid.
[25]Eric Berman .G. and Louisa N. Lombard.The Central African Republic and small arms: a regional tinderbox. Small Arms Survey,[c/o] Graduate Institute of International and development Studies, 2008.
[26]Ibid.

[27]Carayannis, & Lombard, (Eds.) (2015.)Op cit.
[28]Robert, Muggah and Francis Sang. "The enemy within: rethinking arms availability in sub-Saharan Africa." Conflict, Security & Development 13, no. 4 (2013): 417-447.
[29]Berman, Eric G., and Louisa N. Lombard.The Central African Republic and small arms: a regional tinderbox. Small Arms Survey,[c/o] Graduate Institute of International and development Studies, 2008.
[30]These assertions are a summary of respondents and key informants of the research study drawn from the local population, staff of MINUSCA and the French Sangaris military operation.

Source:Kalidou.[31] -estimates (e) and projections (p)

d) Porous borders: CAR is a vast country with extensive borders. It has no capacity to monitor all its borders. Besides, as already mentioned it is surrounded by countries, which have experienced diverse conflicts with an overflow effect into CAR. This has contributed to the flow of illicit SALW mainly through the unmanned entry points. This has facilitated proliferation of SALW across the border, mostly to the rebel groups and criminal networks,[32] further contributing to state fragility situation and undermining state authority in CAR.

3.3   Impacts of fragility situations and illicit SALW proliferation on development

a) Poor economic performance: The impacts of fragility situations in CAR have been devastating. The country is characterized by a weak and uneven economy that is faced with the challenge of youth bulge and unemployment. Economic growth has been stagnant with low public investment, systematic exclusion of certain sectors of the society, and poor service delivery. Half the population lives on less than one dollar a day.[33] CAR is largely an agricultural based economy. However, this sector has been badly affected by the protracted conflict, displacements, insecurity, and extortion of farmers. Thus, years of conflicts have stagnated the agricultural performance and declined socio-economic progress of the country.[34]

CAR'S rebel groups took control of artisanal diamond sites, timber logging sites, farms, and business premises. Those who were involved in these activities were not able to continue their operations.[35] Further, with the institutional and sector reforms that were aimed at developing the private sector and encouraging foreign investment in mining and forestry, CAR was registered as an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) conforming country in 2011.[36] However, this process was suspended due to the crisis in 2012, which led to the suspension of CAR from the EITI, thus impeding their development and denying the country a chance to participate in global value chains.

b) Increased Insecurity and proliferation of illicit SALW: given the extensive proliferation of illicit SALW in the country, CAR continues to experience situations of insecurity. The armed groups, mainly the Seleka and the Anti Balaka, which control many parts of the country, have a destabilizing effect on the government.[37] One of the main challenges for President Faustin Archange Touadéra, elected in February 2016, is to stabilize the country and ensure the security of the people.

c) Increased vulnerability for women and children: The International Federation for Human Rights reported cases of rape among women and girls, which increased the risk of the population contracting sexually transmitted diseases.[38] Further, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees have been vulnerable to HIV infections given that displacement and conflict expose them to family disintegration, social disruption, poverty, and increased sexual violence. The conflict in CAR has also had negative impact on children, some of whom have been forcefully recruited into armed militia groups. Moreover, other children have dropped out of school because of the insecurity.

d) Dilapidated Social amenities: The conflict has also had a negative impact on the social amenities of the country such as health care, education, sanitation and infrastructure. For example, in the education sector, there has been a breakdown of the education system. In this regard, many teachers have left the country and the education ministry has been unable to effectively administer national exams in the whole country.[39]

[31]Kalidou Diallo, 2015. Central African Republic - African Economic Outlook. Available at: http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/aeo/2014/PDF/CN_Long_EN/Republique_Centrafricaine_EN.pdf (Accessed on 2/20/2016)

[32]Jennifer Giroux, David Lanz, and DamianoSguaitamatti. "The tormented triangle: The regionalisation of conflict in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic." (2009).

[33]World Bank, "Central African Republic." Available at: http://data.world-bank.org/country/central-african-republic (Accessed on 18/)

[34]MthuliNcube and Basil Jones, "Drivers and Dynamics of Fragility in Africa", Africa Economic Brief. Vol. 4, No. 5 (2013), 4

[35]Herbert, Dukham&Debos (2013).Op cit.

[36]Kalidou Diallo, (2014) op cit.

[37]Council on the Foreign Relations (CFR), 2016."Violence in the Central Africa Republic." http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/conflict/violence-in-the-central-african-republic (Accessed on 23/02/2016).

[38]International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) is an international NGO federating 178 organizations from 120 countries defending all rights as set out in the Universal declaration for Human Rights.

[39]Carayannis,& Lombard (2015). Op cit.

4.0 KEY FINDINGS

4.1 *Manifestations of Fragility Situations and proliferation of illicit SALW in CAR*

The study revealed various manifestations of fragility situations, which have been heightened by the increased levels of illicit SALW in CAR. The fragility situations are manifested by the presence of internally displaced persons (IDPs), protracted conflicts, politicization of religious identities and ungoverned spaces.

Presence of IDPs: during a focus group discussion (FGD) conducted in PK 10 (one of the locations in Bangui), it was revealed that the presence of many IDPs camps is a clear manifestation of fragility situations in the country. A senior Catholic Church official in Bangui observed that many families have been disjointed by the displacements. There are cases of individual disappearances that have not been traced to date. With many people displaced due to the political crisis that engulfed CAR in 2013, women and children were the most vulnerable with some being raped and others left orphaned or widowed.

Two United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) staff were of the view that the humanitarian crisis will continue until the citizens find it safe to go back to their homes. They were themselves displaced and living in one of the peacekeepers' camp. They further noted that some refugee camps provided conducive grounds for exchange of weapons and re-recruitment of rebels. This precipitated the continued cycle of violent retaliatory attacks.

Presence of peacekeepers: during a FGD conducted with United Nation (UN) staff, it was revealed that the multiple fragility situations in CAR necessitated external interventions. For instance, during the time of data collection there were 12,870 MINUSCA uniformed forces alongside the French Sangaris operation forces.

Ungoverned spaces: the absence of government institutions and authority has resulted in armed rebels taking over the administration of some parts of the country. An NGO official from Mbaiki located in Lobaye Prefecture, southern part of the country, expressed that the armed groups were collecting taxes and charging levies for cases they dealt with. The non-functional judiciary and non-existence security agents in most of CAR depicted the government's weak legislative and judicial structures, which have contributed to state fragility situations and weakened the authority of the government.

Protracted conflicts: Since independence, CAR has experienced a series of violent military and political crisis. Profound socio-economic grievances and state incapacity to adequately respond have culminated into recurrent tensions, rebellions and civil unrest. According to one member of transitional parliament who was interviewed, the latest crisis begun in March 2013 when Seleka backed by both Chad and Sudan fighters overthrew Francois Bozize. He was replaced by Michel Djotodia, the leader of Seleka armed group. However, due to his failure to govern the country and reconcile the warring factions, which precipitated into lawlessness in the country, he was under pressure from regional leaders and the international community to resign. Djotodia was replaced by Catherine Samba who oversaw the transition to an elected government in February 2016.

Politicization of religious identities: Conflict in CAR has also been fuelled by the political class, which has instrumentalized religion to justify the conflict. A senior Catholic Church leader strongly asserted that the conflict had nothing to do with religion. He emphasized that the root of the conflict was largely based on political, economic and social interests of the perpetrators of violence. One of the community leaders in PK10 stated that he is a Christian, but had a brother fighting for the Muslim Seleka rebel group. He added that the brother is a Christian and simply joined Seleka to have access to illicit SALW, which would allow him to loot and extort money. Religion for him was simply a way that the elites were manipulating to mobilize and arm unsuspecting youth.

An officer of the UN peacekeeping forces strongly underscored that members from both supposedly Christian Anti-Balakaand Muslim Seleka did not necessarily profess the implicated faiths. In other words, the motivation of the conflict was beyond religion. This is because, as one of the community leaders indicated, while Anti-balaka may be Christians "they kill Christians more than they kill Muslims."

On the other hand, the Seleka sell or steal arms from Anti-balaka and vice versa, which means that the two identities are socially constructed and do not necessarily represent religion. Such instrumentalization of religion breeds religious animosity prompting protracted conflicts involving various actors.

4.2   Drivers of Fragility situations in CAR

The study established that weak governance (85%), proliferation of illicit SALW (78%), protracted conflicts (75%), economic collapse/poverty (74%) and porous borders (70%) as the major drivers of fragility situations in CAR as illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 4: Percentage of responses on Drivers of Fragility in CAR
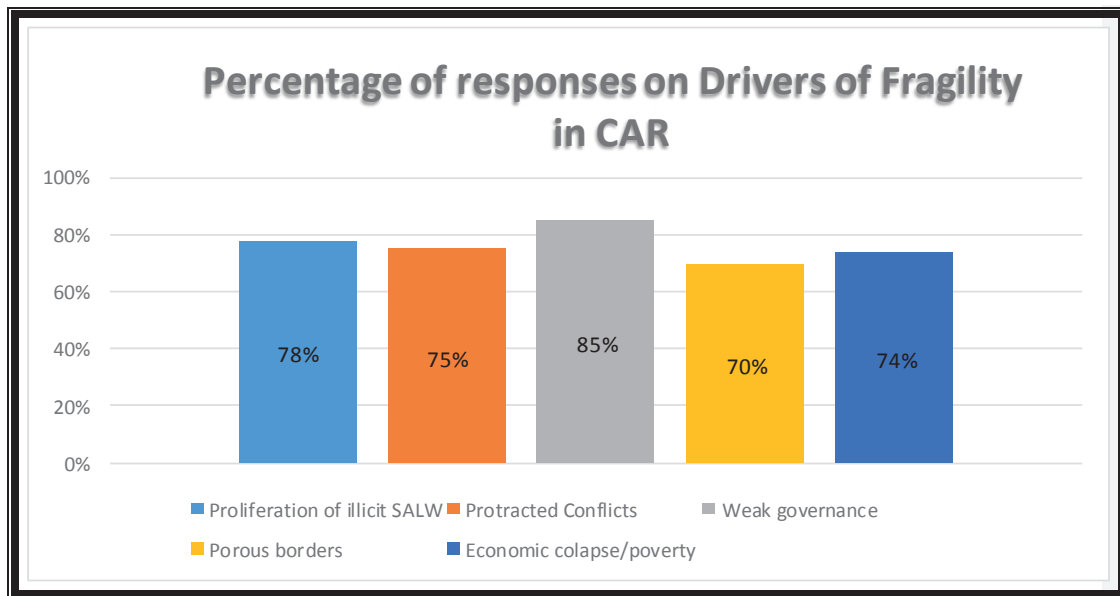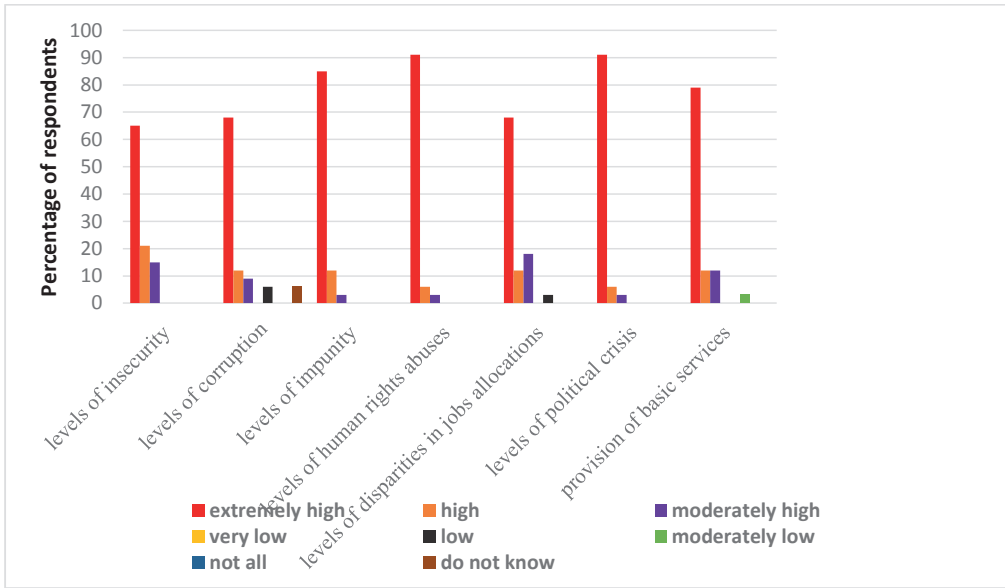

Source: Research Findings

4.2.1   Weak governance

One of the indicators of good governance is the holding of regular, free, and fair elections. Democratic governance also calls for transparency and accountability in the management of resources and decision-making. The state of weak governance in CAR was highlighted by 85% of the responses as the leading driver of fragility situations in the country. The respondents were disappointed by the fact that by November 2015, CAR had never held peaceful and fair elections over a long period. They depicted a number of past leaders of the country as authoritarian presidents and described their regimes as undemocratic. Notable examples mentioned were Bokassa Kolingba, Patasse, and Bozize and even more recently in 2013 Michel Djotodia's imposition as President of CAR. In an interview with an aid worker with Save the Children, who has worked in Bambari, as well as with UN peace keeping respondents, there were assertions that the transitional government under the former President Catherine Samba was accused of corruption, irregular allocation of resources, and high-handedness in dispensing justice.[40] Respondents rated the country's governance based on selected variables such as insecurity, levels of corruption, human rights abuse, and impunity as shown in the figure below:

[40]FGD with community leaders at PK10(PK12 is a suburb of Bangui 12km from the city centre)

Figure 5: Respondents rating of CAR's performance in selected governance areas

Source: Research Findings

A total of 90% of the respondents held the view that the levels of political crisis in the country was high given the ineffective political transition that the country was going through. The political crisis was also attributed to feelings of economic and political deprivation and exclusion of a larger section of CAR's population. The majority of the respondents unanimously lamented CAR's, transitional government's incapacity to restrain activities of armed groups due to the divisions in the government. This is a clear indication of weak leadership, which CAR has witnessed since 2003. With regard to corruption, 68% of the respondents perceived that the levels of corruption were very high. Further probing of respondents indicated that citizens seeking public services mainly experienced corruption in government offices. Police and military were also said to extort money from the citizens.

Figure 5 (above) indicates that a high percentage of respondents felt that there were extremely high levels of insecurity (65%) and human rights abuses at (91%). This was mainly attributed to the activities of rebel groups and unlawful activities of some government security personnel.

Further probing of the respondents indicated that successive governments have ensured massive changes or over-haul of the constitution, which was often aimed at serving the interests of the incumbent, such as disbanding previous militaries, recruiting fresh soldiers or seeking external military support. This, according to the study findings, has meant that CAR has always lacked a unified army. A Muslim leader explained that Seleka group led by Djotodia claimed that the former president's (Bozize) army and government officials were from his ethnic group. He however, did not maintain them throughout his regime. Instead, he engaged the South African army between 2007 and 2013. Bozize's relationship with the Chad soldiers is said to have broken down when they accused him of not honouring his commitments, thus leading to divisions among the Chadian soldiers.

4.2.2   Proliferation of illicit SALW:

The proliferation of illicit SALW was mentioned as the second fragility situations driver in CAR (78%). The participants were asked to estimate the number of illicit SALW in CAR. Figure 6 (below) presents the estimated number of illegal arms in the hands of civilians, according to the respondents.

Figure 6: Estimated number of SALW in the hands of civilians
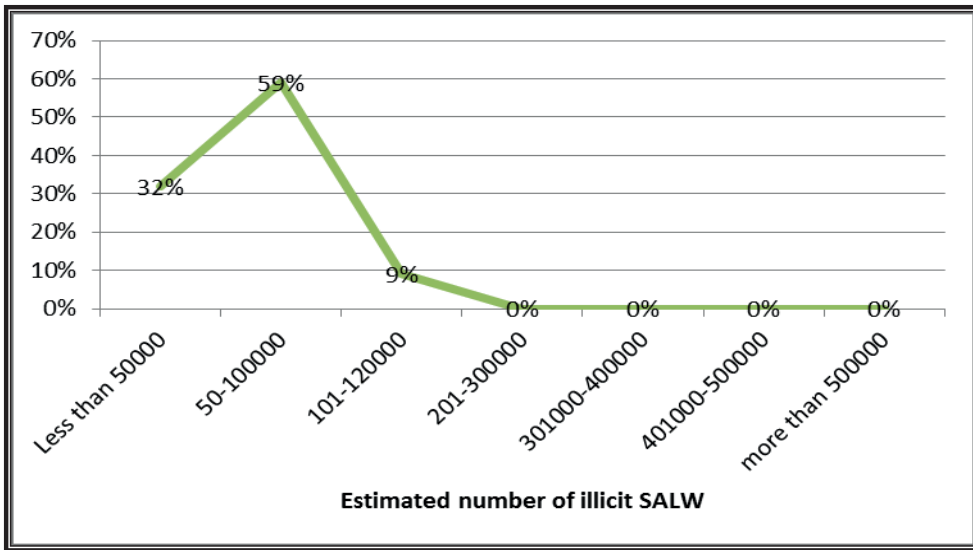
Source: Research Findings

As shown in Figure 6 above, a majority of respondents, 59% estimated the number of SALW in the hands of civilians as 50,000-100,000, while 32% at less than 50,000, and 9% at between 101,000 to 120,000.

The presence of illicit SALW has fuelled armed conflicts, armed crimes and disrupted the delivery of social services in many parts of the country hence contributing to fragility situations.
Respondents cited several actors in the proliferation of illicit SALW in CAR. This is demonstrated in figure 7 (below):

Figure 7: Those most responsible flows of illicit SALW
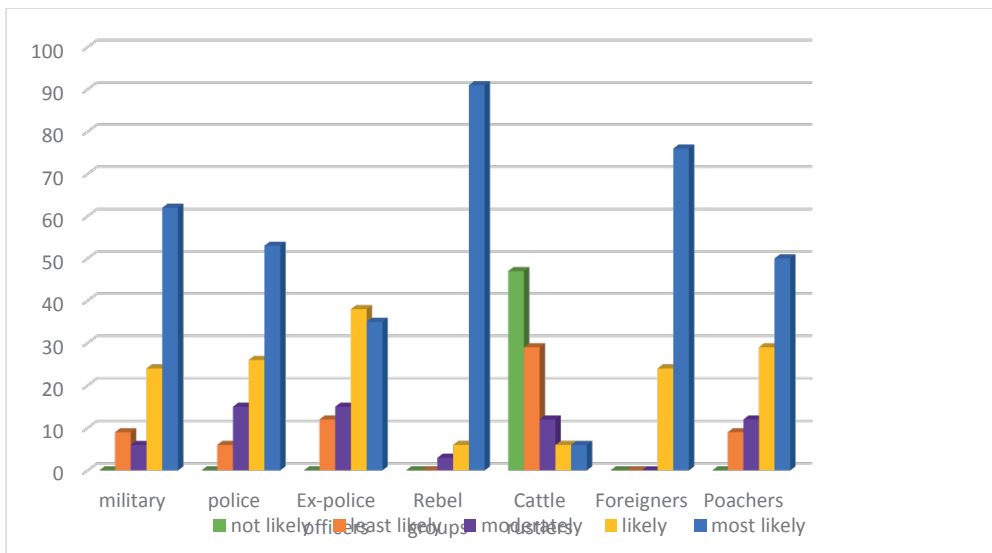
Source: Research Findings

Of the respondents interviewed, 90% were expressed that rebel groups were responsible for the flow of illicit SALW. Armed rebel groups have increased exponentially in CAR after 2013. This is corroborated with the findings of Herbert, Nathalia

and Marielle who established that in 2010, the rebel groups were estimated at 10,300 people: 6000 for APRD (ArméePopulaire pour la Restauration de la République et la Démocratie), 2,181 for Union of Democratic Forces for Unity, and between 2,000-2,500 for other smaller groups.[41]

Foreigners were also implicated in the flow of illicit SALW by 76% of the respondents to be among the distributors of illicit SALW, as shown in Figure 7 above. CAR's military was also implicated in the increased levels of illicit SALW by 60% of the respondents. Other sources include the police (51%), poachers at 49%, ex-police officers (32%) and cattle rustlers (7%) of the respondents. In reference to the border situation, respondents stated that there was no border entry point into CAR that is strictly guarded, hence, crossing into the country is not a hurdle.

SALW are sold cheaply on the black market and aare readily available for purchase. This may thus explain the increased possession and use of illicit SALW. In this regard, a total 59% of the respondents noted illicit SALW, specifically grenades, were as cheap as bread and that they were easily available in public spaces. The findings underline the enormity of the illicit SALW situation in CAR. The informants were categorical that the AK47 is the most used weapon.

CAR has been characterised by militarized changeover of regimes. It was thus reported by 63% of the respondents, that this has prompted illicit SALW proliferation, and high levels of insecurity. This is due to a tradition in CAR of changing governments with bullets in coup d'états rather than by ballots, a factor that has contributed to high levels of impunity. A respondent from the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission was emphatic that the legacy of coups in which illicit SALW play a central role has been a common phenomenon in CAR. Equally, the rapid change over of the composition of the army and government officials after a coup d'état often rendered the country more fragile given the potential for retaliation by ex-military and police.

4.2.3   Protracted conflicts:

In a focus group, discussion with community leaders and interviews with the UN and religious leaders respondents identified protracted conflicts as yet another driver of fragility situations. This was supported by 75% of the respondents. The ethnic militias, rebels and criminal elements have catalysed conflicts in the country. For decades, CAR has had a series of conflicts associated with disgruntled leaders, competition over management and control of natural resources, weak security systems and marginalization of the majority of the population.

In an interview with an academician from the University of Boganda, a respondent explained that the cycle of violence, which has rocked CAR, was also associated with the bipartisan and disorganized nature of disarmament process. He reiterated that the Anti-balaka leaders in particular lamented that they are often targeted for disarmament while the Seleka in PK5 are rarely mobilized for the disarmament exercises. An NGO worker with a Humanitarian Organization added that the government tends to blame this on inadequate security personnel and lack of funds.[42]

4.2.4   Porous borders and instability in neighbouring states

In all interviews and returned questionnaires, respondents were emphatic that the porous borders have largely contributed to fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW as noted by 70% of the respondents. CAR is bordered by countries that have been riddled with conflict. These countries include Sudan, Republic of Congo, Cameroon, South Sudan, DRC and Chad. Armed conflicts in these countries have often spilled over to CAR. In addition, refugees and warlords from these war-torn countries have often entered CAR with arms, which they use for their own protection or as merchandise for sale.

Notably, a Christian religious leader in Bangui reported that Chadian refugees consisted of army men from the ousted Chadian leader Hussein Abre, who brought with them arms and settled at PK5. Likewise, refugees from DRC and South Sudan; and immigrants from Nigeria and Cameroon have continued to trickle into CAR bringing with them illicit SALW. In Birao, the border between CAR and Sudan, refugees returning to CAR from Sudan were suspected to be transporting arms after the civil war. The warlord Baba Lade from Chad used to control the border between CAR and Cameroon where arms diffusion was said to be facilitated by the porosity of the unmanned border.

4.2.5   Economic collapse and widespread poverty

Sustained fragility situations in CAR have equally been attributed to the disabling economic conditions caused by the conflict as highlighted by 74% of the respondents.

[42]Interview with government security officers at the Mpoko International airport refugee camp

Respondents gave various reasons to explain the connection between poverty, illicit SALW proliferation, fragility situations and economic collapse. These include government's failure in the provision of economic rights to its citizens, economic exclusion, unequal development, and mismanagement of public funds. The country lacks basic infrastructure including roads and electricity. Such poor communities are thus easy to recruit into armed militias.

4.3   Impact of illicit SALW and fragility situations on livelihoods and development

Fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW have had negative effects on livelihoods and human development. Respondents cited economic, social, political and regional aspects as the most affected:

4.3.1   Economic impacts

The history of rebellions and conflicts in CAR has created sustained economic crises. The sectors most affected by the proliferation of illicit SALW and fragility situations are agriculture, employment, foreign investment, tourism and industrialization, as shown in Figure 8 (below):

Figure 8: Extent to which selected development sectors are affected by the fragility situations in CAR.
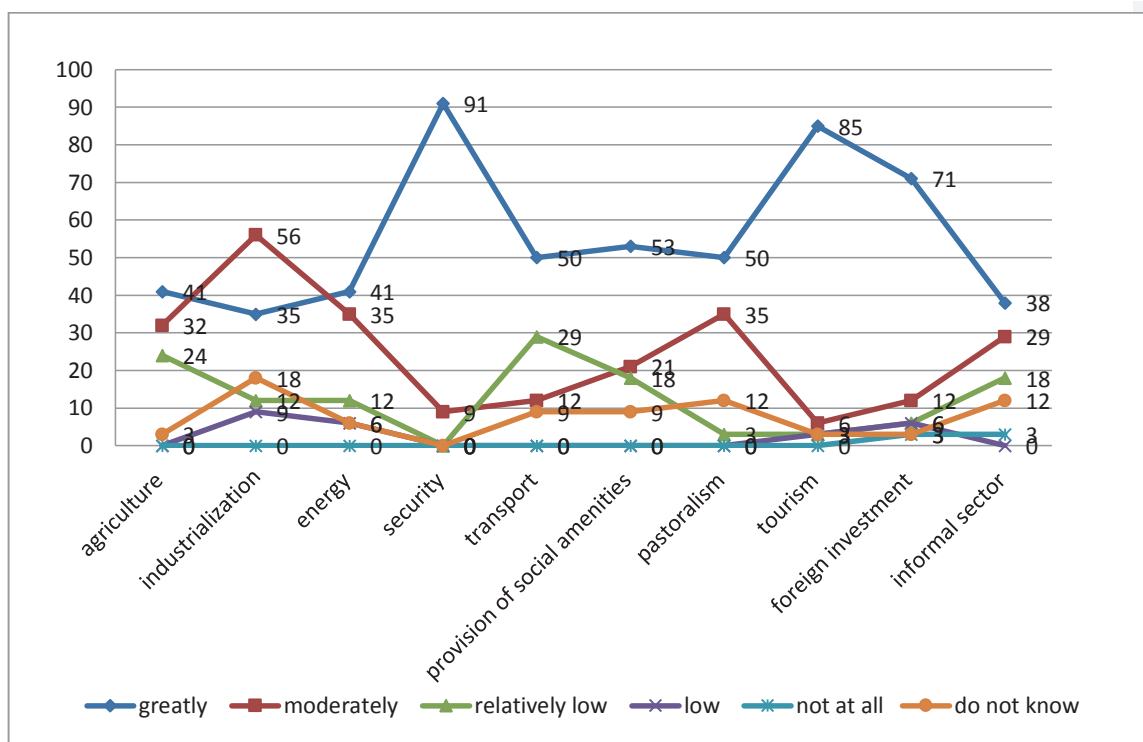
Source: Research Findings

i)   Security
Security stood out as one of the major issues of concern, with the majority (90%) of respondents identifying it as a major economic set back. Due to insecurity and poor governance, foreign investment, as noted by 71% of the respondents, had been greatly affected. Similarly, the transportation network was

noted by 53% of the respondents as being negatively affected by the conflict. On further probing, respondents pointed out that while they were concerned about the poor state of some of the roads, their main worry was the insecurity evidenced by roadblocks, extortions and killings along the main roads.

ii) Agriculture

Agriculture is the backbone of CAR's economy with more than three quarters of the population relying on subsistence farming. However, due to increased insecurity, 41% of the respondents, were of the view that agriculture had been negatively impacted. This was attributed to displacement of farmers who left their farms unattended. Respondents equally noted that during the 2015 crisis, some farmers were attacked by armed groups who demanded for farm produce or/ and money. Respondents from both the NGO and community leaders sectors noted that instead of farming, some armed youth opted to extort money from farmers and illegally taxed motorbike riders and vehicles transporting goods from Bangui to Douala. The research also established that communities around the Dzanga-Sangha national park could not continue with farming because armed rebels who were also poachers harassed and extorted money from them. Interviewees lamented that approximately 800,000 arable hectares are in use for export cash crops out of 15 million hectares of possible arable lands.

iii) Employment

The study also established that persons, who had employment in the extractive industry, mainly mining and logging, have suffered massive loss of income from the conflict. Due to heightened insecurity, extractive industries have closed down as investors fled. Of these 71%, as shown in Figure 8 (above), noted that many foreign companies had closed down because of insecurity in the capital and its environs. The majority of respondents (85%)

were emphatic that the tourism sector had been negatively impacted by insecurity. This meant that hardly any tourists were visiting the country and hence the employment within the tourism sectors had been adversely affected. This has had serious ramifications for the youth in particular. With increased insecurity levels and fear of armed groups, CAR has increasingly lost large-scale investments in the mining, agricultural and tourism sectors. This has had direct implications on employment, as few opportunities are available in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. Youth in CAR were emphatic that unemployment levels have risen significantly thus forcing some of them to engage in criminal activities. The cycle of violence is thus informed by unemployment and feelings of hopelessness.

iv) Economic Exclusion:

Successive governments were accused by some of the respondents of neglecting rural CAR and favouring Bangui in resources allocation. On further probing, respondents (56%) pointed out that the perceived economic exclusion was at the heart of the political crisis that hit CAR from 2013.

4.3.2 Social impacts

Fragility situations and the proliferation of illicit SALW have strained both the quality and the quantity of services provided by CAR's government. The impacts of these on infrastructure, education, health and general life expectancy have been immense as shown in the figure below:

Figure 9: Impact of fragility situations and illicit SALW proliferation on selected aspects of livelihoods
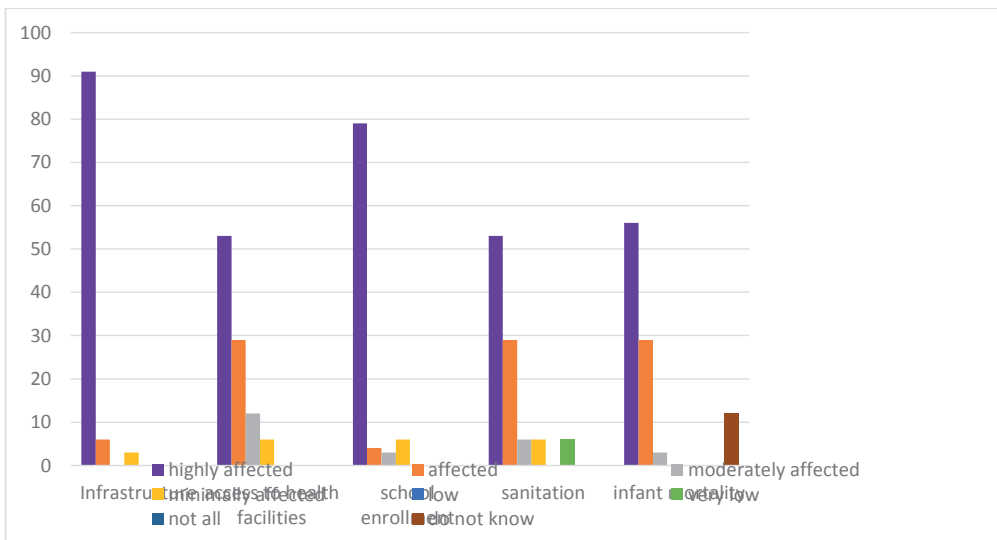
i) Declining health provision and accessibility

As shown in Figure 9 above, the protracted conflict has impacted negatively on CAR's population. Child deaths were a concern to 56% of respondents. Health workers and NGOs providing health services in CAR, reported that infant mortality is high mainly due to nutrition-related diseases including Kwashiorkor and Marasmus. One of the aid workers from Save the Children noted that when there is conflict, food is insufficient and what is available is not of good quality. This causes malnutrition and many children die because caregivers do not work when people are fighting.

International and local health workers added that with low food production, nutrition deficiency related deaths are also on the rise. In addition, poor sanitation has seen increased cases of malaria, since local communities are unwilling to clear bushes, which are breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Education

Referring to education, 79% of respondents, as shown in Figure 9 (above), reported that school enrolment and retention have gone down since the 2013 crisis. They added that there is increasedunattendance of school days and destruction of classrooms due to conflict, which leads to further breakdown of the education system. The respondents also explained that most teachers in the country are poorly remunerated and work in insecure environments. Consequently, after the 2013 conflict many abandoned their places of work due to widespread insecurity. This concern was also expressed by workers in a UN mission who lamented that the education levels have gone down and that illiteracy levels are very high because many children drop out of school to participate in the conflict.

The conflicts in CAR were also blamed for brain drain. UN workers and community leaders lamented that those who were educated and skilled had left the country in search of better jobs and all they do is to simply send remittances home. This had led to a skills gap in CAR.

ii) Infrastructure

As shown in Figure 9 (above), 91% of respondents reported infrastructure as the most affected sector of development.

These respondents explained that due to constant roadblocks and burning of tyres along such roads by conflicting armed rebel groups, the conditions of the roads have deteriorated. For example, the main road from Bangui to villages in the North had been destroyed by youths who were constantly burning and barricading it to prevent movement of people and goods.

4.3.3 Impact on governance

The majority of the respondents (91%) were convinced that fragility situations and increased proliferation of illicit SALW have affected political stability in CAR. A respondent from the African Union working on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes noted that political stability cannot be achieved without disarming both the civilians and armed rebel groups. He further observed that multiple armed groups as well as lack of political leadership had tremendously weakened the governance structures of the state .

Respondents (46%) lamented the lack of inclusiveness of the country's consecutive governments noting that political elites dish out positions to their cronies instead of relying on merit and political diversity for government jobs. Respondents also complained about flawed electoral process. Many of CAR's presidents have come or sustained their hold into power by bullets not through the ballot. The majority of the respondents (87%) noted that the electoral system was not free and fair. This is characterised by instances of handpicking of candidates and rampant harassment of opponents in previous elections. Moreover, only aspirants with financial means could become candidates for elections. Election credibility has thus become a major issue of concern among the respondents. A Muslim community leader in Bangui, for instance, lamented that while he would have wished to represent his people of Boeing he has no means and cannot be nominated by any party for his lack of campaign finances.

Child and youth abduction: Women traders in Bangui noted that their children had either been abducted or lured into armed groups.

[43]IFRC and Red Crescent Societies, 2014. "Children Hardest Hit by ongoing violence in the Central African Republic." Available at: http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/africa/central-african-republic/one-year-on-children-hardest-hit-by-violence-in-central-african-republic--67729/ (Accessed on 2/2/2016)

[44]UNICEF, 2014. "Children in Crisis in CAR: A four month progress report." Available at: http://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_CAR_4_MONTH_REPORT_EN(2).pdf (Accessed on 3/02/2016)

In the 2013 conflict, children bore the brunt of the violence with many displaced, orphaned, or arriving in camps unaccompanied.[43] In 2014, UNICEF released a damning report which indicated that up to 6,000 children had been recruited into armed groups daily.[44]

Sexual abuse and violence: Women who participated in the study reported cases of rape and sexual abuse attributed to soldiers, combatants, peacekeepers and militia groups who use weapons to subdue their victims. In Bangui, women and young girls reported that peacekeepers and armed group members had raped them as they fled the violence at night. Health workers interviewed reported that sexual violence in CAR, has led to increased cases of sexually transmitted diseases and injuries. This is due to increase in high-risk sexual behaviour, which has been associated with the conflict since 2013. The corresponding changes in the sexual relations of men and women, from both armed forces and civilian population, have also resulted in higher incidences of HIV and AIDS transmission. Acts of sexual and gender-based violence were also widely reported by different categories of respondents. In this regard, the study established that women and girls suffered sexual and gender-based violence in the hands of armed groups.

4.4   Existing Interventions

There have been multi-dimensional efforts to address fragility situations and the proliferation of illicit SALW in CAR. The efforts have been geared towards peace building, political stabilization, curbing illicit SALW proliferation and poverty reduction. These can broadly be categorized into national, regional and international interventions.

a) National interventions
To mitigate conflicts, CAR has signed various peace agreements. For instance, the Republican Pact for Peace was signed by the armed groups and transitional government in May 2015 during the Bangui Forum to initiate the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). According to the National Focal Point Co-ordinator on SALW, the DDR process is yet to begin and that the government had received 10 million Euros for the pre-DDR process. Following the February 2016 elections, efforts are underway to reconstitute operational government institutions.

b) Regional Efforts
The African Union led International Support Mission to the CAR (MISCA) was deployed in December 2013 to quell the spiralling violence. The swift deployments of MISCA proved critical support to saving the lives of civilians and preventing an even greater tragedy in the Central African Republic.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), a sub-regional intergovernmental body, has played a front-line role in responding to the crisis in CAR, mediating peace accords, deploying troops under Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa CEMAC arrangement, and influencing the selection of CAR's political leadership. ECCAS also led a political initiative to create a Transitional National Council (TNC) that was charged with drafting a new constitution and preparing for the recently concluded elections.

CAR is a member state of the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA). In a bid to tackle the SALW proliferation in the country, RECSA Secretariat in 2012 conducted a sensitization workshop on practical disarmament and mainstreaming of gender in SALW interventions. RECSA also conducted a workshop on arms marking and donated one arms marking machine and its accessories to CAR for it to initiate the arms marking process.

Under the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) project to RECSA, the creation of a National Institution responsible for SALW management and control was identified as a priority in CAR. In this regard, RECSA Secretariat has since organized a senior Government Officials sensitization workshop, on the need to establish the aforesaid institution. Following the sensitization workshop, a draft decree on the establishment of the institution was developed and submitted to the relevant authority for action

c) International efforts
UN embargo and sanctions on arms were imposed under UN Security council resolution (2134) 2014. Even though the transitional President Catherine Samba-Panza appealed for exceptions, the embargo is a step in the right direction of reducing SALW. The Security Council also established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) by its resolution 2149 (2014). The Council decided that the mandate of MINUSCA should initially focus

on the protection of civilians and support for the implementation of the transition process, including efforts in favour of the extension of State authority and preservation of territorial integrity. The mission also facilitates the immediate, full, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance. It was also to promote and protect human rights as well as support for national and international justice and the rule of law.

The European Union (EU) is the country's main development partner and the main provider of humanitarian assistance. It has committed more than €360 million of new funding to respond to the crisis in CAR since it started in 2013 and intervenes in the following fields: Security, Humanitarian assistance, Resilience and sustainable recovery. Together with the AfDB, they have financed programs aimed at building resilience amongst the populations. Such programs include infrastructural development, poverty reduction strategies, water supply projects, resource mobilization efforts and provision of budget support.

Humanitarian interventions have cushioned the country from bearing the full wrath of the fragility situations. There are many UN, inter-governmental and non-government organizations assisting the most vulnerable members of the country such as children, women and wounded victims of armed violence. For example, UNHCR takes care of internally displaced persons; the International Rescue Committee (IRC) provides livelihood opportunities through food distribution, farming and human rights education. UNICEF has focused on assisting children and their mothers who have been most affected by the conflict

A number of organizations have come forward to raise awareness on the cases of the human rights abuse in the CAR with the suggestions on how to address the crisis. Such include United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG),Human Rights Watch (HRW), UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, among others.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

Even though the above interventions have been undertaken, they have not been effective enough in addressing the fragility situations in CAR; therefore, the study offers the following recommendations in building resilience:

a) **Strengthening of governance institution:** to effectively address fragility in CAR the establishment of effective governance institutions is critical for policy stability. The lack of effective coordination and information sharing between the various government departments and agencies that have a role to play in building resilience is often a significant barrier in tackling fragility situations. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the capacity of various governance institutions for them to implement their mandates.

b) **Address proliferation of illicit SALW:** The government should finalize the establishment of a national institution responsible for small arms and light weapons management and control and support it with appropriate budget and staff. The government should also commence the drafting of legislation dealing with SALW to help deal with proliferation and possession of SALW.

c) **Security sector reforms:** the long history of armed conflicts in CAR coupled with security sector institutional dilapidation calls for comprehensive security sector reforms. This should involve establishment of appropriate security sector management policies, and laws, recruitment of sufficient law enforcement personnel, training and provision of appropriate equipment. The role of development partners is critical in providing the needed resources and integration of international and regional standards.

d) **Sensitization and civilian disarmaments:** the many years of internal conflicts in CAR has left the population heavily armed. To address this, it is imperative to develop and implement long term behaviour and attitude change programs, to dissuade the population from the gun culture. **Post conflict reconstruction: the many** years of conflict has left the socio-economic sector of CAR shuttered. Majority of the people are poor, illiterate and cannot access the basic social services. The collapsed economy which has resulted in increased unemployment has led to the increase of armed **violence a.** It is therefore necessary to establish alternative livelihood through heavy investment in the socio-economic sectors of the country.

e) **Regional cooperation:** there is need for a concerted effort and political will among the regional and international actors for a lasting solution in CAR.

CONCLUSION.

The study established a strong nexus between fragility situations and proliferation of illicit SALW in CAR. These situations are a result of many interlocking factors, including weak governance, poverty, multiple armed groups, and protracted conflicts among others. The impact of fragility situations is far-reaching in terms of effects on people's livelihoods and overall development of the country. Insecurity has affected several sectors leading to high levels of poverty in the country.

The historical fragility situations in CAR can largely be attributed to weak governance institutions, protracted conflicts and proliferation of illicit SALW - among others. These have subsequently weakened the government's authority, capacity and legitimacy. This is demonstrated by existence of ungoverned spaces within the CAR territory and the dependence on peacekeeping forces. This has offered a fertile ground for existence and breeding of armed groups and continued proliferation of illicit SALW, further undermining the authority, capacity and legitimacy of the existing government and society resilience to socio-economic shocks.

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