GENEVA DECLARATION

Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction

A Challenge for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

BACKGROUND PAPER

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The *Geneva Declaration*, endorsed by more than 90 states,commits signatories to supporting 'initiatives to prevent and reduce human, social and economic costs of armed violence, to assess risks and vulnerabilities, to evaluate the effectiveness of armed violence reduction programmes, and to disseminate knowledge of best practices'. The Declaration calls upon states to achieve demonstrable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and improvements in human security and development by 2015. Core group members of the *Geneva Declaration* include Brazil, Guatemala, Finland, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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Abbreviations and acronyms

DDR	disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
GDP	gross domestic product
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFI	international financial institution
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NCPS	National Council for Public Security
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD–DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
PCNA	post-conflict needs assessment
PPDI	Pastoral Peace and Development Initiative
PREVIVA	Programme for Prevention of Violence in the Medellín Metropolitan Area
PRSP	poverty reduction strategy paper
SGPVP	Small Grants Programme for Violence Prevention
SSR	security sector reform
SWV	'Society without Violence'
UNDAF	UN development assistance framework
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UN-HABITAT	UN Human Settlements Programme
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
USD	US dollar
WHO	World Health Organization

I. Summary

More than 500,000 people die violently every year, most of them in the developing world, and the vast majority as a result of small arms and light weapons.

Poorer countries are less safe than rich ones. Most of the world's current armed conflicts are raging in the global South, and more than one-third of all countries mired in poverty have experienced war since the late 1990s. The same patterns hold true for criminal violence: many poorer countries—and an alarming number of medium-income states—are exposed to high rates of homicide, armed assault, and victimization associated with collective or criminal violence.

The international community has been relatively slow to act on this linkage between armed violence and human development. While it is widely recognized that security is necessary for development, and that underdevelopment can lead to insecurity, there is little analysis of how improved security can enhance human development. The anecdotal experience is clear: armed violence disrupts markets; displaces populations; destroys schools, clinics, and roads; and scars families, communities, and societies. More than 500,000 people die violently every year, most of them in the developing world, and the vast majority as a result of small arms and light weapons. And high levels of armed violence undermine aid effectiveness.

This background paper is intended to assist policy-makers and practitioners to better understand the relevance of armed violence prevention and reduction to their daily work. It also highlights the efforts of an important multilateral initiative designed to help reduce the global burden of armed violence around the world. The *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development* adopts a three-track approach to achieving measurable reductions in armed violence by 2015. A core group of 12 countries are leading the development of concrete measures concerning (1) advocacy, dissemination, and coordination; (2) mapping and monitoring; and (3) practical programming.

Many armed violence reduction interventions continue to focus at the national level, yet violence is often concentrated in particular regions or among specific groups.

The paper also signals a number of ways to engage with the issue of armed violence, especially in the development sector, and offers recommendations to advance the agenda. It focuses on (i) defining armed violence; (ii) reviewing the different contexts of armed violence; (iii) considering the state of research on linkages between armed violence and development; (iii) international responses; (iv) policy and programming gaps; (v) the function of the *Geneva Declaration* and its measuring and programming components; and (vi) recommendations. In this way, the paper offers a template for concerted action.

Currently, there is no centralized community of expertise or common language to deal with the programming of armed violence prevention and reduction. Armed violence reduction has mainly focused either on conflict prevention or on crime prevention and reduction programming, rather than adopting a holistic focus on the instruments, agents, and institutions of armed violence. Many armed violence reduction interventions continue to focus at the national level, yet violence is often concentrated in particular regions or among specific groups, and effective programmes are often localized and targeted.

Concerted efforts are thus needed to strengthen coordination and partnerships among a diverse array of institutions. Ensuring that development agencies are equipped with the tools to promote practical violence prevention and reduction programmes is also a crucial challenge that, if met, can enhance human development prospects. As this background paper makes clear, there are a range of nascent initiatives for positive engagements on armed violence prevention and reduction, including from multilateral agencies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), bilateral donors, the UN, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and civil society organizations.

II. Defining and understanding armed violence

In some situations, the illegitimate use of force by state actors against the population can have a seriously negative impact on socioeconomic and human development.

Armed violence is widely recognized as a major obstacle to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aid effectiveness. It occurs in war-affected and post-conflict contexts, and as a function of crime and interpersonal competition. Preventing and reducing the burden of armed violence can enhance different aspects of socioeconomic and human development and positively contribute to the security and well-being of citizens.

The complex links between armed violence and underdevelopment—with armed violence undermining development prospects, and underdevelopment and inequality fuelling armed violence—are becoming better recognized by policy-makers and development practitioners.[1] Practical evidence of how and when armed violence undermines development prospects, and of effective strategies to prevent and reduce armed violence, is indispensable in assisting affected societies to meet their MDG targets.

Armed violence entails the use or threatened use of arms to inflict injury or death. It is also highly gendered in its perpetration and victimization patterns: young and adult males are the most frequent perpetrators and direct victims of armed homicide, while women and girls often face the threat of violence (especially in domestic and gender-based violence), and bear a lasting burden as carers and providers. Armed violence can take many forms, ranging from the large-scale violence associated with conflict and war to intercommunal and collective violence, organized criminal and economically motivated violence, political violence by different actors or groups competing for power, sexual and gender-based violence, and interpersonal violence. Traditionally, these types of violence have been

treated separately, as if their underlying causes and dynamics are fundamentally different.

But the changing face of violence over the past three decades, including the advent of economically motivated wars ('warlord conflicts' or 'new wars'), the blurring of the line between political and non-political violence, the rise of transnational criminal gangs, the growth of non-state armed groups, and persistently high levels of violence in some post-conflict situations, highlights the fact that clear distinctions between different forms of violence are practically and analytically impossible. Continuing to treat these different forms of violence separately also hinders a comprehensive strategy for armed violence prevention and reduction, and impedes the development of coherent international and local-level policies.

There is as yet no international consensus on how to define the parameters of armed violence. For the purpose of this background paper, therefore, armed violence can be described as: *the intentional use of illegitimate force (actual or threatened) with arms or explosives against a person, group, community, or state, which undermines people-centred security and/or sustainable development.*

Many multilateral assistance programmes are designed to help build effective and accountable security institutions, as part of the effort to prevent and reduce armed violence.

It is also important to underline that not all uses of force are illegitimate. International norms, and usually also domestic laws, recognize a state's monopoly of the 'legitimate' use of armed force in order to protect and safeguard its citizens, institutions, and core values. But states are also bound by international law and human rights principles, as well as by national laws, to exercise only 'legitimate' force. Excessive or inappropriate uses of force inside or outside state borders can contravene international or domestic laws and principles and can therefore be 'illegitimate'. In some situations, the illegitimate use of force by state actors against the population (when, for example, the police extort the population) can have a seriously negative impact on socioeconomic and human development. Many multilateral assistance programmes are designed to help build effective and accountable security institutions, as part of the effort to prevent and reduce armed violence.

III. The different contexts of armed violence

It is recognized that the states ranking at or near the bottom of the Human Development Index are most often those that have been directly affected by violent conflict.

Armed violence exhibits a number of common political, geographic, and demographic characteristics across different contexts. It is generally concentrated within particular groups in society, and predominantly perpetrated by young men. It is also often geographically concentrated in border regions; in areas where there is widespread trafficking or smuggling of people, drugs, extracted minerals, or other illegal goods; where there are high levels of visible inequality; in urban environments; or where intense competition for scarce resources such as land or water exists.

Armed violence is *not* uniformly spread across society—even in war zones, enclaves of peace and security exist among areas of widespread violence. It is most visible in the inner core and periphery of urban areas, but is not necessarily more prevalent in them—rural violence can be endemic and unnoticed. Even 'localized' armed violence often exhibits a transnational dimension when linked to factors such as the trafficking in resources, narcotics, and arms. Armed violence is also highly gendered in its patterns: young adult males are the most frequent perpetrators and victims of armed homicide, while women and girls are often indirect victims and survivors.

The specific risk factors associated with the onset and persistence of armed violence are becoming increasingly well understood. Sharp macroeconomic shocks, rising levels of income inequality, the expansion of unemployed youth populations, growing demographic youth 'bulges', horizontal inequalities among groups, and persistent political and socio-economic grievances (associated with land distribution, access to political or economic opportunities, and ethnic or religious discrimination) are all related to the outbreak of violent conflicts.[2] Violence against women is also

Iraqi man mourning the death of his family and destruction of his home in fighting in Baghdad, 2003.

specifically associated with asymmetric power relations between men and women, reflected in the lower social and economic status of women in many cultures and societies. Violence against women, including rape, domestic violence, murder, and sexual abuse, is a significant cause of female mortality and a leading cause of female injury (UNIFEM, 2007).

Risk factors associated with the onset of armed violence—all of which represent fundamental development challenges—are compounded by the often-unregulated and easy availability of arms, munitions, and explosives.[3] Traditional conflict-prevention and peace-building interventions, including international peacekeeping operations, arms control and disarmament measures (international, regional, and national), and post-conflict peace-building programmes, while important, are only partly capable of breaking conflict-related cycles of violence.

Recognizing the contexts in which the risks and effects of armed violence are most pressing is central to framing appropriate intervention strategies and development responses. Anecdotal evidence from post-conflict

societies such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Burundi, and Timor–Leste suggests a relationship between conflicts and above-average rates of post-conflict armed violence. Recent evidence from cities in Colombia, Brazil, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Jamaica, and Haiti also reveals how societies affected by criminal violence can experience rates of homicide and economic losses that can be equivalent to those of countries at war.

The degree to which a country or municipality is affected by armed violence shapes the development response. As the level of armed violence increases, the potential scope for development investment declines. In societies highly afflicted by crime, the diversion of individual, commercial, and government resources to police, private security, and military actors represents an opportunity cost and a diminishing potential for investment in development. In war zones, high levels of armed violence and the associated large-scale displacement of populations and destruction of infrastructure and human capital—schools, health clinics, access to basic services—directly jeopardizes development prospects and the achieve-

ment of the MDGs. It is widely recognized that the states ranking at or near the bottom of the Human Development Index are most often those that have been directly affected by violent conflict.

Conflict-related armed violence exacts a major toll on developing societies. In recent years, at least 30,000 and possibly several times more people were fatally wounded with arms in war-affected societies. The human costs of armed conflict extend well beyond these direct deaths: between two and ten times more (depending on the conflict) died from non-violent causes (such as malnutrition, dysentery, or other easily preventable diseases) that were due to the effects of war on populations. The magnitude of these deaths cannot be understated: in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 1999 and 2005, more than three million people died as a result of the large-scale war that raged in the region. Less than ten per cent of them died violently, but they are all victims of armed violence (IRC, 2007).

In Africa alone, a crude but nonetheless useful estimate of the opportunity costs of conflict between 1990 and 2005 is more than USD 300 billion—which represents approximately 15 per cent of Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) and roughly corresponds to the amount of international aid granted by the principal donors during the same period.[4] Conventional conflict-prevention and peace-building mechanisms have proved to be only selectively effective in reducing the burden of conflict in Africa, and the extent to which such interventions contribute to meaningful reductions in armed violence is seldom empirically analysed.

Non-conflict armed violence has produced several times more fatal injuries than war each year—approximately 500,000 deaths in 2004.[5] Armed violence occurring outside of conflict (motivated by political, criminal, or economic factors) may not exhibit analogous 'ripple effects' as does conflict violence—it does not generally lead to excess mortality or indirect deaths. But non-conflict armed violence has indirect effects—when the main provider for a family is killed, the entire family suffers, and the effects of the insecurity associated with high levels of violence are felt throughout a community—from street vendors to health and education providers. The attenuated effects of crime are widely felt: approximately two out of every three people will be victims of crime in a major urban centre in the next five years.[6]

Criminal armed violence—including homicidal interpersonal and gang violence—is not evenly distributed around the world. The most dramatic rates of such violence are found in sub-Saharan Africa and South and Central America, with the lowest reported levels in Western and Central

The city and slum are increasingly important landscapes for armed violence.

Europe and East Asia. Where armed violence reaches near-epidemic levels, as in major cities in El Salvador, Guatemala, South Africa, or Nigeria, it distorts livelihoods, sustains cycles of poverty, and undermines local confidence in state institutions. This loss of confidence can lead households and communities to resort to informal security measures, including self-defence groups, vigilantism, or the recruitment of local gangs and armed groups for protection. These costs have considerable macroeconomic implications. On average, expenditures on law enforcement consume 5 per cent of GDP in developed countries and 10–15 per cent in developing countries, yet it is in developing countries that levels of armed violence are generally highest.[7]

Armed violence is best understood as a sub-national phenomenon, since it is rarely distributed evenly across a country. Instead, it is usually spatially and temporally concentrated in particular regions or areas. The city and slum are increasingly important landscapes for armed violence, because they simultaneously exhibit pressing challenges in an urbanizing world and opportunities for achieving sustainable and well-targeted improvements in safety and security. Many effective armed violence prevention activities are undertaken as partnerships at the municipal level—but also at other levels—and bring together accountable local authorities, police and health services, the research community, and representatives of civil society. These interventions identify and activate local solutions on the basis of grounded evidence and identified stakeholder needs. They articulate clear and realistic objectives, formulate plans in a participatory and consultative fashion, monitor outcomes, and replicate successes from other urban contexts. Similar initiatives could be pursued in non-urban contexts and at other levels of organization (national, sub-national, regional).

IV. Research on the links between armed violence and development

Over and above the substantial contribution of violence as a cause of death and physical injuries, victims of violence are also more vulnerable to a range of mental and physical health problems.

Several attempts have been made to measure and analyse armed violence and its relationship with development. In an effort to better understand the linkages between poverty and armed violence, the Centre for International Cooperation and Security undertook a review of multiple case studies. The Armed Violence and Poverty Initiative identified a range of entry points to strengthen governance and security sector programming in order to minimize the threats presented by arms availability and misuse.[8]

Similarly, in order to coordinate UN activities on armed violence, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the Armed Violence Prevention Programme in 2004. This programme is an interagency initiative designed to promote partnerships and enhance policy on armed violence reduction. At present, UNDP, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), and WHO are undertaking global and national assessments in Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, and Kenya, compiling systematic inventories of armed violence reduction at the country level, and conducting pilot projects.[9]

Even so, many national governments and development donors are still not sufficiently convinced that armed violence directly undermines aid effectiveness. Establishing accurate estimates of the economic burden of armed violence—particularly its impact on economic development and productivity—can go some way towards demonstrating to ministries of finance and national treasuries that addressing risks, enhancing protective factors, and mitigating the effects of armed violence make good financial sense.

Table 4.1
Assessing the burden of armed violence

	Human Costs	Social, economic, and development costs
Direct burden	Death and injury	**Paid** Hospital care/funeral/credit Rehabilitation and re-education treatment programmes Life insurance pay-out **Lost** Lost productivity/income Interrupted commerce Impaired tax collection Capital flight Damage to private property Damage to infrastructure Damage to agriculture
Indirect burden (excess mortality and morbidity)	Death and sickness from treatable disease Death and sickness from malnutrition Death and injury from risk-taking behaviour	**Paid** Care providing (family) Out-patient care Increased policing Incarceration Higher insurance rates Higher commodity prices Legal services **Lost** Lost quality of life Migration/emigration Long-term productivity/income losses Reduced GDP

The burden of armed violence-related deaths is heaviest in low- to middle-income countries. Less than ten per cent of all violence-related deaths occur in high-income countries. Low- and middle-income countries feature a violence mortality rate that is almost two-and-a-half times greater than that for high-income countries. Over and above the substantial contribution of violence as a cause of death and physical injuries, victims of violence are also more vulnerable to a range of mental and physical health problems.

Table 4.1 highlights the way 'direct' and 'indirect' deaths arising from armed violence contribute to underdevelopment. There are fiscal and opportunity costs associated with spent income and lost productivity arising from violent death. But there are also broader and longer-term indirect costs—which are ultimately much higher than the direct costs—due to deteriorating quality of life, income spent on increasing safety, and even forced migration. Armed violence thus directly and immediately inhibits the

Table 4.2
The relationship between armed violence and the MDGs

Millennium Development Goals	Armed violence effects
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Loss of livelihoods, unemployment, displacement, changes in household composition (esp. women-headed households), disruptions in service provision, disruptions of internal trade and markets
Achieve universal primary education	Destruction of schools, disruption of schooling (especially for girls), diversion of state revenues from social expenditures to military/public security
Promote gender equality and empower women	More women-headed households; expanded workloads for women; increases in gender-based violence; recruitment of women and girls into militias and gangs; distinct challenges in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR)/civilian disarmament and security sector reform (SSR)
Reduce child mortality	Destruction and closure of medical facilities; disruption of livelihoods and security; increases in child and infant mortality due to disease, malnutrition (especially for girls), and/or lack of protection; attraction to or pressed service in gangs and militias
Improve maternal health	Destruction and disruption of health infrastructure retards improvements to maternal health and increases infant mortality
Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases	Destruction and disruption of health services and sanitation systems, poor living conditions for the displaced, increase in sexual violence and prostitution, introduction of infected combatants
Ensure environmental sustainability	Accelerated rural to urban migration and growth of slums, destruction of infrastructure for safe drinking water and sanitation, unregulated resource exploitation and deforestation

achievement of MDGs. And unlike the economic burden associated with external deaths from causes such as traffic or other accidents, the indirect costs of armed violence are more corrosive for the economy and society because of their ensuing impacts such as diminished perceived security and psychological distress.

More efforts to establish robust cost-benefit analysis and costing assessments of conflict and criminal armed violence are needed, however. While the majority of reliable studies are undertaken in developed country

contexts, there is widespread recognition that armed violence generates a disproportionately higher economic cost across lower-income groups.

There is also good evidence that the use of arms can significantly increase the overall costs of violence. Firearms inflict more severe and lasting injuries than other weapons and tend to undermine economically productive demographic sectors of the population. The medical costs of treating firearm injury in two pilot studies in Brazil and Colombia were 1.7–2.4 times higher than injuries inflicted by blades. Overall, firearm injuries cost these countries' medical systems a combined USD 100 million per year (in purchasing power parity terms) (Butchart et al., 2008; Small Arms Survey, 2006).

Each non-fatal injury has economic effects that extend well beyond the victim and perpetrator to the material costs for survivors, families and institutions, lost output and productivity, fear and insecurity, burdening of public services, lost investment and tourism, diverted public expenditures (from education to law/justice), and impacts on revenue.

The macroeconomic implications of armed violence have been documented in countries affected by crime and conflict. In Guatemala, the resources allocated to address civilian insecurity in 2005 accounted for more than 7 per cent of GDP and investment was estimated to be 16 per cent below what could otherwise have been expected (UNDP Guatemala, 2006). Multiple country estimates in conflict-affected countries suggest an annual decline of GDP per capita of between 2.2 and 10 per cent. Studies in Jamaica and Haiti suggest that if homicide rates were reduced to the levels in, say, Costa Rica, their growth rates could rise by above 5.4 per cent per year (UNODC and World Bank, 2007).

Regardless of these numbers, it is important to recall that the true costs of armed violence are often incalculable and intangible. They relate to reduced quality of life, pain and suffering, and psychological impacts that affect society as a whole.

V. International responses to armed violence

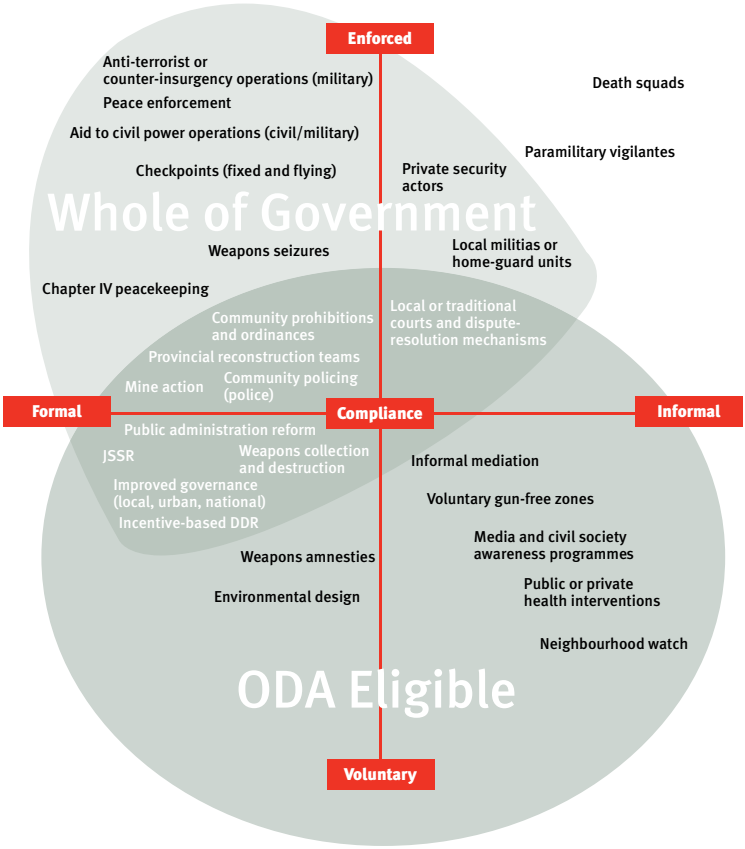
Local governments regularly partner with non-governmental agencies and academic institutions to undertake action research and monitor and prepare programmes on armed violence prevention and reduction.

A growing number of development agencies are promoting activities to prevent and reduce armed violence. The *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development* represents one initiative to help draw attention to and invest in literally thousands of discrete programmes around the world. These range from direct interventions focused on armed urban youth or pastoral populations, and others that are mainstreamed indirectly into sector-specific development activities that address poverty reduction and gender equality (see Figure 5.1). For example, UN agencies are focusing on armed violence reduction in crisis and post-conflict contexts (UNDP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs—OCHA), population health promotion (WHO), urban renewal and environmental design (UN-HABITAT, UNODC), crime-prevention (World Bank, UNODC, IADB) and youth (UN Children's Fund, UN Development Fund for Women).

Typical examples of armed violence prevention and reduction activities include efforts to disarm ex-combatants and civilians, or to reinforce the policing and security sector. DDR, small arms control, and SSR are widely recognized approaches to promoting stability and security and enhancing the accountability of the military and the police in post-conflict environments.[10] Such interventions could be made even more responsive to armed violence prevention and reduction if they explicitly adopted relevant indicators of success such as reductions in real and perceived insecurity.[11]

The promotion of armed violence prevention and reduction activities is also often overseen by networks and coalitions of civil society organizations. Community-driven processes frequently respond to locally identified needs and work in partnership with municipal governments, police, academic institutions, and local neighbourhood watch groups. Local initiatives such as the KwaMashu Youth Organization in South Africa,[12] the Pastoral Peace and Development Initiative (PPDI) in Kenya,[13] or Colombia's Programme for the Prevention of Violence in the Medellín Metropolitan

Figure 5.1
A spectrum of armed violence prevention and reduction initiatives



Notes: JSSR: justice and security sector reform; ODA: overseas development assistance.
Source: OECD–DAC (2008b)

Area (PREVIVA)[14] have supported weapons recovery programmes that seek to change attitudes toward weapons ownership and focus on supporting high-risk groups.

While such diverse interventions vary in quality and impact, lessons are being learned. For example, successful armed violence reduction activities in Latin America are frequently crafted at the city or town level by governments with reasonably good institutional capacity. Local governments regularly partner with non-governmental agencies and academic institutions to undertake action research and monitor and prepare programmes on armed violence prevention and reduction. Coalitions often work to carefully identify the context in which armed violence occurs, locate risk factors on which to base programmes, strengthen already existing protective factors, and support focused interventions with clear benchmarks of success.

The development sector can and should play a more direct role in armed violence prevention and reduction. The World Bank's Small Grants Programme for Violence Prevention (SGPVP) provides an example of an

Child soldiers brandish their weapons in Liberia, January 2003.
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innovative initiative targeting sub-national institutions. Specifically, SGPVP supports municipal-level initiatives that advance community-based approaches to victimization reduction, the prohibition of weapons and control of weapons availability, and sustainable transformations in the attitudes and behaviour of the agents that might potentially use them. A primary goal of SGPVP is to strengthen public and private institutions addressing security and good governance.[15] Similarly, IADB has supported large-scale citizen security and crime prevention interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean since the late 1990s and developed considerable expertise in this regard.[16]

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD–DAC) has also shaped the engagement in armed violence reduction for development. A range of OECD–DAC guidelines, handbooks, and declarations highlight the linkages between preventing conflict and insecurity and development promotion. The *Guidelines of Eligibility for ODA* (overseas development assistance) were expanded in 2005 to include provisions for small arms control and various aspects of armed violence prevention and reduction programming. Other important standards include the *Paris Declaration on*

Aid Effectiveness (2005); the *Guidelines on Helping to Prevent Deadly Conflict* (1997; 2001); and *Preventing Conflict and Building Peace* (2005). Equally, a range of reports include *Security System Reform and Governance* (2005); *Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States* (2006); *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States* (2007); and the *Handbook on SSR* (2007).[17]

The forthcoming OECD–DAC *Guidance on Armed Violence Reduction and Development* (2008b) is a succinct expression of the development community's efforts to consolidate best practice. The *Guidance* highlights the various impacts of armed violence on development in different contexts. In proposing the use of an 'armed violence lens' to understand how instruments, actors, and institutions interrelate, it indicates a number of signposts towards risk reduction and impact mitigation. The *Guidance* also traces out the kinds of international, national, and municipal development frameworks that are available to promote armed violence reduction from above, and diagnostic tools and programming strategies to identify, prevent, and reduce armed violence from below.

Ultimately, a major commitment of multilateral and bilateral donors is to enhance aid effectiveness, promote more coherence among country partners and between departments, and strengthen accountability. An important contribution in this regard is the OECD–DAC *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities* (2008a), which offers strategic support for development practitioners to enhance the effectiveness of their investment in complex environments, drawing as it does on best practice in monitoring and evaluation. In offering principles for setting targets and benchmarks and ways of measuring success, this and other publications support the many activities of international and national actors promoting conflict transformation and resolution and enhancing community resilience with regard to armed violence.

VI. Policy and programming gaps

Establishing effective armed violence prevention and reduction programmes will require concerted efforts to enhance the frameworks for engagement from above and enhanced coordination and partnership among a diverse array of institutions from below.

While there are a growing number of examples of good practice associated with armed violence prevention and reduction, a number of conceptual and practical gaps still confront development practitioners.

Firstly, no centralized community of expertise or common language on armed violence prevention and reduction exists. Instead, approaches and activities are highly dispersed among various sectors such as population and public health promotion, governance and the rule of law, police enforcement, urban planning, conflict prevention, and peace-building. This can lead to confusion and poor coordination when it comes to programming and financing.

There are a number of ways to enhance knowledge and capacities to undertake armed violence reduction programmes. At a minimum, the establishment of common concepts and language and the compiling of empirically tested best practices for practitioners would help to develop a grounded approach to armed violence prevention and reduction.[18] Similarly, providing opportunities to forge professional and multidisciplinary networks and develop pilot projects to help guide policy-makers and practitioners working in disparate development sectors would help promote coherence and coordination.

Secondly, most approaches to armed violence reduction continue to focus narrowly on either conflict or crime prevention rather than adopting a holistic focus on the instruments, agents, and institutions of armed

Urban planners have long recognized the need to understand and respond to the problem of armed violence at the municipal and community levels.

violence across various contexts. In the case of conflict, programming emphasizes 'root causes', 'drivers', and 'triggers', while peace-building interventions focus on economic recovery, good governance, and political reconciliation. In the case of crime, interventions aim to redress structural and proximate risk factors associated with armed violence and discourage and deter perpetrators from engaging in such violence. Interventions tend to target the agents involved in perpetrating violence and taking the instruments out of circulation—but less on strengthening institutions.

A holistic approach would examine all dimensions of armed violence:

- the *instruments* used in perpetrating armed violence (the unregulated availability or supply of weapons);
- the *agents* involved in committing armed violence (sources of people's demand for arms and motivations for their misuse);
- the wider *institutional* environment that either enables or constrains the resort to armed violence; and
- the *people* who are affected or victimized by and/or survive armed violence.

All four factors—instruments, agents, institutions, and people—are interconnected, and considering them as an integrated system can help development planners and practitioners to identify promising entry points for armed violence reduction programming. The development of a comprehensive approach will require greater investment in elaborating robust surveillance and monitoring capacities that capture the dynamics of both conflict and criminal manifestations of armed violence.

Thirdly, many armed violence reduction interventions continue to be focused at the national rather than the transnational or local level. Armed violence is highly dispersed and often generates pockets of insecurity in border areas, urban slums, and isolated or marginal rural zones outside the reach of public security providers. Because of donor preoccupations with building national ownership and institutions, they can fail to address sufficiently the spatial dynamics of armed violence.

Ensuring that development agencies are equipped with the planning and financial tools to deal with preventing and reducing armed violence at

multiple levels will be a crucial challenge facing future programming. As this background paper highlights below, there are a range of concrete precedents in this regard, including those led by the World Bank and its sister entities—IADB, the Asian Development Bank, and the African Development Bank.

Establishing effective armed violence prevention and reduction programmes will require concerted efforts to enhance the frameworks for engagement from above and enhanced coordination and partnership among a diverse array of institutions from below. Achieving this will require that effective and targeted norms and principles be set and monitored by international bodies such as the UN General Assembly.

Regional organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, Western Europe, Africa, the Middle East, South and South-east Asia, and the Asia-Pacific region can also contribute positively to creating a supportive political environment for engaging on potentially sensitive and high-risk thematic priorities.

There are a growing number of international legislative instruments associated with armed violence reduction and small arms control that can be used to help shape dialogue with national partners, and to facilitate coordinated and responsible action (see Table 6.1). In addition to supporting the *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development*, these measures have established important precedents for, among other things, manufacturing controls, regulation of small arms possession, stockpile management and security, transfer controls, marking and record keeping, and tracing.[19] While many commitments are not legally binding, they do offer entry points for situating violence-reduction efforts.

There is an increasingly dense cluster of normative measures to address armed violence reduction at the regional level they are overseen by regional bodies such as the EU, the African Union, ECOWAS and SADC, the OAS, the Pacific Islands Forum, the League of Arab States, and many others (see Table 6.1). The majority of these multilateral mechanisms address different aspects of regulating and controlling arms, ammunition, and landmines. Efforts have been largely inspired by the UN *Programme of Action* dealing with the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, and offer valuable entry points to stemming the diffusion of the instruments of armed violence, as part of the broader range of efforts to reduce armed violence.

National frameworks also offer an important—if underutilized—mechanism for guiding armed violence prevention and reduction programmes. There are at least three frameworks that may be appropriate for practitioners

Table 6.1
Examples of international and regional instruments

Global	Africa	Americas	Asia-Pacific	Middle East	Europe
UN Firearms Protocol (2001)	*ECOWAS*[a] *Moratorium* (1998, 1999)	*OAS*[b] *Convention* (1997)	Pacific Islands Forum (2003)	League of Arab States (Resolution 6447, 2004)	*EU Code of Conduct* (1998, 2003)
UN Programme of Action (2001)[c]	*Bamako Declaration* (2000)	*OAS Model Regulations* (1998)	*Nadi Framework* (2000)	League of Arab States (Resolution 6625, 2006)	*OSCE*[d] *Document* (2000)
Wassenaar Arrangement (2002, 2004)	*SADC*[e] *Firearms Protocol* (2001)	*Antigua Guatemala Declaration* (2006)	*APEC*[f] *Declaration* (2003)		*OECD Guidance on Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction* (expected 2009)
Ottawa Treaty on Landmines (1997)	*Nairobi Protocol* (2004)		ACP–EU[g] (Resolution 2446/98, 1998)		

a Economic Community of West African States
b Organization of American States
c Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
d Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
e Southern African Development Community
f Asia Pacific Economic Community
g African, Caribbean, and Pacific–European Union

thinking about armed violence prevention and reduction. These include poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), the UN development assistance frameworks (UNDAFs), and post-conflict needs assessments (PCNAs).[20] While these three instruments are organized by different actors and have different goals, they are theoretically expected to be aligned and coordinated.

Although international, regional, and national frameworks can reinforce norms and rules to guide armed violence prevention and reduction, effectiveness is inevitably measured by changes in real and perceived violence in affected cities, towns, and villages. Urban planners have long recognized the need to understand and respond to the problem of armed violence at the municipal and community levels. Development practition-

ers have also acknowledged the importance of adopting a community perspective, nurturing community ownership, and monitoring and evaluating in partnership with beneficiaries.

Despite this recognition, there are still few examples of municipal frameworks for armed violence reduction, and fewer still of donor efforts to support them. Donors are still primarily equipped to channel assistance through national authorities and institutions—and resources are often not funnelled down to municipal entities. This presents a bureaucratic constraint to supporting local partners, since aid investments are approved and accounted for through national treasuries and ministries of finance.

But precedents are emerging for bridging the donor-national-municipal divide. The World Bank and IADB have been leaders in this regard. For example, during the 1990s Bogota, Cali, and Medellín each received loans from IADB to finance specific interventions focusing on armed violence reduction. Loans were guaranteed by the national government, but secured, managed, and repaid at the city level. IADB later approved more than USD 150 million in 'citizen security' loans to Uruguay and other countries.

A growing number of municipal actors are also designing and implementing armed violence reduction programmes independently. Governors, mayors, elected councillors, and civil servants, together with public health specialists, criminologists, researchers, and civil society groups are actively advocating and undertaking efforts to promote armed violence reduction from Latin America and the Caribbean to Africa, the Balkans, and Southeast Asia and the Pacific. These tendencies coincide with the reallocation of many security-related functions to local structures.

VII. Taking the initiative: the *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development*

National surveillance and data-gathering capacity is weak in many parts of the world, which means that governments and local officials often do not have adequate information about the particular risk factors and vectors of violence that may be affecting their communities.

The *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development* is a high-level diplomatic initiative to tackle the global burden of armed violence and its negative impact on socioeconomic and human development. It was adopted at the conclusion of a ministerial summit hosted by the government of Switzerland and UNDP on 7 June 2006. Initially including 42 state signatories, and now supported formally by more than 90 states, its headline commitment is *to achieve, by 2015, measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and tangible improvements in human security worldwide*.

Participating states acknowledged that efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence and prospects for sustainable development are closely linked, and agreed in particular to strengthen their efforts to integrate armed violence reduction and conflict prevention programmes into national, regional, and multilateral development frameworks and strategies, as well as into humanitarian assistance, emergency, and crisis management initiatives. Through a process of international and regional consultations, monitoring and mapping, and collaborative programming, implementation of the *Geneva Declaration* will make a global contribution to armed violence prevention and reduction with the specific aim of improving the prospects for sustainable economic and social development.

Table 7.1
Advocacy, dissemination, and coordination initiatives for implementing the *Geneva Declaration*

Major objectives	Activities	Results expected
Build diplomatic support for the *Geneva Declaration* and its principles **Integration of the issue of linking armed violence and development into relevant UN resolutions** **Partnerships among governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations, including international financial institutions (IFIs)**	Lobbying for support for the *Geneva Declaration* and its follow-up activities Development of relevant language for UN draft resolutions on armed violence and development Tabling of a UN General Assembly resolution sponsored by the core group under the lead of Switzerland and co-sponsored by the countries that have adopted the *Geneva Declaration* Development of partnerships that promote the links between armed violence reduction and development	The majority of UN member states support the *Geneva Declaration* and its follow-up activities Donor countries, countries affected by armed violence, civil society organizations, the private sector, international organizations, and IFIs are sensitized to the links between armed violence reduction and development
Regional meetings	Regional Meeting on Armed Violence and Development for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in Guatemala (April 2007) Regional Meeting on Armed Violence and Development for the countries of Africa, in Nairobi, Kenya (October 2007) Regional Meeting on Armed Violence and Development for the countries of Asia, in Bangkok, Thailand (May 2008) Sub-regional Meeting on Armed Violence and Development for the countries of the Middle East, in Amman, Jordan (late 2008) Sub-regional Meeting on Armed Violence and Development for countries in South-Eastern Europe (late 2008)	Adoption of the *Regional Declaration of Guatemala on Armed Violence and Development* and the *Africa Declaration on Armed Violence and Development*, reflecting regional perspectives on the issue Participants who have not yet adopted the *Geneva Declaration* endorse it Non-governmental, regional, and international organizations, including IFIs, participate in and actively support the *Geneva Declaration* process Operational activities for implementing the *Geneva Declaration* are discussed among participants

Table 7.2
Programming initiatives for implementing the *Geneva Declaration*

Major objectives	Activities	Results expected
Identify focus countries in which the *Geneva Declaration* framework can be tested and further developed	Governments and civil society of focus countries design, together with other stakeholders, programmes and projects to implement objectives of the *Geneva Declaration* and related regional declarations. Activities are informed by the assessments made in the focus countries and include mainstreaming, capacity building, and strengthening of institutions	A range of armed violence prevention policies and programmes are developed in focus countries, with coordinated support from donors and international organizations
Mainstream armed violence reduction into national and multilateral development frameworks	Policy dialogue with national partners in designing PRSPs, UNDAFs, etc.	Linkages between armed violence and development are integrated into policy planning in focus countries. Coordination improves among government agencies and between government and civil society Linkages between armed violence prevention/ reduction programmes and development strategies are reflected in bilateral and multilateral development policies

Specifically, the *Geneva Declaration* commits signatories to supporting 'initiatives to prevent and reduce human, social and economic costs of armed violence, to assess risks and vulnerabilities, to evaluate the effectiveness of armed violence reduction programmes, and to disseminate knowledge of best practices' (p. 2).

In order to implement the *Geneva Declaration* commitments and to advance concrete measures, a core group of 13 states coordinated by Switzerland have taken the lead in promoting adoption of the *Declaration* through a series of regional meetings, and developing a Framework for the Implementation of the *Geneva Declaration* that will be presented to a ministerial-level review meeting in September 2008.[21]

Major objectives	Activities	Results expected
Build capacity and awareness in countries affected by armed violence **Strengthen institutions that address armed violence to ensure ownership of programming on armed violence and development**	Capacity-building programmes and projects are implemented in focus countries and inform development strategies of countries affected by armed violence, donor countries, and multilateral organizations, including IFIs	Awareness of the link between armed violence and development is reflected in government policy and development cooperation frameworks Human capacities in managing armed violence reduction programmes are strengthened
Strengthen coordination among donors and international agencies, including IFIs, on armed violence prevention strategies and programmes and their links with development strategies **Encourage countries that have adopted the *Geneva Declaration* to promote armed violence reduction and prevention programming as part of their national and bilateral development strategies**	Regular meetings of donor countries and agencies to exchange experiences and review implementation of armed violence reduction strategies and programmes	Countries engage in cooperative partnerships on armed violence prevention and reduction programming Countries that have adopted the *Geneva Declaration* integrate armed violence reduction and prevention programming into their national and bilateral development strategies

The Framework for Implementation is organized around three clusters: advocacy, dissemination, and coordination; mapping and monitoring; and practical programming. Among the many aspects of implementation, key elements in each basket are:

- increasing the number of countries endorsing the *Geneva Declaration* and identifying approaches to promoting UN engagement such as by introducing a resolution on armed violence and development in the General Assembly;
- developing appropriate indicators, goals, and targets for measuring progress in reducing the global burden of armed violence; and

- promoting the integration of armed violence reduction programmes into national and multilateral development frameworks to foster capacity building and the strengthening of institutions to address armed violence.

- In addition, members of the core group have taken the lead in identifying focus-country partners in which the three clusters of work (advocacy, dissemination, and coordination; mapping and monitoring; and practical programming) can be advanced at the national and local levels, in close collaboration with appropriate government ministries and multilateral agencies. The key elements of the advocacy, dissemination, and coordination cluster are summarized in Table 7.1.

Five countries (Burundi, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kenya, and Papua New Guinea) have agreed to collaborate as focus countries, and several others are discussing the possibility of doing so.[22] In each case, an open-ended dialogue among relevant government ministries and multilateral and bilateral donors is being undertaken, together with efforts to engage civil society and map the contours of armed violence in each national context.

Implementing the *Geneva Declaration* involves a long-term commitment and process. The mobilization of relevant actors and ministries at the national level, the development of collaborative working relationship at the multilateral level, the identification of opportunities for practical programming (and acquiring the necessary resources), and the development of a robust base of information and analysis for evidence-based policy and programming are institutionally and practically challenging tasks.

To date, the balance sheet is positive, but we are only at the beginning of the process. States and multilateral institutions have adhered in growing numbers to the goals of the *Geneva Declaration*, and awareness raising is advancing rapidly. The main elements of a support architecture for information gathering and analysis are being put into place, and appropriate goals and indicators are being identified (discussed in the next section) to lay the foundation for evidence-based policy making.

The most difficult challenge, addressed in the last part of this background paper, is the identification of practical programmes and best practices that can be tailored to different regional and local contexts, and implemented on a wide enough scale to have a demonstrable impact on reducing levels of armed violence worldwide. Table 7.2 presents the main goals and proposed activities under the 'practical programming' work cluster of the *Geneva Declaration*, and it underlines the significance of a broad engage-

Table 7.3
Measuring and mapping initiatives

Major objectives	Activities	Results expected
Define targets and indicators for measuring armed violence and its impact on development	Expert workshops on strategies and indicators for data collection	Expert workshops on strategies and indicators for data collection
Assess the global burden of armed violence	Finalize indicators of armed violence by January 2008	First estimates of the global burden of armed violence are presented to the Review Summit on Armed Violence and Development
Conduct country-level armed violence mappings, including scope and distribution, risks and vulnerabilities, and vectors for violence	Launch pilot mapping exercises in collaboration with local partners on the measurability of different dimensions of armed violence in focus countries	First of a series of country baseline assessments for Guatemala and Burundi
Conduct impact assessments on existing armed violence and development programmes	Gather information on existing monitoring and evaluation of armed violence prevention and reduction programmes	Develop best practices and evidence-based programming and policies for violence prevention and reduction

ment with national and multilateral development actors, many of whom remain unconvinced of the importance of armed violence prevention and reduction work for the achievement of their own programming goals.

Despite the many examples and indicators provided above, there is no systemic assessment of the global burden of armed violence, and available data is often incomplete or incomparable. National surveillance and data-gathering capacity is weak in many parts of the world, which means that governments and local officials often do not have adequate information about the particular risk factors and vectors of violence that may be affecting their communities. In such circumstances, it is difficult or impossible to design evidence-based programmes and policies for armed violence reduction and prevention.

At the global level, one result of this knowledge deficit is a tendency to minimize or underestimate the negative impact of armed violence. Yet the facts and figures offered above—in terms of both the human and the

economic costs of armed violence—make a pressing case for action. One aspect of the implementation of the *Geneva Declaration* is therefore to build an accurate and accessible picture of the global scope, scale, and distribution of armed violence that is useful for policy and programming.

Developing a reliable and comprehensive assessment of armed violence—including risks and entry points to strengthen protective factors—is a long-term process. It involves innovative data-gathering and data-generation methods, multiple institutional partnerships, and geospatial mapping techniques, with a view to enhancing the capacities of governments and civil society to assume control of monitoring and analysis over time. A second aspect (see Table 7.3) is the implementation of a series of country-based mapping and monitoring projects designed to provide national and local stakeholders with better information and to enhance local capacities for ongoing data gathering on armed violence.

VIII. Assessing the global burden of armed violence

Most policy development and practical programming is implemented at the national level, and hence a global overview of armed violence needs to be complemented by a detailed focus on different national situations.

Previous attempts to assess the global burden of violence include WHO's *World Report on Violence and Health* (WHO, 2002), the *Human Security Brief 2007* (Mack, 2008), and regional or international surveys and reports published by such organizations as UNDOC, the World Bank, IADB, and the Global Peace Index. Each has its strengths and weaknesses, but none has yet developed innovative and robust methods for measuring systematically the scope, scale, distribution, and impact of armed violence. Very few generate new data and analysis, and most suffer from methodological weaknesses that limit their utility and relevance for policy making and violence reduction or prevention programming. Nevertheless, these efforts provide an adequate basis on which to build a more robust support architecture for implementing the *Geneva Declaration* and for assessing the global and local burden of armed violence.

The global mapping component of implementation of the *Geneva Declaration* will, over the medium term, aim to provide comprehensive, reliable, and up-to-date data on international trends and patterns of armed violence. It is centred on documenting global and regional patterns (and in subsequent years, longitudinal trends) for specific indicators of armed violence.

The 2008 report on the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* (*Geneva Declaration* Secretariat, 2008) will present data and analysis on:

- an estimate of total direct conflict deaths per year per 100,000 people in conflict-affected states;

- an estimate of the scale of indirect conflict deaths per year (excess mortality) in conflict-affected states;
- an estimate of armed homicide rates per 100,000 people by region and sub-region;[23] and
- an overview of the economic impacts and costs of armed violence, from both narrow (public health and microeconomic) and broad (socioeconomic and developmental) perspectives.

There is currently no reliable cross-national national database that adequately covers all of these indicators, and the challenges to collecting reliable and comparable data are enormous. Developing an initial estimate will require the preparation of a transparent and reliable methodology for filling data gaps, collecting and assessing the reliability and comparability of all available data from multiple (and usually non-compatible) sources, and the elaboration of instruments for cross-national data collection, generation, and comparison. At the centre of this aspect of implementation will be the long-term development of a database on armed violence and human insecurity to improve global, regional, and national information-gathering systems.

Measuring and monitoring work is administered by a core team relying on a decentralized data-harvesting network (including as partners or potential partners WHO, UNODC, UNDP, the World Bank, IADB, the Households in Conflict Network, the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, the London School of Economics, the University of Oxford, the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin), and the University of Pittsburgh). Several discrete indicators are used to develop an assessment of general trends (e.g. direct conflict deaths, indirect conflict deaths, homicidal violence, displacement flows, etc.) and data-collection capacities in first tier (data-rich), second tier (data-moderate), and third tier (data-poor) contexts.

The 2008 report will also present preliminary work and begin gathering cross-national data on:

- forms and patterns of violence against women, many of which are not well captured by existing data-gathering techniques;[24]
- clearance rates for homicides, to assess the effectiveness of criminal justice systems;
- patterns of extra-judicial and state-sponsored armed violence; and
- the distribution of aid worker victimization and its implications for aid effectiveness.

Work in subsequent years will sharpen the global picture of armed violence, enhance our understanding of the associated risk and resilience factors and the relationships among different types of violence, and evaluate the effectiveness of armed violence prevention and reduction programming. In 2009 and 2010 specific efforts will also be undertaken to integrate the work and findings of the report on the global burden of armed violence into the UN *Human Development Report* process, and on other risk assessment and early warning initiatives.

Country-based armed violence mapping

Most policy development and practical programming is implemented at the national level, and hence a global overview of armed violence needs to be complemented by a detailed focus on different national situations. Already in 2008 efforts to implement the *Geneva Declaration* include the launch of two country-based comprehensive armed-violence mapping studies. These studies are meant to supplement existing nationally based data by conducting (depending on the setting) large-scale household victimization surveys, establishing incident reporting and monitoring mechanisms and retrospective surveillance, and performing qualitative analysis of existing data. The first two country studies are taking place in Guatemala and Burundi; subsequent mappings may be launched in Haiti, Jamaica, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor–Leste.

Each country study will highlight key trends, provide an inventory of armed violence activities, and outline entry points for practical violence reduction programming. They will:

- review the scope, scale, and distribution (spatially, longitudinally, demographically, socioeconomically) of armed violence;
- assess specific vectors for violence (e.g. gangs, guns, drugs) and risk factors (interpersonal and community);
- map the interrelationships between different categories of armed violence and human development;
- cost the burden of armed violence (socioeconomic and macroeconomic costs); and
- identify (and ultimately monitor) the effectiveness of armed violence prevention and reduction programmes.

Overall, the goal is to get 'beyond the numbers' of people killed or injured in order to understand better who is using violence, with what means, for what motives, in what situations, and with what effects. Knowing only that 6,000 people a year are killed in Guatemala, for example, or that the homicide rate in the Central America region is 27.7 per 100,000 people (compared to a global average of 7.9) does not provide sufficient information for evidence-based policy making and practical measures to achieve sustained reductions in armed violence.

Country mapping studies will be conducted with local and international partnerships involving a close relationship with Geneva-based researchers. The results of these studies will be widely disseminated to relevant national stakeholders. Where possible, follow-up activities will be undertaken to build capacity and foster institutional development in order to strengthen the ability of local stakeholders to undertake long-term monitoring and violence reduction programmes.

IX. Programming for armed violence prevention and reduction

Many developing countries theoretically 'at peace' also face enormous problems of intense interpersonal, criminal, and gang-related armed violence.

A central goal of armed violence reduction is to contribute to a concrete and visible decline in real and perceived violence in order to enhance the prospects for sustainable human and economic development. Armed violence reduction programmes can be pursued directly through focused interventions that explicitly target the availability of the instruments of violence. Direct armed violence reduction programmes therefore include a combination of activities, including weapons collection activities, weapons in exchange for development projects, reforms to firearm legislation and regulation, training for responsible firearms use, neighbourhood watch initiatives, and others.

Alternatively, interventions can be undertaken indirectly. Indirect programmes can highlight how the risks of armed violence inhibit aid effectiveness, can seek to reinforce protective factors that might reduce the exposure of beneficiaries to armed violence, or can attempt to minimize the effects of armed violence through targeted development assistance. Focusing on institutions, for example, governance programmes directed towards promoting the rule of law can also reinforce customary conflict resolution mechanisms, local security arrangements, and community policing activities to reduce violence and victimization. Focusing on risk factors for victimization, poverty reduction, and community development projects can target areas where such things as market, transport, and water access are undermined by localized conflicts or high levels of criminal victimization. Focusing on individuals at risk of becoming perpetrators of violence, health and education programmes can also target specific demographic sectors of the population—particularly single-parent families

The overriding principle of programming with regard to armed violence is that the 'context' must be adequately assessed and understood before interventions are designed, financed, or implemented.

and/or at-risk young men—to provide specialized services or alternatives to gang or armed group membership.

Programming in armed violence is often limited by difficulties in determining where and how discrete interventions can or should be undertaken. In many cases, armed violence prevention and reduction activities are restricted to strictly 'conflict' and 'post-conflict' contexts, with programmes selected according to a preselected, predetermined toolkit that may not be adapted to the local context. But research demonstrates that conventional labels such as 'conflict', 'post-conflict', and 'crisis' are of little help from an armed violence reduction programming perspective. Describing a society as being 'at war' or 'at peace' may say little about the real and perceived experience or context of armed violence on the ground. Countries emerging from years or decades of war, such as Guatemala, Haiti, Sudan, or the Philippines, exhibit levels of violence that amount to the equivalent of rural and urban warfare. In certain cases, ex-combatants have joined organized criminal networks, while criminals themselves have assumed political roles. In all cases, development suffers as a result: almost half of all countries emerging from conflict experience a relapse into armed violence within five years.[25]

Many developing countries theoretically 'at peace' also face enormous problems of intense interpersonal, criminal, and gang-related armed violence. African, Latin American, and Caribbean countries register the highest levels of armed violence in the world: their regional homicide rates are more than double the global average. In Brazil and South Africa—from Rio de Janeiro to Johannesburg—armed criminality compromises the governments' capacity to provide safety and security, and the poor often suffer the most.[26] In such environments, states may be unable or unwilling to protect their citizens. As such, the overriding principle of programming with regard to armed violence is that the 'context' must be adequately assessed and understood before interventions are designed, financed, or implemented.

In the case of violence against women and other forms of gender-based violence, ensuring that armed violence reduction programmes are responsive to gender concerns requires additional efforts to acquire a good understanding of gendered power relations, including the role of gender in local norms and practices and how these practices transect generations, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and religion.[27]

Brazil

Brazil, a country with almost no record of violent political conflict, has one of the highest rates of armed violence in the world. Firearm victimization increased steadily from the 1970s to 2004, when the first signs of a tapering off became apparent. The firearm death rate grew threefold from 7 to 21 deaths per 100,000 people in the period 1982–2002. Brazil's firearm victimization rate surpasses that of some countries at war.

One of the wealthiest cities in Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, also faces extreme income inequality and extremely high homicide rates.[28] Residents of the spatially segmented slums, or *favelas*, confront social exclusion, stigmatization, and a paucity of state services, with most such areas controlled by heavily armed drug factions made famous in the internationally acclaimed film *City of God*. Young men—mostly between the ages of 14 and 29—are the primary perpetrators and victims of armed violence.

Despite being on its way to reaching important MDG goals, at the municipal level, Rio's *favela* dwellers lag far behind. Fewer than 37 per cent of the residents achieved primary education, further contributing to cycles of exclusion, limited livelihoods other than narco-trafficking, and the appeal of gang membership. A latent culture of machismo reinforces the appeal of gun ownership as a source of power and identity, further contributing to gender-based violence.

A local NGO—Viva Rio—has launched a range of instrument-, agent-, and institution-based armed violence reduction interventions. Adopting an evidence-based approach, it works at the federal, state, municipal, and local levels. It adopts a people-centred approach, focusing on taking guns out of society, enhancing police–community relations, and creating opportunities for dialogue to assist gang members to exit a life of armed violence.

Key lessons from Viva Rio's experience include the importance of adopting a grounded approach to local problems, risk factors, and solutions. Identifying integrated security strategies embedded in existing community structures is critical, as is crafting an integrated approach through innovative media strategies and working with federal and state-level legal institutions, together with the police. Arms collection is possible only after these steps are taken. Finally, Viva Rio also helped to develop achievable indicators and benchmarks of success through establishing data sets for the police to track weapons, and subjective criteria to track progress in armed violence reduction.[29]

El Salvador

More than 15 years after the end of the civil war (1980–91), El Salvador remains one of the most violent countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The national homicide rate has reached epidemic levels, exceeding 55 per 100,000 people in 2006. At least 80 per cent of these direct deaths are committed with firearms. What is more, armed violence is highly geographically concentrated in cities, particularly peri-urban areas exhibiting high rates of social and income inequality. The costs of armed violence are prohibitive, and are estimated to have exceeded 11 per cent of GDP in 2005.

A major contributor to armed violence in El Salvador is youth gangs, or *maras*. As in neighbouring Guatemala and Honduras, gangs literally own the streets. Often operating in collusion with political actors, they charge rent and tax local communities, discouraging local transportation and domestic investment. They also actively foster weapons smuggling, narco-trafficking, and kidnapping. Crack-down operations ('*mano dura*') have so far yielded few concrete results.

In the Rio favela of Vila Cruzeiro, police pursue members of the gang Comando Vermelho (Red Command), May 2007.

In the late 1990s, UNDP and the National Council for Public Security (NCPS) mapped out the scale and burden of armed violence. The NCPS embedded its subsequent armed violence reduction interventions in existing international and regional standards such as the 1999 *Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons* and the 1997 *OAS Model Regulations* for the control of firearms.[30] A coalition—'Society without Violence' (SWV)—was created to advance the issue, and this proved decisive.

The NCPS and SWV generated rapid and demonstrable improvements in security and safety. They encouraged the Ministry of Security to accept changes in firearm legislation and also supported the increase of the age for the legal carrying of firearms from 18 to 21. They supported prohibitions on arms carrying in public spaces such as parks, open squares, and petrol stations. Together with the police and health authorities, they also computerized data collection and analysis for surveillance and expanded the number of actors working on the issue. By the end of 2006 they managed to leverage a decree to provide municipalities with the discretion to reduce arms carrying in order to stop armed violence in their communities.[31]

South Africa–Mozambique

Despite an end to conflict in Mozambique and Angola, and the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa the early 1990s, armed violence escalated in South Africa in particular in the intervening years. In order to prevent criminal violence from rising further still across the region, Operation Rachel was designed more than a decade ago to target arms availability across Southern Africa. Since 1995, the police forces of South Africa and Mozambique have worked together to identify and destroy arms caches still buried in Mozambique following that country's civil war.

The operation's goals were twofold. The first was to prevent weaponry from falling into the hands of smugglers and traffickers who direct them to lucrative underground markets where they are used to perpetrate violent crimes. Secondly, the operation aimed to remove and destroy unstable explosive devices and material from these caches, thereby preventing injury to innocent civilians (women and children) in the vicinity.

Operation Rachel collected and destroyed some 21,600 firearms, 1,610 anti-personnel landmines, and 5.1 million rounds of ammunition in its first decade. In 2006 more than 3,060 small arms and light weapons, 105 missiles, 75,000 firearm magazines, and 300,000 rounds of small arms ammunition were gathered, with over 95 per cent in good working condition. South Africa's 2005 report to the 11th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice stated that 'Operation Rachel has had a positive impact on the stability of South Africa, Mozambique and the Southern African region'.[32]

Operation Rachel's success is attributed in part to a high degree of cooperation and intelligence sharing between states and their police forces and a 'culture' of learning and adaptation that occurred between the Mozambican and South African police forces over successive operations. This translated into consistently well-planned and -executed interventions. Other SADC member states that are strong candidates for similar types of initiatives are Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (given their relatively recent peace processes and the number of arms caches that are presumed to be located in these two countries), as well as Tanzania and Zambia.

X. Conclusions and recommendations

Armed violence prevention and reduction is fundamentally a development issue. Collective and interpersonal violence undermines development programmes, diminishes aid effectiveness, and puts achievement of the MDGs out of reach. Social and economic—or horizontal—inequality, systemic unemployment, demographic youth 'bulges', rapid urbanization, and arms availability all increase the risks and severity of armed violence. When poorly planned or executed, development assistance itself can induce and prolong such violence. Opportunities to prevent and reduce it are frequently overlooked or underfunded.

Diplomats and development actors have a constructive role to play in enhancing international and local efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence. But determining the most effective entry points is a priority. Direct and indirect support to national and municipal actors to enable them to take charge of violence reduction will probably generate the most convincing returns. UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors, and civil society organizations are aware that it is ultimately cities, villages, and rural communities—together with their local support networks—that are often best equipped to address the direct risks of armed violence in the long term.

The international community can support these efforts through the articulation of common goals, support for monitoring and evidence generation, and the fostering of intersectoral partnerships. Armed violence prevention and reduction is a laborious and painstaking task that often requires rebuilding trust in, and the legitimacy of, local institutions. The development community can strengthen the social fabric of communities in a way that reinforces equitable and responsive service delivery to violence-affected groups.

A strategy for harnessing the international community and development assistance to prevent and reduce armed violence must move beyond

Ensuring that interventions are responsive to gender concerns requires a careful understanding of local norms and practices across generational, socio-economic, ethnic, and religious lines.

generic and bureaucratically convenient labels such as conflict, post-conflict, and crime to recognize that armed violence is heterogeneous, geographically concentrated, and temporally dynamic. Existing labels do not adequately explain the recurrent risks contributing to the onset of armed violence or the patterns of resilience in affected communities. A more sophisticated strategy would privilege an 'evidence-first' approach that builds policy and programming on the basis of robust, reliable, and credible data built from the ground up.

This report recommends that international diplomats, development policy-makers, national and municipal authorities, and civil society take armed violence seriously. There are a number of ways that the issue can be advanced on the peace, security, and development agenda. At a minimum, it is vital to do the following:

Enhance awareness of the impacts of armed violence and development and convene high-level processes to advance the issue. This entails widely disseminating existing work and gathering focused data on violence-affected societies. It would also involve the establishment of best practices for armed violence prevention and reduction on the basis of comprehensive assessments of past and ongoing interventions in different contexts. In order to expand political support for this agenda, it is important to maintain the political commitment and momentum behind the implementation of the *Geneva Declaration*.

Invest in national and municipal capacities to conduct national surveillance and monitoring of armed violence—including its demographic, spatial, and temporal distributions. Development agencies and policy-makers must support local governance and capacities to identify, respond to, and monitor armed violence at the community level. Violence-affected municipalities and rural communities often have the least access to development aid that could help them manage, finance, or evaluate armed violence prevention and reduction activities. This is partly because of their weaknesses relative to the central government. A priority for the international aid community, then, is to enhance the governance and capacity of municipalities in order to develop integrated interventions, to 'bargain' with central authorities, and to pursue sustainable interventions.

Support direct and indirect programming interventions to prevent and reduce armed violence. Direct initiatives refer to those programmes primarily concerned with security promotion and controlling the actors and instruments engaged in armed violence.[33] Indirect programmes include tailoring development interventions to target the risks of armed violence from breaking out, or enhancing mechanisms to promote 'resilience' in affected communities.[34] In order to achieve measurable reductions in armed violence, it is important that these programmes target specific high-risk groups, but also ensure adequate attention to survivors of armed violence, including vulnerable populations.

Ensure that gender concerns are adequately represented in armed violence prevention and reduction initiatives. It is clear that young men are the overwhelming perpetrators of armed violence, and also the majority of the direct victims. But too often, women's victimization by armed violence is hidden, difficult to measure reliably, and often kept secret due to shame and threats of further victimization. Ensuring that interventions are responsive to gender concerns requires a careful understanding of local norms and practices across generational, socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious lines. Efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence should mobilize all groups affected by such violence, including in particular women's movements and organizations.

Notes

1 See, for example, contributions by WHO (2002, 2008); Small Arms Survey (2003); Greene and Bourne (2005).

2 See, for example, Small Arms Survey (2007) for a review of the dynamics of armed violence in urban contexts. See also Muggah and Jutersonke (2008).

3 See, for example, Small Arms Survey (2008) for a review of risks and resilience related to armed violence.

4 See, for example, Oxfam-GB, IANSA, and Saferworld (2007).

5 Data from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (unpublished, 2008).

6 Violent crime—including homicide, attempted homicide, assault, harassment, and sexual violence—accounts for approximately 15 per cent of all reported crime.

7 See, for example, IADB (2006b, p. 2).

8 See, for example, ‹http://www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/cics/publications/AVPI/briefing/AVPI_SSR_Briefing_Paper.pdf›.

9 See, for example, UNDP and WHO (2004); UN-HABITAT (2006).

10 See, for example, UNDP (2006) and Small Arms Survey (2005) for a review of DDR and small arms control. Consult OECD–DAC (2007b) for best practice on interventions to promote civilian control over the security sector.

11 See, for example, Muggah (2005).

12 The KwaMashu Youth Organization is an umbrella body made up of different social, religious, and political youth formations. On the basis of robust surveys, it subsequently embarked on a community weapons recovery programme. See Muggah (2008).

13 The PPDI supports community declarations and commitments to violence prevention and reduction, and localized interventions, including targeting pastoral conflicts in Garissa district. Such activities tend to emphasize the importance of building confidence within and between competing communities through shared agent-based interventions, instrument-focused initiatives such as weapons collection in exchange for development, and customary local reconciliation (Muggah, 2008).

14 PREVIVA focuses on preventing armed violence through collaboration between municipal governments and communities. It explicitly draws on a public health approach that (i) uses evidence to designate priorities and monitor results; (ii) focuses on generating high-level political buy-in; and

(iii) ensures careful disbursement of resources. See OECD–DAC (2008b).

15 The World Bank and its sister agencies (IADB, the Asian Development Bank, and the African Development Bank) are constitutionally proscribed from internal political interference. Non-interference is one of three criteria for authorizing a loan to a recipient government. This explains why, when it is involved in reducing armed violence, it (i) invests heavily in combating domestic violence, and (ii) focuses primarily on early childhood and urban design initiatives. See, for example, IADB (1998).

16 See, for example, IADB (2006a).

17 Full publication details for all of these can be found under OECD–DAC in the list of references at the end of this background paper.

18 WHO's Violence and Injury Prevention Programme, for example, is an international platform for publicizing and disseminating best practice on the prevention and reduction of self-directed and interpersonal violence. Similarly, IADB has issued a number of best practice guides on supporting the reduction of criminal violence and victimization.

19 These include, among others, the UN *Programme of Action*; the *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development*; the *UN Protocol on Marking and Tracing*; the Landmine Treaty; various European Union, African Union, Organization of American States, Southern African Development Community, East African Community, and other conventions; and others. See ‹http://www.smallarmsurvey.org› for a review of international and regional measures and corresponding texts.

20 PCNAs are ordinarily led by the World Bank and are designed to facilitate transitional planning at the post-conflict stage. These include as part of their monitoring and evaluation framework a transitional results matrix. Armed violence reduction priorities may find a better fit in the PCNA process, given the proportionately higher weight provided by the World Bank to analysis. In Somalia, however, parallel planning processes around reconciliation and security enhancement were well captured by the PCNA process.

21 Core group members include Brazil, Guatemala, Finland, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. Associated organizations include UNDP, the OECD, and the Small Arms Survey.

22 See, for example, ‹http://www.genevadeclaration.org› for an update.

23 Disaggregated national-level data for all countries will be presented in subsequent years, since data gaps are too large to present reliable estimates for all countries in the first phase.

24 A working group will be created in 2008–09 to explore improved data gathering and analysis on violence against women.

25 See Collier et al. (2003).

26 See Moser and McIlwaine (2001).

27 Development practitioners are aware of the need to reconcile universal women's rights as codified in the *Convention on the Elimination of the Discrimination against Women* with local customs and traditions. In certain violence-affected contexts, they also must account for UN General Assembly Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

28 For a review of the relationships between income inequality and violence, consult Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza (2002).

29 Indicators of success included the degree of public support for gun carrying, the number of arms collected, levels of coercive police intervention, sustainability beyond the project funding cycle, attitudinal changes in key target groups, and changes in perceptions of socioeconomic exclusion.

30 El Salvador also signed the 2005 *SICA Code of Conduct of Central American States on the Transfer of Arms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Material*; the 2003 *PAS CICAD Amendments to the Model Regulations for the Control of Firearms*; the 2001 *Programme of Action*; the 2001 *Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms*; and the 1997 *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines*.

31 No applications have been denied and the cities of San Salvador and Soyapongo maintain consistent prohibitions.

32 Soon to be published by OECD at ‹http://www.oecd.org›.

33 They range from reinforcing stockpile security and weapons for development programmes to the strengthening of international and domestic legislation, rules, and procedures.

34 Activities include early interventions for women-headed households, targeted employment schemes for gang members, mobile health facilities for violence-affected communities, urban renewal and environmental design projects in violence-prone slums, and targeted governance interventions in the policing sector.

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