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In Search of Lasting Security
An Assessment of Armed Violence in Nepal

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ASSESSMENT

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Interdisciplinary Analysts

Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA) is a Kathmandu-based research and consulting organization established in 1996. IDA is founded on the premise that issues of development are best illuminated through an interdisciplinary approach that intermeshes the soft and hard sciences. For the past ten years, IDA has specialized in quantitative approaches—household surveys and public opinion polls have become its forte. Although the initial focus was on surveys of the contemporary political situation, it added issues such as perception of security, small arms, and violence as well as perceptions of Nepal's business climate to its scope of work. IDA seeks to promote public discourse and inform policy-making through rigorous research methods and data collection. For details, see www.ida.com.np.

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List of abbreviations

CPN–M   Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist
IDA   Interdisciplinary Analysts
IED   Improvised explosive device
INSEC   Informal Sector Service Centre
NPR   Nepalese rupee
UCPN–M   Unified Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist
WOREC   Women's Rehabilitation Centre

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Executive summary

Nepal's turbulent transition from civil war to peace—marred by frequent political stalemates and the recent failure of the Constituent Assembly to adopt a new constitution—has raised new questions about the overall security situation in the country.

In response to this call for information, the Small Arms Survey and its Kathmandu-based partner, Interdisciplinary Analysts, introduce *In Search of Lasting Security: An Assessment of Armed Violence in Nepal.* This study presents original research based on a national household survey covering more than 3,000 respondents as well as focus group discussions and key informant interviews carried out in 2011 in Nepal's Hill and Terai regions. In addition, the report draws on a wealth of data collected from official, non-governmental, and international sources throughout 2012.

This *Special Report* reveals that:

- Household survey respondents were positive about developments in the security situation in 2011, with 70 per cent declaring that security had improved in their area compared to the previous year, although they underlined that more could be done. Relatively few respondents had experienced violence themselves, with 4 per cent reporting that they had been victims of crime or violence between 2007 and 2011.
- Nepal's security improvements are clouded by persistent political instability and the recent proliferation of economically motivated crime. Close to half of the survey respondents identified property crime as the type of victimization they were most likely to encounter in 2011, while 2012 reports confirmed that such crime was on the rise.
- Economic factors play a key role in triggering and perpetuating the cycle of violence; in 2011, survey respondents identified poverty and unemployment as chief drivers of criminality.

Map 1 **Nepal's districts**

CHINA
(TIBET)

INDIA

CHINA

INDIA

Kathmandu

DARCHULA
BAJHANG
BAITADI
DADELDHURA
DOTI
ACHHAM
KAILALI
KANCHANPUR
HUMLA
BAJURA
MUGU
KALIKOT
DAILEKH
JUMLA
JAJARKOT
BARDIYA
SURKHET
BANKE
DOLPA
RUKUM
SALYAN
ROLPA
DANG
MUSTANG
MANANG
MYAGDI
BAGLUNG
PARBAT
KASKI
LAMJUNG
GORKHA
PYUTHAN
GULMI
SYANGJA
TANAHU
ARGHAKHACHI
PALPA
KAPILBASTU
RUPANDEHI
NAWALPARASI
CHITWAN
DHADING
NUWAKOT
RASUWA
SINDHUPALCHOK
KATHMANDU
BHAKTAPUR
LALITPUR
KAVREPALANCHOK
MAKAWANPUR
PARSA
BARA
RAUTAHAT
SARLAHI
MAHOTTARI
DHANUSA
SINDHULI
RAMECHHAP
DOLKHA
OKHALDHUNGA
SOLUKHUMBU
SANKHUWASABHA
KHOTANG
BHOJPUR
UDAYAPUR
SAPTARI
SIRAHA
TAPLEJUNG
TERHATHUM
DHANKUTA
SUNSARI
MORANG
PANCHTHAR
ILAM
JHAPA

International
boundary

District
boundary

Hill district

Terai district

National
capital

km

0   100

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- Urban spaces display higher concentrations of insecurity. The percentage of urban residents who spoke of a declining security situation was twice as high as the national average in 2011. This finding is supported by recent reports suggesting a rise in small arms trafficking in 2012.

- While men accounted for the majority of victims of armed violence globally, men and women appeared to be almost equally likely to fall victim to crime or violent acts in Nepal—with women being primary targets in Hill areas, and men in the Terai in 2011. Having a steady source of income or carrying money or valuables increased the likelihood of victimization.

- Although the number of reported cases of violence against women remains small, 2012 data suggests that violence continues to affect women of all ages, from the prenatal phase to childhood and adolescence and into adulthood.

- Survey responses suggest that a large percentage of victims knew their attackers. Almost half of the respondents who reported having been victimized from 2007 to 2011 identified their perpetrators as part of their inner circle. Three-quarters of reported cases of victimization involved more than one attacker.

- Around 7 per cent of respondents asserted that they were aware of at least one armed group in their area in 2011, citing extortion and bomb attacks as their principal modes of operation.

- Armed violence in Nepal is generally low-tech, as perpetrators rely primarily on the use of crude or makeshift weapons, such as bicycle chains or sticks, as well as traditional bladed weapons (including the *khukuri*), improvised explosive devices, and home-made firearms.

- Approximately 2 per cent of respondents said they owned firearms in 2011. Based on self-reported and perceived ownership, an estimated 41,000–84,000 households in the surveyed districts probably owned firearms. The respondents claimed that most of these weapons originated in India. Kathmandu Valley exhibited a higher concentration of civilian-held firearms than the rest of the districts.

- Although overall police performance, accountability, and responsiveness were rated fairly high, with more than 80 per cent of respondents stating that they would seek help from the police in the event of an attack, in 2011

interviewees were more divided over police efficiency, citing lack of training, political interference, and a lack of standardized service as key issues.

- Respondents accorded community leaders more trust than other security providers in 2011. They gave political leaders the lowest ratings, due to what respondents described as their constant interference in police and judicial proceedings.

- The survey reveals a gap between the supply of and demand for security programmes in 2011. While the government agenda was dominated by policing and security initiatives, particularly in the Terai, respondents attached greater significance to programmes that were geared towards economic development. Indeed, more than 60 per cent of the respondents pointed to development programmes as the optimal solution to improving their sense of security.

I. Introduction

Background

In the wake of a decade-long civil war that claimed more than 13,000 lives,[1] Nepal's uneasy peace has been plagued by uncertainties, tied to the volatile political environment, the gridlocks over the drafting of the new constitution, and the reported proliferation of criminal activities. Despite the signing of the peace agreement in 2006, bouts of violence are not uncommon in today's Nepali socio-political context. These intensify regularly, following the ups and downs of the constitutional process, which has seen setbacks, new negotiations, and stalemates over questions such as federalism, disarmament of former combatants, and ethnic representation. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in May 2012 after four successive mandate renewals has also drawn attention to the fragility of Nepal's democratic institutions, calling into question their ability to survive yet another constitutional crisis as well as the commitment of political elites to the democratic process.

In addition to general strikes, or *bandhs*,[2] violent incidents—including high-profile assassinations[3] and clashes with police forces or between rival political groups—inflame public opinion and weaken overall security. A recurrent phenomenon in Nepali society, such politically motivated violence is primarily carried out by armed wings of political parties or armed groups that are seeking to advance their own agendas regarding Nepal's political and administrative configuration, and notably the question of federalism (Carter Center, 2011; ICG, 2011).

Whether this turbulence indicates that the country is on the 'brink of collapse' or simply represents convulsions typical of political change in post-conflict environments is disputed by researchers and policy-makers alike (Brown and Felbab-Brown, 2012; NYT, 2012c). In fact, despite persistent political volatility, the past few years have also witnessed key advancements

towards a durable compromise and democratic consolidation,[4] pointing to the resilience of a deeply rooted political culture (ICG, 2010).

By using violence as a tool for social and political transformation, Maoist insurgents have to some degree popularized it, removing it from the purview of the state, and transforming it into a tool for political and social expression, whether in the confines of a village or household. Hence violence in Nepal goes beyond political motivations, affecting the security of average individuals in the course of their day-to-day lives. Interpersonal disputes—whether over questions of land, family, or political ideology—and criminality continue to fuel insecurity at the village and municipal levels, as suggested by a wealth of studies on safety and security in the country.[5]

The national survey conducted by the Small Arms Survey and the Kathmandu-based institute Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA) examines manifestations of violence at the household level, shedding light on the scale and severity of victimization, the profiles of victims and perpetrators, and the instruments of violence as well as state responses and security provision.

Rooted in generalized poverty, exploitation, and a discriminatory caste system—which has survived informally despite its abolition in 1963—social contentions pre-date the Maoist conflict and continue to fuel interpersonal violence and crime (Lawoti, 2007, pp. 23–24). In this sense, an understanding of current economic opportunities and identity politics, which reflect ethnic, religious, and linguistic divisions, remains germane to an assessment of the types and scale of violence at the community level in Nepal.

Since the end of the conflict and the Madhesi *Andolan* (uprising) in early 2007, researchers have documented a host of new sources of insecurity, including the emergence and proliferation of armed groups in the eastern and central Terai (IDMC, 2010; IDA et al., 2011); the rise of organized crime[6] (Saferworld, 2012); the proliferation of firearms; and the collusion between crime and politics, alternatively dubbed 'politicization of crime' or 'criminalization of politics' (Bhattarai et al., 2010, p. 80). This *Special Report* builds on these findings, investigating the current state of security challenges, identifying new concentrations of violence, and looking beyond the Terai–Hill cleavage to rising insecurity in urban centres.[7]

Regionally, Nepal continues to occupy a strategic location in South Asia. Stretching about 1,800 km, the country's porous border with India contributes to making Nepal an overland route for arms and human trafficking from Pakistan and India (UNODC, 2011; Mittra, 2011). While some regional efforts are under way to curb these illegal transnational activities,[8] more concrete changes on the ground are still needed to limit these transactions and improve security.

In a 2011 regional survey, Nepalis ranked terrorism and crime as the principal regional security threats; they named Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan as the countries posing a major threat to security in the region (SADF and Gallup, 2011, p. 18). While Nepal appears to serve as a transit route rather than a destination country for drugs,[9] other illegal substances, and light weapons, the presence of these international networks undermines police efforts to reduce crime in border areas—such as Bara, Parsa, and Rautahat[10]—and to combat terrorism and arms trafficking.

Methodology

The Small Arms Survey and IDA carried out the research for this study in late 2011. The aim was to investigate not only perceptions of overall safety but also personal experiences involving crime and victimization, patterns of firearm use and ownership, the prevalence of armed groups, and the role of key security providers. With a view to providing insight into patterns of armed violence and public expectations for the future, the study maps the causes, types, means, and actors involved in violent incidents, largely relying on stakeholders such as household respondents, civil society members, law enforcement officials, and key informants.

In addition to a literature review and the collection of crime and violence data from official, non-governmental, and international sources,[11] the study employed the following methodological tools:

- **A national household survey** covered 30 districts—14 in the Hill areas and 16 in the Terai belt.[12] The sampling design consisted of a random multi-stage stratification using probability proportionate to size; that is,

3,048 total interviews with respondents aged 15 and older, each representing one household, were conducted employing a confidence level of 95 per cent.[13] Extrapolations to the general population are provided with a margin of error of +/- 2 per cent. The final weighted sample size was determined based on male–female ratios among respondents, irrespective of location. Following a pilot exercise, IDA conducted fieldwork on 9–30 September 2011 and data was processed using a dedicated data entry instrument in CSPro, to ensure consistency and provide quality checks.

- **Six focus group discussions**—three with community members and three with members of civil society organizations—were organized by the Survey in the districts Banke, Dhanusa, and Dhankuta from 7 to 18 December 2011.

- **Eight key informant interviews** were conducted with members of the Nepal Police, representatives of the main political parties in Nepal, locally based researchers, and members of international foreign representations.

- **Thirty in-depth interviews** with community members from 28 districts were conducted by IDA in 2011, to provide qualitative data on public perceptions of the security situation and personal experiences of armed violence.

II. Trends in armed violence

Overview

Armed violence is a complex phenomenon. In Nepal, perpetrators—including armed groups, youth wings of political parties, criminal groups, and security providers—are known to use instruments ranging from bladed weapons and firearms to improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Fuelled by poverty, unemployment, and political instability, armed violence has been aimed at random individuals as well as journalists, officials, and businesses.

Armed violence has been present in Nepal since the country's unification in the late 1700s, as evidenced by records of sporadic incidents of ethnic, religious, and political violence (Lawoti, 2007, pp. 31–34). Yet the magnitude of human loss experienced during the more recent civil war dwarfs both pre- and post-war violence, with the most significant surge in armed violence occurring in 2002 (WHO, 2006; UCDP, n.d.[14]).[15] The bloodshed began in 1996, after the Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist (CPN–M) began to call for a shift from constitutional monarchy to democratic republicanism; hundreds of civilians were soon injured or lost their lives in clashes with police and army forces,[16] riots,[17] and bandhs.[18] The decade-long 'people's war' that subsequently raged between government forces and Maoist combatants claimed more than 13,000 lives and had injured about four times that many by the signing of the peace agreement in 2006 (OHCHR, 2012).

In addition to exacting a massive human toll, the violence also perpetuated a climate of fear and insecurity, further exacerbating social cleavages. Various observers have stressed the long-lasting effects of the conflict—such as the spread of small arms, physical and psychological trauma, and the extensive economic costs—which continue to haunt Nepalis to this day (Bhatt and Murshed, 2009, p. 121; ICG, 2010; Shakya, 2009). Yet scholars have increasingly underlined some positive social impacts of the conflict, such as the emancipation of women, increased social and political consciousness,

and high awareness of human rights, which has driven challenges to the discriminatory caste system as well as general inequality (Sharma, n.d., p. 11; Lawoti, 2005, p. 58).

The scholarly literature has generally focused on conflict-related violence, attempting to gauge its drivers, intensity, and ideological underpinnings;[19] in contrast, policy-makers have concentrated on assessing post-conflict violence in the context of an unfinished transition to democracy (IDA and Saferworld, 2009; 2010; 2011). The current security situation can be better understood by complementing the findings of both approaches with an analysis of emerging trends in armed violence (see Box 1).

Box 1 Quantifying armed violence in Nepal: establishing 'trends'

Despite the surge of aggregate data[20] and survey data[21] being collected in Nepal to quantify the magnitude of post-conflict armed violence, identifying patterns remains a difficult endeavour.

Challenges to establishing trends include the following:

- **varying definitions for the same indicator**, such as for the term 'killing', which can refer to: 1) 'intentional killing or murder' and thus exclude deaths that occur during clashes or as a result of IED explosions (UNNIP, n.d.); or 2) all deaths resulting from intentional violence (INSEC, 2012b);[22]
- **underreporting** that affects both aggregate and survey data, whether due to: 1) geographical barriers (which make certain mountainous or rural communities difficult to access); or 2) the reluctance of respondents to report victimization.

Despite such challenges, certain factors support comparability of research results, namely:

- **using similar research parameters**, such as: 1) the same type of instrument, including surveys, to measure changes in the security situation since 2007;[23] or 2) similar survey sample sizes of around 3,000 respondents;
- **using similar questions and indicators** across surveys, as is the case with IDA and Saferworld surveys, which use indicators on perceptions of violence, types, and main victims.

It is thus possible to identify some patterns and trends regarding types of violence and drivers.[24]

Trends of violence: scale and spread

The incidence and severity of violence in Nepal have fluctuated markedly since the end of the conflict, as suggested by UN data on killings, abductions, and IED explosions (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Security incidents, 2007–12
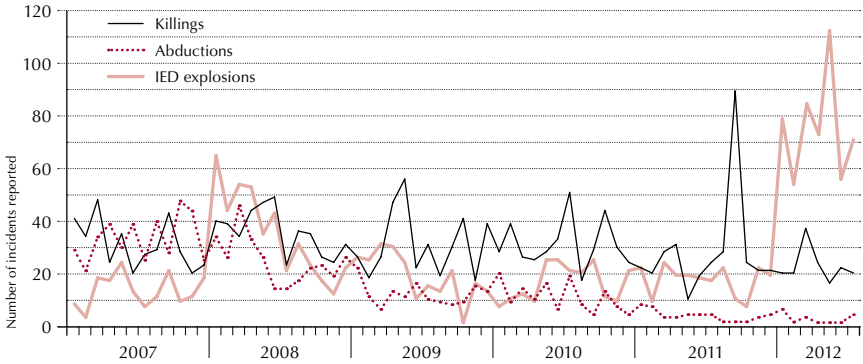
Source: UNNIP (n.d.)

Relative calm has been punctuated by bouts of violence in response to political events, such as the election of the Constituent Assembly in 2008,[25] the stand-offs between Maoists and the government in 2010,[26] and the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in May 2012.[27] In turn, the number of bandhs (violent and non-violent) increased, as did ethnic and religious clashes. In particular, the Hindu–Muslim riots—which had initially flared up prior to the civil conflict in 1992, 1994, and 1995—resurged in 2007 in Tulsipur; violence erupted in Kapilvastu on 16 September 2007;[28] and bomb explosions rocked the Catholic Church in Lalitpur in May 2009.[29] After peaking in the second half of 2011, the number of killings decreased in early 2012, approaching levels that had been registered at the end of the conflict.

As shown in Figure 1, the reported number of incidents involving IEDs in 2012 is more than three times greater than in 2007. The frequency of killings and IED incidents seems to be directly related to the evolution of the political situation, with numbers increasing during periods of political instability. In

that sense, the security outlook may remain uncertain until political leaders are able to reach a lasting compromise regarding the federal structure of the state.

Volatility has taken hold as a key characteristic of the security situation in Nepal, calling into question progress in security sector reform. Even though survey respondents have consistently interpreted their personal security situation in a positive light, political crises and upheavals have challenged such optimistic readings of the situation (IDA and Saferworld, 2009; 2010; 2011). Moreover, observers have described the failure of the Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution as a potential trigger for renewed civil conflict, worrying both national and international elites, as well as society more broadly.[30] Yet, while Nepal still lacks strong and stable state structures and institutions, the effectiveness of its ongoing efforts at coalition building and various development and security programmes remains to be assessed, such that it may seem premature to forecast a political implosion. Nevertheless, armed groups have already positioned themselves on the issue of federalism in particular, rendering all too real the threat of violent protests akin to those of 2007–08 (GICHD, 2012, p. 2; Acharya, 2012). The recent surge in the use of IEDs—a signature of some armed groups[31]—only underscores the cause for concern.

In contrast to such sombre prognoses, some public and academic voices have underlined a different message, namely that of Nepal as a country in transition (ICG, 2010; NYT, 2012b). In this context, moments of crisis are to be expected; rather than spelling collapse, they represent trials and tribulations of a young democracy struggling to consolidate.[32] Indeed, while research has emphasized the fragility of the security situation—as signalled by periodic political crises, frequent bandhs, the rise in property crime, and active armed groups—it has also stressed the resilience of state institutions, the ability of politicians to reach last-minute compromises, and the role of political culture in shaping the transition (ICG, 2010). Notwithstanding its difficulties, Nepal could be described as a 'resilient state' whose numerous security-related achievements may help it weather the current crisis (Putzel and DiJohn, 2012, p. 5).

Violence and its manifestations

For many Nepalis, crises and political volatility are manifestations of a state in continuous transition.[33] To assess the extent of violence in Nepal—and the sense of insecurity plaguing individuals in the course of their day-to-day lives—this section considers not only organized political violence but also interpersonal violence and the palette of criminal activity since the end of the conflict.

Reflecting aggregate data from the annual human rights reports published by the Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC),[34] Figure 2 reveals that violence has generally been subsiding since 2007.

Figure 2 Trends per type of violence, 2007–11
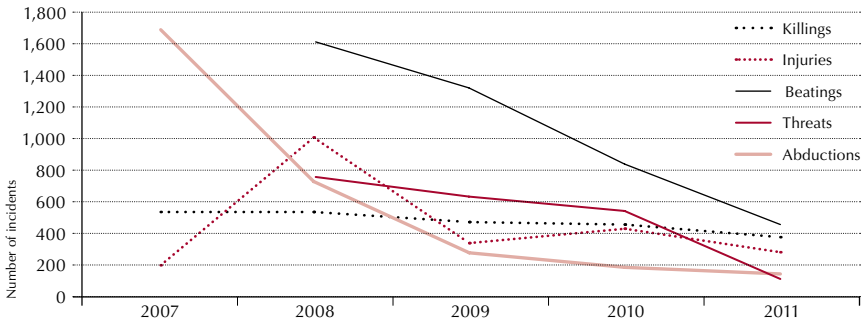
Sources: INSEC (2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011a; 2012a)

Although the number of abductions skyrocketed during the civil war—reaching 32,857 in 2004 (INSEC, 2006, p. 1)[35]—and constituted one of the key means of indoctrination and recruitment by Maoist guerrillas (Macours, 2011),[36] the figure declined drastically following the 2006 peace agreement. Linked by some scholars to the intensity of fighting, the rate of abductions registered the biggest drop immediately following the end of the conflict—between 2007 and 2009 (Valente, 2011, p. 8). From 2007 to 2011, the number of reported abductions decreased by nearly 90 per cent according to INSEC data, and more than 85 per cent according to UN data (UNNIP, n.d.).

As Figure 2 shows, the number of recorded beatings also decreased over time, dropping by about 70 per cent from 2008 to 2011. Similarly, the

number of threats decreased by almost 85 per cent during the same period, with a steep drop registered between 2010 and 2011. The number of injuries fluctuated more than the other indicators—exhibiting a surge in 2007–08,[37] a sharp decline in 2008–09, a slight increase in 2009–10, and another decline in 2010–11.

The number of 'killings' or 'intentional homicides' registered a much slower decline than did some other types of violence, which decreased between 70 and 90 per cent; nevertheless, the figure did decrease by almost a third from 2007 to 2011—from 545 to 377 killings.[38]

A longer time series reveals that the number of killings peaked in 2002 and again in 2004, following an intensification of the conflict (see Figure 3). While the number has slowly decreased since 2007, it remains high compared to 1996–97 rates, as may be expected in a post-conflict country.[39] Post-conflict killings are often a result of interpersonal violence; the media have reported on killings in the context of domestic violence, armed group clashes, and private disputes (Small Arms Survey and IHRICON, forthcoming). Targeted killings, such as the murder of a Supreme Court justice in June 2012,[40] a prominent businessman in 2010,[41] and several journalists,[42] have also made the national headlines.

Figure 3   Number of killings, 1996–2011
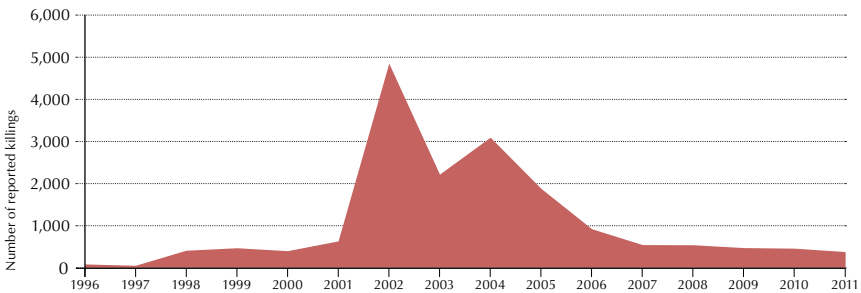
Sources: INSEC (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011a; 2012a)

Although INSEC data indicates that violence has generally decreased since the end of the conflict, survey respondents signalled ongoing concern about potential property crime, such as theft and pickpocketing, and a rising fear of threats (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Household perceptions of the major types of violence, 2007–11
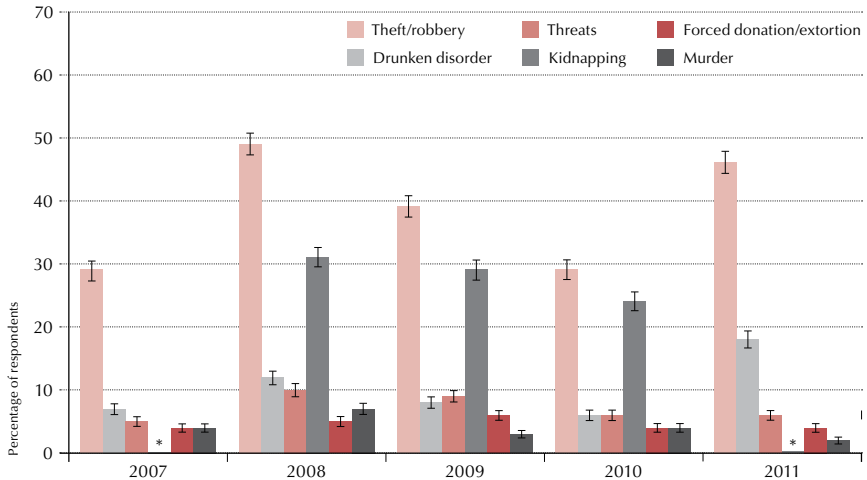
Notes: * No data provided. Sample sizes: n=3,010 for 2007 and 2008, n=3,025 for 2009, n=3,016 for 2010, and n=3,048 for 2011. Respondents answered the question, 'What are the major types of violence in your area?' Multiple responses were permitted; not all responses are shown in this graph.

Sources: IDA and Saferworld (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011a); IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Even though INSEC data shows that the rate of kidnapping[43] has declined dramatically since 2007 (see Figure 2), the percentage of surveyed Nepalis who ranked this type of crime as a main security concern remained fairly stable from 2007 to 2011. This gap between perception and reality could be explained by the accentuated political instability from 2010 to 2011, which can detract authorities from holding perpetrators of interpersonal violence to account and from pursuing economic development to assure livelihoods (Asia Foundation, 2011; HRW, 2012).

Drivers of crime and violence

Survey data from 2007 to 2011 has underlined the continuous relevance of the economic roots of insecurity, crime, and violence (see Figure 5). Asked to identify the main causes of crime and violence in their area, survey respondents consistently cited the lack of gainful employment opportunities and poverty (IDA and Saferworld, 2009; IDA and Small Arms Survey, 2012).

Figure 5 Main perceived causes of crime and violence, 2008–11

Persistently ranking at the bottom of the GDP per capita rankings, Nepal has long struggled with poverty, malnutrition, and low living standards (World Bank, n.d.). With one in four Nepalis living below the poverty line in 2011, income-related insecurities abound and many are 'unable to afford the minimal basket of goods required for an acceptable living standard' (CBS, 2011c; UNCTN, 2011, p. 12). Notably, survey respondents have consistently flagged poverty and unemployment as the main drivers of crime and violence (see Figure 5).[44] Although official statistics point to a slow improvement in the absolute rate of poverty in the country, the situation remains dire (CBS, 2011c). In 1995–96, more than 40 per cent of Nepalis were estimated to be living in poverty (CBS, 2011c, p. 23); the overall reduction of poverty has been accompanied by persistent inequality, with 41 per cent of all income still held by the top 20 per cent of the population, compared to 51 per cent in 2003 (World Bank, n.d.).

Economic conditions in Nepal have a direct relationship to armed violence. Workers are particularly vulnerable to violent disruptions of production cycles, which deprive them of salaries and benefits, especially since many Nepalis do not have fixed labour contracts and must thus rely on remittances from abroad (Acharya and Leon-Gonzalez, 2012, p. 1). Theft and other property crime further deteriorate many households' economic prospects.

Reflecting some improvements in the overall poverty rate, survey respondents in 2011 ranked unemployment rather than poverty as the primary driver of violence in the country (see Figure 5). Yet that year the official unemployment rate was about 2 per cent (CBS, 2011b, vol. II, p. 2); in fact, the government has reported little change in that figure since 1998, though job vulnerability has reportedly been high, at about 80 per cent (ILO, 2010, pp. 24, 26). Other sources, however, place the unemployment rate at anywhere between 20 and 46 per cent (Khanal, 2011; CIA, n.d.). While unemployment figures may be disputed, underemployment[45] is clearly high, with more than 30 per cent of the population working fewer than 19 hours per week, an increase of 7 per cent compared to the 2004 situation (CBS, 2011b, vol. II, p. 55). Further, young people are twice as likely as adults to be without a job, with nearly one in seven youths unemployed in urban areas in 2008 (ILO, 2010, p. 26).

In addition to poverty and unemployment, many survey respondents and focus group participants rank widespread 'lack of education' among the main drivers of crime and violence in Nepal. Education serves both as a marker of social exclusion, given that access to education is often determined by social and economic status, and as a predictor of economic well-being; in Nepal, households headed by illiterate people are almost five times more likely to be poor than those headed by educated individuals (ILO, 2010; CBS, 2011c, p. 21). Access to education was impeded during the Maoist insurgency by frequent targeting of schoolchildren and teachers (HRW, 2011). In the post-conflict period, schools continued to be attacked as part of a violent campaign to reform the inequalities of the education system and increase access to education to the underprivileged.[46]

In 2008–11, respondents increasingly identified the excessive consumption of alcohol as another major driver of violence in the post-conflict period (see Figure 5). The unrestricted availability of alcohol[47]—even for minors—increases the likelihood of excessive consumption. Strong lobby groups associated with alcohol producers and retailers have also contributed to perpetuating this situation. In addition to taking a heavy toll on the health of individuals, excessive alcohol consumption is linked to social stigma, the exacerbation of poverty, and an increased incidence of domestic violence (ARV Nepal, 2011).

Conclusion

In the context of a potentially destabilizing political situation, violence in Nepal appears to have waned since the end of the conflict. Yet, while data shows several improvements in the security landscape, Nepal continues to be plagued by high volatility and uncertainty related to political and ethnic crises. Although political events have and may continue to disrupt the transition to democracy, data on violent incidents point to an improvement of the security situation since 2007.

Besides political instability, respondents link crime and violence to poverty, unemployment, a lack of education, and excessive alcohol consumption. The profile of the victims and of the perpetrators varies regionally, yet has remained generally constant over the years (as suggested by survey data).

III. Safety, security, and victimization

Defining (in-)security in Nepal

Over time, the traditional understanding of security as 'national security' has broadened to include 'human security', covering not only physical but also economic, food, political, and health security (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy, 2007; Krause, n.d.). In the same vein, recent UN studies use the term 'vulnerability' to describe related aspects of broader human (in-)security, notably by evaluating levels of human development, as gauged by poverty rates, economic resource distribution, education and access to knowledge,[48] and health;[49] exclusion, in economic and political as well as cultural[50] terms; and individual protection, both physical and legal.[51]

Nepal has long exhibited significant vulnerabilities. Marred by deep political uncertainties, such as a succession of fragile power coalitions and thorny political negotiations,[52] the country is also plagued by persistent poverty and malnutrition, with more than 40 per cent of Nepalis undernourished (CBS, 2011c; WFP, n.d.). Given the two-way relationship between insecurity and underdevelopment, whereby armed violence undermines development and underdevelopment often enables violence, it is advisable to understand the extent, magnitude, and characteristics of physical violence as a key step on the road to improving human security as a whole (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 145).

Perceptions of physical security

The year 2011 saw a number of positive political developments, among them the Maoist surrender of arms containers that stored more than 3,400 weapons registered by the UN Mission in Nepal in 2007; the end to the practice of dual security, which entailed the provision of personal security to leaders of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist (UCPN–M)[53] by state security forces and combatants of the People's Liberation Army; and occasional

progress in the drafting of the constitution (SATP, 2011). These positive steps may help to explain why survey respondents appear relatively confident about their physical security.

As Table 1 shows, a majority of respondents said they felt safe in their daily activities, such as going to the market or sending their children to school. Yet they perceived night-time as less safe than daytime, particularly when travelling. Notably, more than half the respondents asserted that they felt unsafe and somewhat unsafe outdoors during political campaigns and bandhs (see Box 2). This finding emphasizes the link between political stability and perceptions of individual safety.

Table 1 Perceived safety levels, 2011

Context	Percentage of respondents			
	'Very unsafe'	'Somewhat unsafe'	'Somewhat safe'	'Very safe'
Walking around outside the home during the day	3%	13%	49%	35%
Walking around outside the home at night	4%	32%	46%	18%
Being inside the home during the day	2%	7%	40%	51%
Being inside the home at night	1%	12%	51%	36%
Walking alone from the home to the market during the day	1%	16%	57%	26%
Walking around the marketplace during the day	1%	12%	59%	28%
Collecting fodder or grass for animals in the fields or jungle during the day*	2%	22%	21%	7%
Sending children to travel to and from school**	4%	21%	41%	28%
Walking around outside the home during religious festivities	1%	23%	52%	23%
Walking around outside the home during national holidays	1%	9%	53%	25%
Walking around outside the home during political campaigns	14%	40%	25%	13%
Walking around outside the home during bandhs	18%	38%	24%	13%

Notes: n=3,048. Respondents were asked the question, 'How safe do you feel in these contexts?'. This table does not show 'Don't know' responses.

* In response to this question, 44 per cent of respondents chose 'Not applicable'.

** This question refers to how safe parents feel their children are when travelling to and from school.

Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Figure 6 Number of districts affected by bandhs, 2011–12
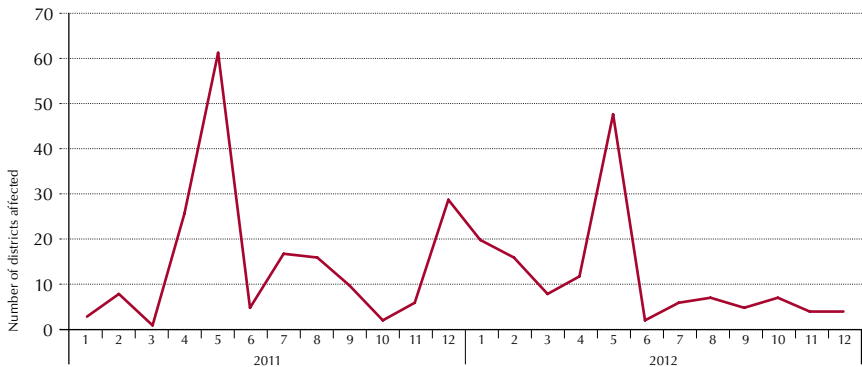
Source: RCHCO (2012; 2013)

Asked whether the security situation had improved in the 12 months from 2009 to 2010, almost three-quarters of the respondents indicated that there had been a general improvement while 7 per cent spoke of a deterioration (see Figure 6). The following year, 70 per cent claimed that security had improved from 2010 to 2011, and the percentage of respondents who reported that it had worsened dropped to 3 per cent. Meanwhile, the number of respondents who said that the security situation had stagnated increased to 26 per cent.

Furthermore, 94 per cent of respondents said they were confident that they would not become victims of crime or violence in the coming year (IDA and Small Arms Survey, 2012). Only 4 per cent said it was likely that they or

Figure 7 Perceived changes in the security situation, 2010–11
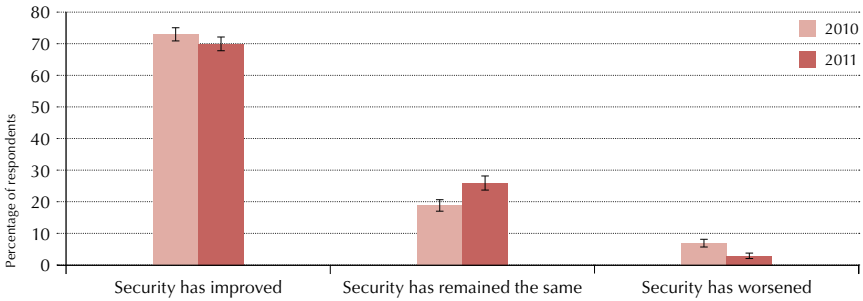
a member of their household would become a victim in the next year, signi-fying a marked decrease compared to 2007 and 2009 surveys, when about 40 per cent and more than 30 per cent of respondents, respectively, expressed such fears (IDA and Saferworld, 2011, p. 18).

Focus group participants and interviewees shared the perception that the security situation was improving, attributing the upturn to increased police patrolling and a higher level of harmony in the community. A man from Kaski affirmed: 'The security situation is fine here, and there have not been unpleasant incidents so far. We are not living with fear.' A number of inter-viewees distinguished between large-scale and small-scale violence, includ-ing a woman from Chitwan: 'There have been quarrels among the neighbours on issues of children, crops, cattle, but these are minor issues. Threats, vio-lent fights, and major disputes do not occur here.' Some civil society voices in Dhanusa suggested a different interpretation, namely that 'security has improved only superficially', and that people have actually become accus-tomed to a certain level of crime in their community; they argued that the perceived decrease in insecurity reflected the fact that crime had become 'institutionalized'.

While the sense of physical security has generally improved among the population, the broader human security landscape remains grim, prompt-ing a number of focus group respondents to stress economic insecurity, health risks, and impunity as key concerns over physical security. A villager

expressed concern that excessive emphasis was placed on physical security, to the detriment of economic security.

Victimization: scale and severity

While incidents of lethal violence have figured prominently in media headlines since the end of the conflict,[55] a relatively small number of survey respondents (134) reported that they had been physically aggressed, attacked, or threatened between 2007 and 2011. Of those, fewer than a third said that the incidents had happened during the 12 months prior to the administration of the survey; this finding represents a significant decrease compared to figures from a 2010 survey, which finds that 8 per cent of respondents or members of their households had been physically aggressed (IDA and Saferworld, 2011, p. 17). Though no clear concentrations of violence are apparent, a number of Terai districts—namely Banke, Dhanusa, Kailali, Morang, and Sunsari—displayed higher concentrations of victimization, with between 7 and 16 per cent of the district populations affected (see Map 2).

Many participants in focus group discussions in Dhanusa and Dhankuta referenced indirect experiences with crime or violence—meaning that they had 'witnessed' or 'heard of' crime, or that it 'was reported in the media'— rather than first-hand accounts. Given that these two districts exhibit higher concentrations of victimization than other areas, these responses may indicate that participants were reluctant to report about certain forms of victimization. In extortion cases, for instance, victims often fear retaliation if they acknowledge the fact in public or inform the police. Some interviewees pointed to general mistrust when answering questions about direct victimization. One of them argued: 'I don't think anyone would be open enough to answer that question. There might be another threat after this.'

Fewer than 5 per cent of all survey respondents reported that someone in their household had been victimized; more than 1 per cent said that someone in the household had been injured, while fewer than one-half per cent said that someone had been killed (see Figure 8). A 2009 epidemiological study finds that 23 per cent of all injuries were caused by violence while unintentional injuries were caused by events such as road accidents and falls (NHRC, 2009, p. 14).

Map 2   **Percentage of respondents who reported having been victimized between 2007 and 2011, by district**
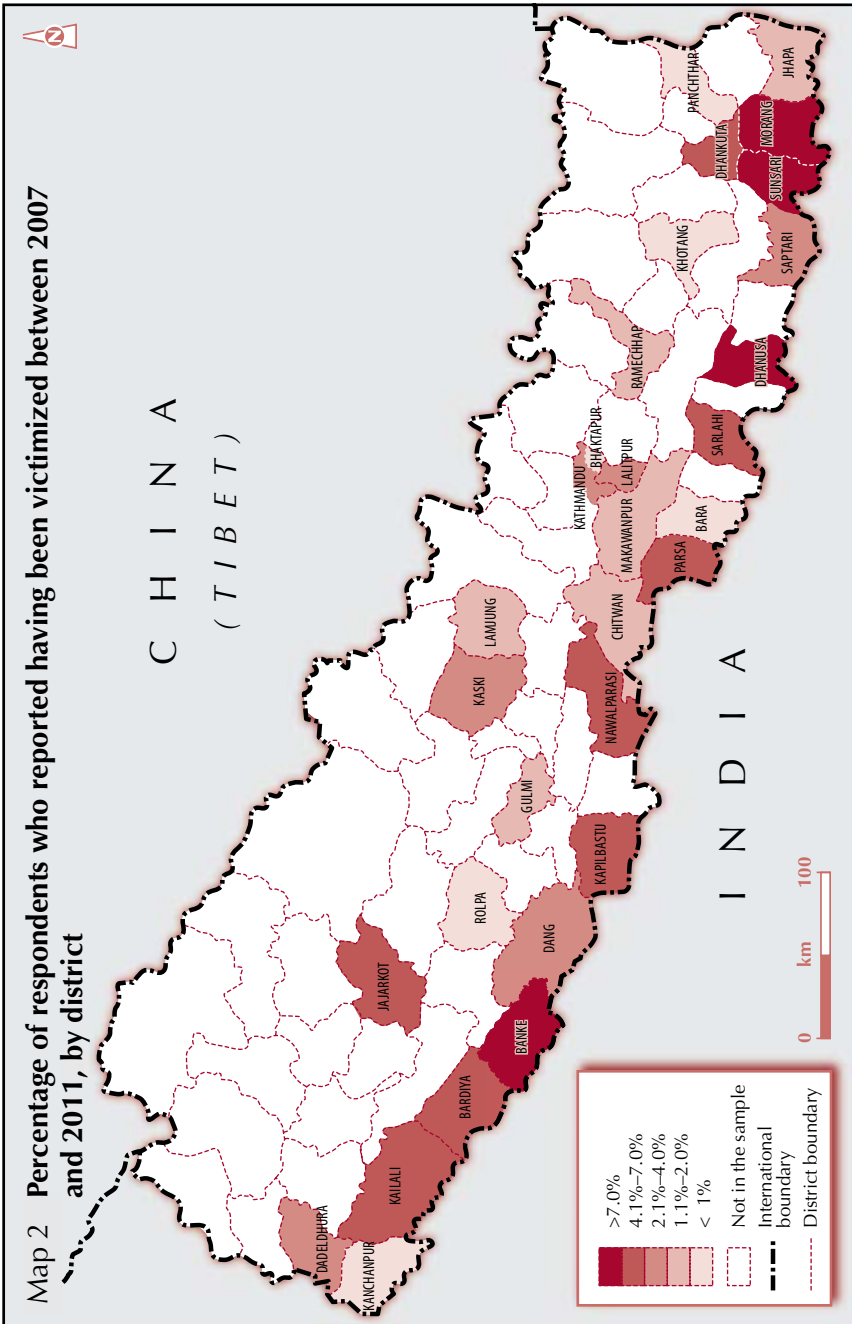
Note: Respondents answered on behalf of themselves and other members of their households.
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Figure 8 Percentage of respondents who reported on consequences of personal or household member victimization, 2011

Not victimized
95%

Victimized
5%

Victim was injured
1% of total

Victim was killed
<1% of total

Victim was neither
killed nor injured
3% of total
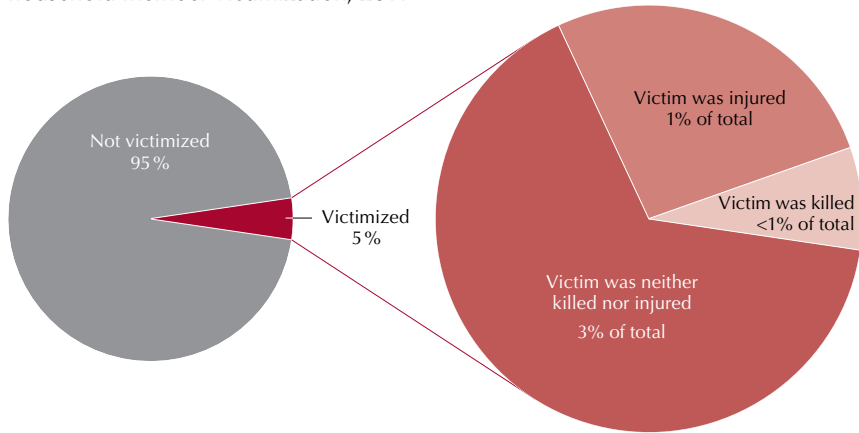
Notes: n=3,048, of whom 134 said that they or a household member had been victimized and 2,908 said no victimization had occurred; 6 respondents did not answer the question.

Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

The relevance of socio-economic factors

In Nepal socio-economic issues are directly linked to broader vulnerabilities. Specifically, poverty rises as social marginalization[56] and household size increase,[57] and it decreases as the level of education rises.[58] Further, findings suggest that the poorer a household becomes, the more likely its members are to experience feelings of physical insecurity.[59] As discussed above and shown in Figure 5, many survey respondents identified unemployment (42 per cent) and poverty (37 per cent) as the main drivers of crime and violence in their areas; these findings were also supported by focus group participants.[60]

More than 30 per cent of Nepal's population lived below the poverty line in 2011 (CBS, 2011c).[61] Exacerbated by structural barriers to law enforcement—such as a shortage of human resources and facilities—this financially precarious situation engenders a climate conducive to increased crime and opportunism. One man from the Madhesi caste in Birjung noted: 'If a national or international organization wants to end armed violence, they should provide jobs to the unemployed.'

More than a third of all respondents singled out alcohol as a critical trigger; focus group participants linked alcohol consumption to domestic and dowry-related violence in particular. Research has found that alcohol and drug-related intoxication increase the risk of violence by impairing judgement and lowering inhibitions (UNHCR and WHO, 2008, pp. 5–6). More specifically, the risk that a woman will suffer from domestic violence has been found to increase if her husband, partner, or other family member or acquaintance abuses alcohol or drugs (SAIPAL and FHD, 2012, pp. 31, 34). While the rate of alcohol consumption in Nepal is not known, the country has an estimated 150,000 drug users, including heroin and pharmaceutical drug abusers (Jha and Plummer, 2012).[62]

Although poverty and unemployment are broadly associated with violence at the community level, in the early post-war years (2007–08) survey respondents cited political and ethnic instability as principal motivations behind violent incidents in which they were involved (Saferworld and IDA, 2008; 2009). In 2011, however, few respondents mentioned ethnic conflicts and religious animosities; those who did referred to localized events such as the 2009 Kapilvastu communal riots between Hindus and Muslims. These responses suggest a near absence of community-level ethnic disputes, which stands in sharp contrast to the many media and academic reports of demands for territorial autonomy put forward by ethnically defined armed groups (IHRICON and Small Arms Survey, forthcoming; Bhatt and Murshed, 2009). Respondents attributed this discrepancy to increased awareness, even among the most marginalized communities, of their political rights and to their desire for community harmony. Interviewees referred frequently to disputes among neighbours over practical, mostly agriculture-related matters, rather than to ethnic or identity-related issues. These responses suggest a more decentralized, isolated type of community violence—in contrast to a more organized form of political violence.

Asked to identify the main motivations behind the violent incidents that reportedly occurred in 2007–11, respondents did cite political and ideological disputes, slightly more frequently than stealing and personal disputes (see Figure 9).

Figure 9 Top perceived motivations behind reported violent incidents that took place in 2007–11
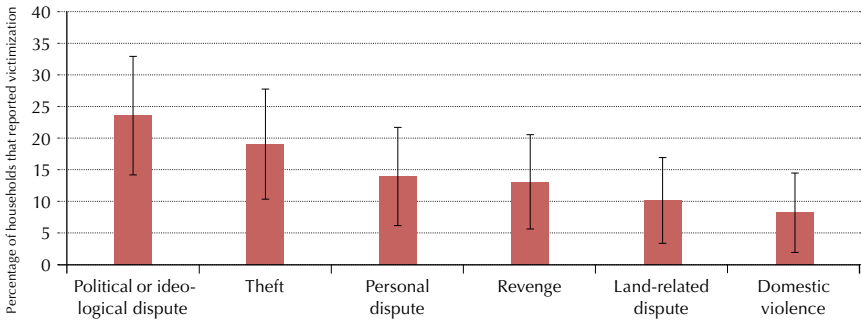
Note: n=134 (households that reported victimization).
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Revenge and land disputes also figure as motivations for violent incidents. In a country whose economy is primarily based on agriculture, land ownership is crucial to many people's livelihood (Bhattarai et al., 2010, p. 74). Reports of land seizures and land redistribution by Maoists and their supporters during the conflict inflamed tensions, leading to post-conflict calls for redress (p. 82). Yet the low rate of reported victimization obscures patterns and makes generalizing difficult.

Major types of crime and violence

The vast majority of respondents said they had not experienced any form of victimization over the period covered by the survey. Nearly 5 per cent of respondents reported having been victimized in the five years before the survey (2007–11); most of them said they had been victims of threats, theft, and robbery (see Figure 10).

Figure 10 Percentage of respondents reporting violent incidents that occurred in 2007–11, by type
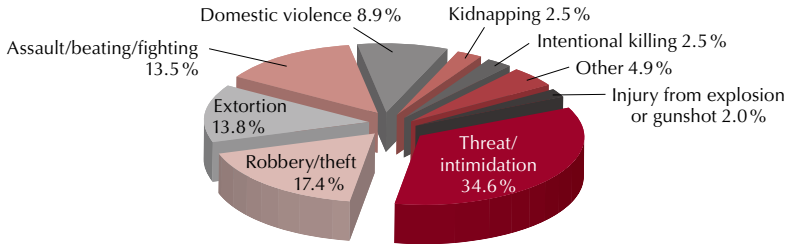
Domestic violence 8.9%
Kidnapping 2.5%
Assault/beating/fighting 13.5%
Intentional killing 2.5%
Other 4.9%
Extortion 13.8%
Injury from explosion or gunshot 2.0%
Robbery/theft 17.4%
Threat/intimidation 34.6%

Note: n= 134 (households that reported violent incidents).
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Almost half of the survey respondents identified property crime—such as theft, robbery, and land disputes—and another 17 per cent cited threats as the types of victimization they were most likely to encounter (see Figure 11). Fifteen per cent said they worried about serious crime and violence, such as attacks against households (8 per cent) and armed robbery (7 per cent). Focus group discussants generally confirmed these findings, with stealing and looting being named as the most common problems in their areas, particularly with reference to cattle or other valuable goods. They spoke of unarmed robbery, theft, and threats as the most likely crimes to occur, but noted that the likelihood of lethal violence was low.

Although most respondents said they feared property crime the most, about 45 per cent of those who reported having been victimized said they had been threatened or intimidated (see Figure 10). Threats may refer to a number of different practices or be associated with other types of crime. Focus group discussants particularly referred to threats accompanying extortion attempts or abductions.

Forced donations or unlawful taxation have been levied at makeshift road posts, through informal channels, and at local offices (Carter Center, 2011, p. 15). Operating under political protection, many of these groups do not have formal charges brought against them, and thus many cases of intimidation and threats to journalists and other individuals remain uninvestigated (AHRC, 2011, p. 50).[63] Similarly, trade union members have frequently reported threats and intimidation at the hands of politically affiliated groups,

largely for refusing to take part in party activities.[64] Threats can emerge in a variety of circumstances: in the public space (from political activists, youth wings of parties, armed groups, armed forces, or bandh enforcers), within the household or extended family (as is the case with domestic violence, disciplining, or dowry-related violence), or in the workplace (as related to political activities, gainful employment, or work conflicts).

Theft, robbery, and other property-related crime or violence were frequently reported in 2011. Focus group discussants acknowledged having 'seen or heard of people stealing cattle or other valuable goods', such as jewellery. During the Dashain festival in September 2011, highway robberies in Nawalparasi district led to an intensification of police patrols in the area (Nepal News, 2011). Vehicle theft is also frequent, particularly in urban areas such as Kathmandu, where transportation is key. In 2010–11, Nepal Police reported more than 1,500 bicycle and motorcycle thefts (down from 1,938 such cases in 2009–10), and investigators declared that they received around four such complaints each day (*Himalayan Times*, 2012d). Some cases of vehicle theft are opportunist crimes, with hospital premises among reported hotspots (*Himalayan Times*, 2012d); yet other cases are the work of

Figure 11 Percentage of respondents identifying violent incidents they are likely to encounter, by type, 2011
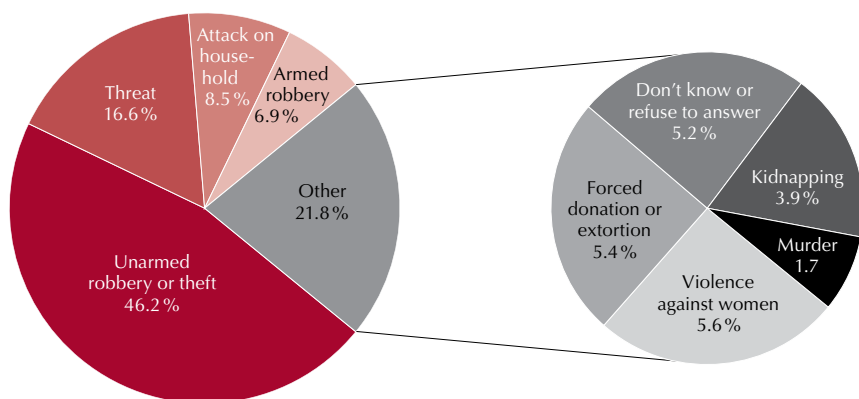
Note: n=117 (households that reported violent incidents).
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

gangs or organized crime groups that have transformed motorcycle theft into a lucrative business (*Times of India*, 2012b).

While the number of extortion cases reported to the police is small, interviewees and focus group participants identified a rising number of abductions organized by youths to extort money from their own families. The purpose of these 'copycat kidnappings'—which emulate the methods used by notorious criminals—is not only to acquire money for illicit activities, such as gambling or buying drugs, but also for more legitimate endeavours, such as paying university tuition. The Metropolitan Police Crime Division has corroborated these declarations, citing that the first half of 2012 witnessed a surge of 'fake abductions'; indeed, 13 out of 20 abduction-related complaints proved to be 'fake' (*Himalayan Times*, 2012a).

Survey respondents mentioned that criminals often targeted individuals based on their professional occupation. Although underreporting obscures broader patterns, farmers and businessmen figured as the principal victims of such violence, suggesting that people with income or property were more likely to be targets of crime. Focus group participants often pointed to the middle class as being particularly victimized through extortion or property crime. Having a steady source of income, carrying money, and owning assets such as vehicles and cattle increases the likelihood of theft, robbery, and extortion. More than a fifth of the survey respondents (21 per cent) ranked students as likely victims in view of their perceived involvement in violent protests.[65]

Violence against women

Men account for the majority of the victims of armed violence worldwide (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 113). In Nepal, however, men and women appear to be almost equally likely to fall victim to crime or violence (see Figure 12). These findings vary slightly across regions, with men being the primary victims of violence in Terai districts, while women are more often victims in Hill areas (IDA and Small Arms Survey, 2012).

In addition to suffering from various forms of gender-based violence, women account for the vast majority of victims of domestic violence; girls

Figure 12 Percentage of respondents identifying the main victims of violence in their community, 2011
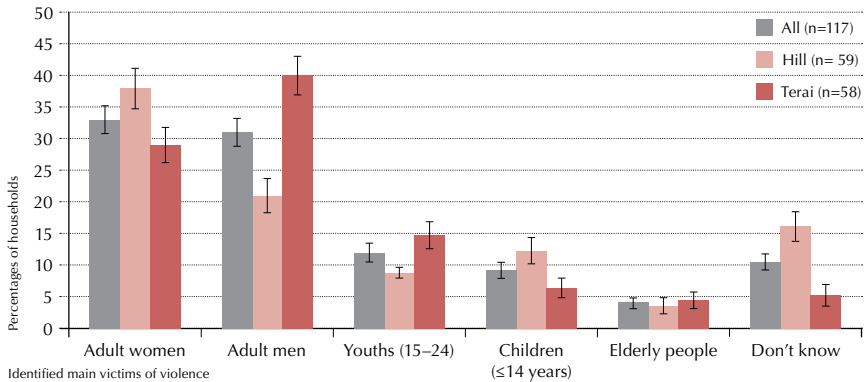
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

and boys are also likely to suffer physical or emotional abuse in households where the mother is directly targeted. Moreover, data on sexual violence suggests that 10–14-year-old children are the primary targets of rape (INSEC, 2012b, p. 22). Fewer than 0.5 per cent of the survey respondents said they had been victims of domestic violence, while 6 per cent stated it was a likely to occur. In contrast, civil society members who participated in focus groups suggested that domestic violence was widespread, along with other forms of violence against women. Independent of their class or age, Nepali women experience a wide array of physical, sexual, and emotional violence, from feticide to dowry-related violence (see Table 2).

Data on the extent of psychological violence and feticide is scarce, yet other types of violence have received more attention. Accusations of witchcraft are levelled most often against widows who are poor or belong to underprivileged castes (Paudel, 2011). In 2011, INSEC registered 61 cases of witchcraft accusations that turned violent, involving 51 women and 10 men (INSEC, 2012b, p. 7; XNepali, 2012). INSEC also registered 464 cases of rape and sexual violence (INSEC, 2012b, p. 22).

During the conflict[75] women were systematically sexually abused; since the end of the fighting, they have often borne the burden of post-conflict reconstruction, including running a household and earning a living, making

Table 2 Selected types of violence against women in Nepal, by age of the victim

Age of victim	Type of violence	Description
Pre-natal	Sex selection and female feticide[66]	The selective abortion of female fetuses is encouraged by a strong social preference for a son and the desire to avoid the economic burden of a girl. The practice is widespread despite a 2002 law outlawing it.
Childhood	Child marriage and rape[67]	Although illegal, child marriage is widely practised, particularly in eastern Terai. Trafficking networks send children to India and elsewhere in the region.
Adolescence and adulthood	Physical violence[68]	Battering, including during pregnancy, is widespread; there are also incidents of acid attacks and femicide (the killing of women).
	Sexual violence[69]	The incidence of rape and gang rape remains high. Sex trafficking and sexual harassment also persist.
	Traditional violence	Dowry-related violence[70] continues although dowry discrimination was criminalized in 2009.[71] Accusations of witchcraft[72] are widespread. Seclusion during menstruation ('*chaupadi pratha*') is prevalent in central and far-western Nepal, even though it has been illegal since 2004.[73]
	Psychological[74] abuse	This type of abuse includes any acts that damage self-esteem, identity, and development, such as mental torture, verbal abuse, humiliation, degradation, and intimidation.

them particularly vulnerable. Yet, with few nationally representative studies, and severe underreporting, the extent of violence against women is difficult to establish. A 2012 report on gender-based violence in selected rural districts finds that almost one in three women experienced some form of violence in the 12 months before the study (Government of Nepal, 2012b, p. ix). These results are not homogeneous across the country, however. Rather, regional studies have suggested that victimization rates may be as high as 91 per cent in some areas (Asia Foundation, 2009).

The Lalitpur-based Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC) records incidents of violence against women, offering a heterogeneous picture dominated by beatings as the most common form of violence, followed by rape and mental torture (see Figure 13). In 2011, WOREC recorded 1,569 incidents of violence against women, of which 64 per cent were cases of domestic violence, with the husband as the main perpetrator (WOREC, 2012).

Figure 13 Incidents of violence against women registered by WOREC, 2009–12
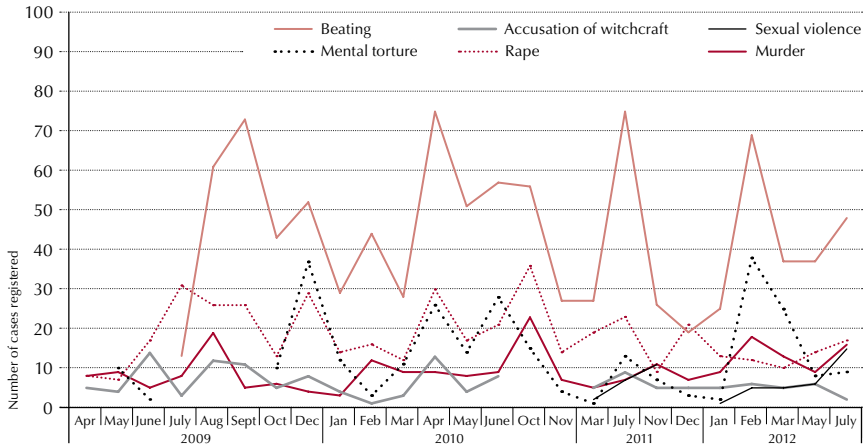
Although this study finds that only a small percentage of respondents reported cases of domestic violence in their households, one interviewee from Kapilvastu claimed that domestic violence was the most widespread type of violence in her community, estimating that one in every ten households had experienced it. Civil society members in Banke reported that a case of domestic violence opens up every 15 days, though an even larger number of incidents of abuse remain unreported. According to a man from Hetauda, Makwanpur, civil society initiatives have encouraged some change in relation to domestic violence reporting, largely through the creation of local centres for women or their involvement in local policy initiatives. Government programmes, such as the designation of 2010 as the 'Year to End Gender-based Violence' in Nepal, as well as legislative projects, such as the Domestic Violence Crime and Punishment Act of 2009, are positive steps (Asia Foundation, 2010). Nevertheless, an assessment of implementation of these measures and their impact remains to be undertaken.

Official records and crime reporting

While violence against women is particularly underreported, other types of crime figures are more available. Official crime records of the Nepal Police show a higher frequency of theft in the last part of 2011 and first part of 2012 as compared with murders, kidnappings, extortion, and rapes (see Table 3). The records also show that the murder rate is relatively stable over time; nevertheless, very few survey respondents cited murders among those they witnessed or feared most.

Table 3 Major crimes reported in Nepal, August 2011–July 2012

Month	Murder	Extortion or forced donation	Theft or robbery	Kidnapping	Drugs	Rape
August 2011	92	0	102	12	124	64
September 2011	61	0	98	14	152	44
October 2011	77	0	80	14	145	34
November 2011	72	2	91	7	115	37
December 2011	59	0	85	12	127	49
January 2012	48	6	69	5	129	25
February 2012	44	2	48	7	137	37
March 2012	63	2	88	9	141	38
April 2012	68	1	108	13	174	46
May 2012	62	0	70	8	154	61
June 2012	64	2	64	8	167	68
July 2012	68	2	84	9	150	54

Source: Nepal Police (2012)

That discrepancy could be partly explained by the fact that, unlike other crimes, which may suffer from underreporting, killings are usually reported to the authorities (partly due to their severity). In contrast, police sources declared that drunken behaviour is neither reported nor prosecuted; the established practice is to keep offenders overnight and release them without creating a criminal record. The same approach applies to incidents of kidnapping and extortion. As one focus group respondent framed it: 'When

a person is kidnapped, family members prefer to remain silent and give the money to the kidnappers. Incidents like that do occur, but do not get public.'

Geographical distribution

The incidence of violence and crime varies across Nepal, with cleavages emerging between the Terai and Hill regions, border and non-border areas, and, more recently, urban and rural zones. After 2007 the Terai–Hill divide became dominant in academic and NGO circles and the Terai became associated with a concentration of armed groups and numerous incidents of armed violence.[76] Population density and diversity might explain a generally higher concentration of crime in the Terai; other influential factors, such as the presence of permeable borders or urban vs. rural dynamics, may also influence the crime rate.

Both Hill and Terai respondents (64 and 76 per cent, respectively) spoke of improvements in community security from 2010 to 2011. Focus group participants generally mirrored these findings, although Terai residents tended to have positive interpretations whereas Hill respondents were divided between those who cited a 'slight improvement' and those who said they felt that there was 'no difference at all'. The percentage of respondents who cited security improvements was highest in the border and rural areas, perhaps indicating a change in the distribution of violence. Of urban residents, 7 per cent declared that security had worsened and 24 said they had observed no change over the previous year (see Figure 14).

Kathmandu Valley—which includes Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, and Lalitpur districts—stands out as a particularly large urban agglomeration, where more than half of the respondents claimed that the security situation had remained unchanged or deteriorated over the previous year. Organized criminal activities, such as human trafficking, illicit trade in red sandalwood, and extortion, have reportedly increased in the Valley, whose residents referred to an intensification of thefts and robberies (Saferworld, 2012).

The percentage of urban residents in Nepal who reported a declining security situation was twice the national average, suggesting not only a trend of growing insecurity in urban spaces, but also a higher relevance of

Map 3 **Percentage of respondents who declared that security had improved from 2010 to 2011, by district**

C H I N A

(T I B E T)

I N D I A

PANCHTHAR
JHAPA
DHANKUTA
MORANG
SUNSARI
SAPTARI
KHOTANG
RAMECHHAP
DHANUSA
BHAKTAPUR
KATHMANDU
LALITPUR
SARLAHI
MAKAWANPUR
BARA
PARSA
CHITWAN
LAMJUNG
KASKI
NAWALPARASI
GULMI
KAPILBASTU
ROLPA
DANG
JAJARKOT
BANKE
BARDIYA
KAILALI
DADELDHURA
KANCHANPUR

>85%
76%–85%
66%–75%
56%–65%
<55%
Not in the sample
Hill districts sampled
International boundary
District boundary

0   km   100

Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Figure 14 Perceived changes in the security situation from 2010 to 2011, by urbanization level

	Security has improved	Security has remained the same	Security has become worse
*All	70%	26%	3%
Rural	73%	25%	2%
Peri-urban	81%	17%	1%
Urban	70%	24%	7%
Kathmandu Valley	39%	49%	10%
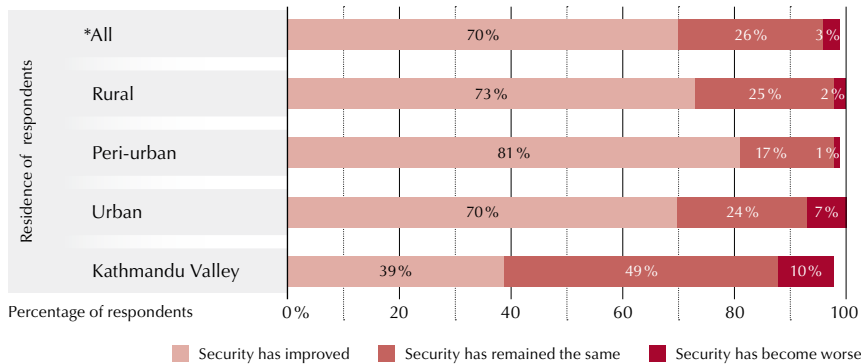
Note: *All refers to the total sample size of 3,048.
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

a rural–urban divide in this context. While the efficiency of police patrols declines as population density increases, which affects Kathmandu in particular,[77] in rural areas remoteness is a key impediment to swift resolution or reporting of crimes. In terms of reported victimization, the Terai displays slightly higher levels of insecurity than the Hill areas; specifically, 7 per cent of respondents in Terai v. 2 per cent in Hill districts reported having experienced a violent encounter in the previous year. This does not necessarily support the view that Terai is the exclusive locus of armed violence in Nepal.

In terms of the perceptions of changes in the security situation, no major differences were apparent between the Hill and Terai areas (see Map 3). A majority of respondents in the Terai districts declared that security had improved over the past year, with the districts of Dang and Parsa registering the highest levels. In contrast, a smaller proportion of the residents of Kanchapur in the Terai, Jajarkot and Kaski in the Hill region, and the Kathmandu Valley cited improvements, underlining that incidents of violence still plague these areas.

Based on survey results, robbery and thefts were almost equally distributed in the Hill and Terai regions, while respondents reported on slightly more assaults in the Terai than in Hill regions. Yet threats, intimidation,

extortion, and street incidents were about twice as common in the Terai as in the Hill areas. In contrast, Hill respondents reported twice as much violence at public gatherings than Terai residents. Small differences between Hill and Terai areas are registered not just in terms of the rate or type of violent incident, but also in terms of casualties. Respondents in the Terai note a slightly higher number of injuries and murders than those in the Hill region.[78] Overall, these findings may challenge the widespread notion that the Terai is by far the most violent area in the country. They also point to urban areas as emerging hotbeds for criminal activity.

'Profiling' perpetrators: a closer look at armed groups

When asked about the main perpetrators of violence and insecurity in their communities, survey respondents identified 'criminals' (32 per cent), armed groups (15 per cent), and members of youth wings of political parties (10 per cent). Interviews and focus group discussions reveal that these labels can be misleading, as armed groups and members of political parties are widely believed to be involved in criminal activities. In Kailali, for instance, youth wings of political parties, such as the Young Communist League and the United Marxist Leninist Youth Force, but also youth wings of armed outfits such as the Limbuwan Volunteers and the Tharu Volunteers, who have reportedly demanded donations, made threats and engaged in acts of violence (Carter Center, 2011, p. 12).

While these responses reflect general perceptions of the sources of insecurity and possible victimization, the profile of the perpetrator of past offences is somewhat different. More than half of the respondents who reported having been victimized in the five years preceding the administration of the survey said they knew their attackers; they identified neighbours, cadres of political parties, relatives, members of armed groups, and acquaintances. This suggests a degree of proximity between victims and their attackers, as the main perpetrators of violence were part of their inner circle (friends, family, neighbours, and acquaintances). Of the respondents who reported having experienced sexual violence, close to 90 per cent of victims knew their attackers and about three-quarters reported having been

attacked by more than one perpetrator (INSEC, 2012b, p. 27; IDA and Saferworld, 2012).

Numerous focus group discussants identified youths as perpetrators of violence. The Nepal Police also declared that the main perpetrators were 15–30-year-olds, and that this was due primarily to rampant unemployment. In the absence of viable sources of income and opportunities, Nepali youths are more susceptible to being recruited into organized crime groups or gangs[79] that engage in property crime, trafficking, and prostitution. Poverty, unemployment, and peer pressure are not new drivers that appeared in the post conflict period; rather, they were, according to some researchers, the primary reasons for youth involvement in the civil conflict as well as the Terai–Madhesi Andolan and the 19-day People's Revolution[80] (British Council Nepal, 2012, p. 18).

Since the Madhesi Andolan in early 2007 many observers have argued that there has been a multiplication of armed groups in eastern Terai that engage in criminal activities such as extortion, intimidation, shootings, and bandhs, which further increase insecurity (IDMC, 2010, p. 53). In 2008 Nepal's Ministry of Home Affairs reported that there were 109 armed groups active in the country and that most of these operated in the Terai (IDA et al., 2011, p. 29); that estimate was revised to fewer than 30 groups in 2011 (Giri, 2011). While close to half of the respondents (47 per cent) said they had also observed a decrease in activity of these groups from 2010 to 2011, more than a quarter (27 per cent) said the situation had not changed (IDA and Small Arms Survey, 2012).

Government officials have reported that many armed groups have joined mainstream politics, while some have surrendered their arms and some have held talks with the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction. One interviewee noted: 'The credit goes to the police, who aggressively tried to curb their activities.' Close to a fifth of respondents (19 per cent), however, held that these groups had grown more active from 2010 to 2011 (IDA and Small Arms Survey, 2012) .

Only 7 per cent of survey respondents said they knew of at least one armed group operating in their area. Focus group participants in the Terai district of Banke stated that they knew 'three or four groups in the area but not more than that'. Responses to this question varied significantly, with

armed groups being mentioned more in the Terai and urban areas than in rural and Hill districts. One interviewee stressed that 'there are some groups here but the media is making it a big story'; another said that 'the media is helping armed groups grow by making their names and activities heard.'

Some 43 per cent of respondents identified the armed groups as youth groups or gangs; 41 per cent mentioned that they were members of political parties; and 26 per cent said they were local criminals who showed little regard for any political manifestos.[81] Most respondents linked armed groups to a decrease in the overall security situation rather than to alternative security provision. An elderly upper-caste man from Kailali said: 'All of such groups, whether they are former combatants, or local youth groups, their presence is detrimental for society as they promote crime.'

Although some armed groups can be traced to Maoist opposition movements that challenged the monarchy,[82] they are increasingly perceived to be motivated primarily by economic rather than political goals (see Figure 15).

Figure 15 Perceived activities of armed groups, 2011
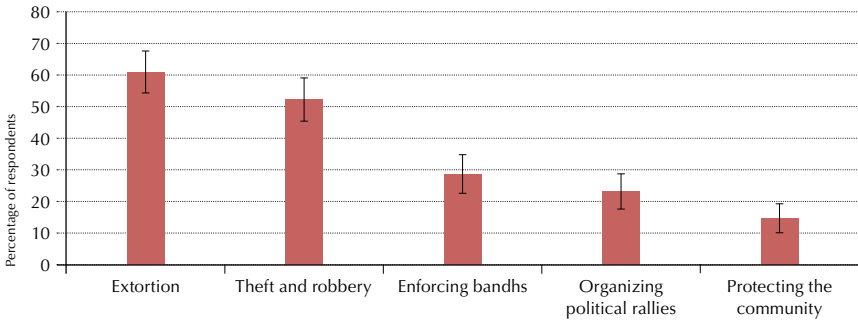
Notes: n=211 (respondents who said they knew of armed groups). Multiple responses were permitted.
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Irrespective of the precise purpose or motivation of these actors, one of their distinctive features is the frequent use of armed violence as a form of opposition, signalling or making demands of political bodies or individuals. The majority of respondents voiced the opinion that armed groups engaged mostly in relatively petty crime—such as extortion, theft, and robbery—rather than enforcing bandhs and engaging in political rallies. This

predatory behaviour is often directed at middle-class people, or those who hold a steady job; interviewees maintained that forced donations represent a very high burden on the monthly income of a household. As one civil society member said, 'When armed groups ask for a donation, they ask for an amount which is beyond our monthly salary.' Interestingly, 15 per cent of respondents indicated that armed groups are actually protecting the community. While responses were highly divided on this topic, a few villagers stated that they preferred to go to 'the Maoists to get justice'.

Conclusion

The survey finds that the level of violence varies over time—often in direct correlation to moments of political instability—and space, notably across the urban–rural divide. Respondents generally feared becoming victims of non-violent property crime rather than murder, armed robbery, or kidnapping. Frequent references to neighbourly disputes suggest a more decentralized, interpersonal type of violence rather than collective violence. Respondents who were able to identify perpetrators tended to name individuals in their intimate circle, such as members of the household or the extended family, rather than armed groups.

Among the top five perceived drivers of violence respondents identified predominantly economic reasons (unemployment and poverty), followed by social factors (alcohol, lack of education, and drugs). The overall sense of physical security may have improved, yet the broader human security landscape (economic security, health risks, and impunity) remains grim.

Nationally, violence appears to affect Nepali men and women equally; yet while men are more likely to fall victim to armed violence, domestic violence and violence motivated by superstition and local customs (such as witchcraft accusations) disproportionally affect women rather than men. Additionally, respondents said that individuals who had money or property, such as businessmen and farmers, were more likely to become targets of attacks.

The survey and focus group respondents also pointed to an urban–rural divide regarding armed violence across Nepal's regions, with urban areas and the Kathmandu Valley in particular being the most insecure.

IV. Instruments of violence

Overview

This chapter reviews the principal instruments of violence in Nepal and then focuses on firearms, seeking to understand their origin and geographical distribution and to assess public perceptions on gun ownership.

Due to its Maoist political, ideological, and social underpinnings, the conflict has been labelled 'the people's war'. It is recognized as a guerrilla struggle based on its tactics as well as its reliance on small arms—particularly handguns, .303 rifles captured from state forces, and a small number of AK-47s; crude weapons such as bladed weapons, stones, sticks, axes; and homemade explosives as tools of warfare (ICG, 2005, pp. 18–19; Seddon, 2005, p. 12).

Violent and criminal activities have continued to involve the same means used during the struggle. Survey responses indicate that, of all violent incidents that occurred from 2007 to 2011, more than 60 per cent involved the use of a weapon (see Figure 16). Respondents who were victims of violent incidents indicated that crude or traditional and bladed weapons were involved in 30 and 20 per cent of these attacks, respectively, while handguns were used in 13 per cent of incidents.

Crude weapons, often created by altering an everyday tool, are the most easily available in the communities.[83] Focus group discussion and in-depth interviews revealed the use of items such as bicycle chains, iron rods, and agricultural tools, including hammers, sickles, axes, and hoes or *lathi* (sticks made of wood or bamboo) (Crozier and Kafle, 2010, p. 11); participants also spoke of traditional bladed weapons such as *bhala* (spears) and *khukuri* (traditional curved knives). *Khukuri*, which are known for their 18-inch steel blades, have a long history of use in Nepal, where they are traditionally produced by the *kami* (blacksmiths) caste (Shakya, 2009, p. 67); they are often used in a variety of interpersonal disputes, attacks, and domestic violence.[84]

These findings indicate that weapons used in violent incidents and crime in post-conflict Nepal are not particularly sophisticated. Police representa-

Figure 16 Types of weapon (if any) used in reported attacks, 2011
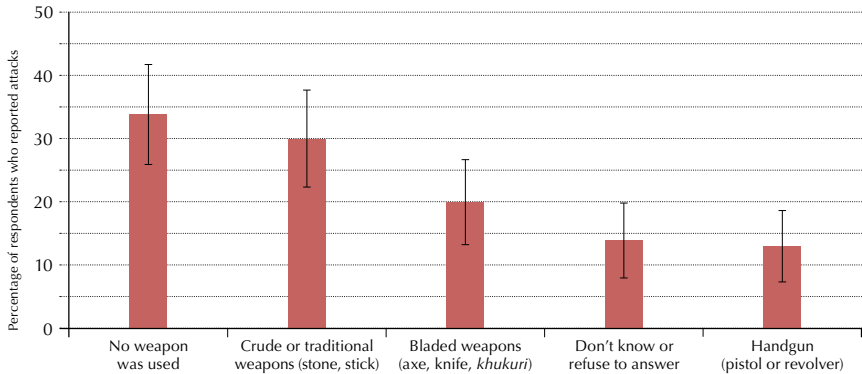
Note: n=134. Multiple responses were permitted.
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

tives confirmed this conclusion, saying that Nepalis do not generally have access to modern weapons, and that even armed groups operate mainly with 'traditional knives, guns (*katuwa*s), pistols, and bladed weapons'. Yet other testimonies pointed to the presence of shotguns and improvised explosive devices.

In line with the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Nepal has taken some measures to curb the illicit trade in firearms, with a particular focus on policing the porous border with India (UNGA, 2012). The survey was designed to capture people's perceptions on the use, cost, and availability of firearms, as well as access to and ownership of firearms by household respondents.

Ownership

As a country just recovering from a long civil war that mobilized many civilians,[86] Nepal is still believed to have a number of small arms in civilian possession, from pistols and revolvers, rifles, and automatic weapons to home-made guns (*katuwa*). The estimated number of civilian-held firearms varies depending on the method of estimation, with figures ranging from 55,000 to around 440,000 small arms (Gautam, 2009; Karp, 2013, pp. 1, 2, 6).

Box 3 Improvised explosive devices in Nepal: a persistent threat

Though survey respondents seldom mentioned the use of IEDs in violent incidents that occurred in the past five years, the media, NGOs, and international organizations have reported a high level of activity involving explosives. Since the end of the conflict, Nepal has witnessed more than 1,800 IED incidents,[85] with the number peaking at more than 500 in the first half of 2012, in advance of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (UNNIP, n.d.). INSEC reports that, from 2007 to 2011, 488 people were victims of IED explosions; 407 were injured and 81 were killed (ICRC and NRCS, 2011, p. 5).

IEDs are not a new type of weapon. During the conflict, Maoists used them extensively to target state security forces and government buildings. Just like crude or hand-made traditional weapons, these explosives are generally low-tech, involving unsophisticated triggers and everyday items such as flowerpots, buckets, or pressure cookers as booby traps. They use readily available substances such as ammonium nitrate and fuel oil; ammonium nitrate and aluminium; or napalm (soap and petrol). IEDs may be categorized as follows:

- IEDs with safety fuse triggers:
    - sutali bombs or thread bombs made of cloth and string;
    - socket bombs or improvised hand grenades made from galvanized plumbing joints;
- wire-controlled IEDs:
    - roadside bombs;
    - bucket bombs or flowerpot bombs, which can also be victim-operated devices;
    - improvised directional mines;
- victim-operated IEDs:
    - banner bombs;
    - trembler switches;
- remote-controlled IEDs:
    - clock or watch timer bombs;
    - radio timer bombs;
    - pager bombs;
    - pressure cooker bomb with call bell receivers (Silwal, 2012; ICRC and NRCS, 2011, p. 21; DHS, 2004).

A 2011 study of injuries due to IEDs and explosive remnants of war concludes that sutali and socket bombs accounted for more than half of the injuries (Bilukha et al., 2011, p. 328). These devices generally appear as a commonplace, innocuous item, often luring curious children. Consequently, children are particularly affected by IED-related injuries (p. 329).

Based on an investigation of both self-reported ownership (direct estimates) and perception data (indirect estimates),[87] survey findings indicate that an estimated 41,400–83,500 households hold firearms across the surveyed districts (see Table 4).

Table 4 Estimated percentage and number of households holding firearms across surveyed districts, 2011

	Percentage of households		Number of households			
	Direct	Indirect	Low direct	Low indirect	High direct	High indirect
Hill	1.44 %	2.07 %	13,017	13,250	15,399	15,505
Terai	1.26 %	5.29 %	28,426	55,049	35,223	68,069
Total	1.34 %	3.80 %	41,444	68,299	50,622	83,573

Notes: Direct estimates refer to the self-reported household ownership; indirect estimates are calculations based on the expressed opinions of respondents as to how many households own firearms in their area.

Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

The mean is almost 61,000 households owning firearms across the 30 districts. This figure is not much greater than the number of legally registered firearms, estimated at 55,000. While the percentage of households reporting firearm ownership is very similar in the Hill and Terai regions (1.4 and 1.3 per cent, respectively), indirect estimates indicate that a higher number of households own small arms in Terai in relation to Hill districts (5.3 v. 2.1 per cent, respectively).

A number of survey respondents were reluctant to answer questions about ownership and perceptions of firearms; some even ended the interview rather than simply refusing to answer and skip the question. This high sensitivity around talking about firearms has an impact on attempts to estimate firearm ownership. Focus group members underlined that people would be reluctant to admit to unlawful firearms possession. One participant noted, 'We do not feel safe enough to say that we keep weapons for our security.' Indeed, the punishment for such a crime is up to five years in prison and/or a fine of NPR 100,000 (USD 1,100) (Nepal, 1963, para. 20(2)).

A Madhesi man from Parsa added: 'It has become harder to keep illegal weapons as compared to the situation one year ago. As the administration is

enforcing rules tightly, no one can roam around openly with weapons these days, unlike the situation a year ago.' These perceptions have also been fuelled by the efforts of Nepal Police to tackle civilian-owned illicit small arms by arresting offenders and confiscating more than 1,300 weapons since 2007 (*Himalayan Times*, 2012b; see Table 5).

Table 5 Nepal Police weapons seizures, 2007–12

Fiscal year	Number of cases	Number of persons arrested	Number of arms confiscated
2007–08	480	356	256
2008–09	480	800	473
2009–10	417	618	375 guns and 654 bullets
2010–11	No data	574	No data
2011–12	No data	709	239 guns and 1,677 bullets

Sources: UNRCPD (n.d.); Koirala (2012); *Kathmandu Post* (2012b)

The confiscated weapons included revolvers, home-made pistols (*nalkatuwa*), 9 mm pistols, sixer,[88] Chinese pistols, 7.65 mm guns, and two-bore *katuwa* pistols as well as rifles (UNRCPD, n.d.). Yet, as these weapons probably represent only a small percentage of firearms in civilian possession, there appears to be a need for a more sustained effort at firearms collection or a better system of registration.

Figure 17 Perceived changes in the quantity of firearms from 2010 to 2011, by region
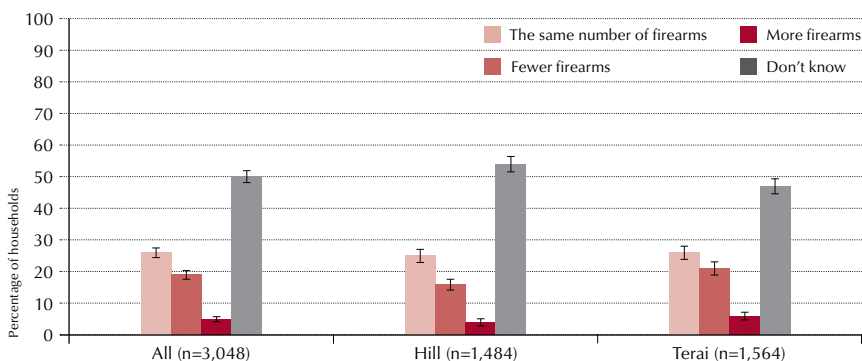
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Although the media has recently reported that the number of civilian-held small arms has grown (*Himalayan Times*, 2012c; 2012e), survey respondents have suggested that the firearm situation has remained generally stable, or even that it improved from 2010 to 2011. That said, roughly 50 per cent of respondents claimed they did not know how the situation had changed (see Figure 17).

Certain interviewees suggested that firearms in their area were a legacy of war and that they were not generally used. A young Dalit man from Morang said:

> I believe there are one or two licensed pistols in the possession of some elderly men. They keep these to protect themselves and their families in case of dacoits [robbers]. However, I have not seen them using them.

Coupled with the high number of 'don't know' responses, such reports make it difficult to generalize to the national level and underscore the need for a micro-level assessment at the regional and local levels.

Origin and distribution

Asked to speculate on the possibility of acquiring small arms in their locality, most survey respondents said that such transactions did not occur in their communities, while some reported that purchasing small arms was a difficult and clandestine affair (see Figure 18). A young Dalit woman from Rolpa mentioned: 'Home-made guns were manufactured in our village itself in earlier times, but that is not the case these days. Maybe people purchase guns from outside.'

Firearms production seems to have been transferred primarily to India, with traffickers taking advantage of the porous border between the countries to smuggle guns and ammunition into Nepal. Indeed, 38 per cent of all survey respondents identified India as the primary source of firearms; in the Terai region, which shares a long border with India, that figure rises to 44 per cent (see Figure 19).

India's role as a principal source of firearms in Nepal is not a new development, but one that expanded during the civil conflict, when Maoist groups smuggled arms through the checkpoints of Belauri (Kanchanpur district)

Map 4 **Arms trafficking routes, 2005 and 2012**

Kathmandu Valley

Sudal
Sangabhanjyang
Nagarkot
Bhaktapur
Patan
Kathmandu
Luvu
Chapagaon
Lele
Kirtipur
Thankot
Dakshinkal

CHINA

TIBET

Mt Everest
(8,848 m)

Kanchenjunga
(8,586 m)

0   km   100

Jogbani

HIMALAYA

Annapurna
(8,091 m)

Kathmandu

Raxaul

Mujjafarpur

BIHAR

INDIA

Banbasa

UTTAR
PRADESH

Lucknow

Kanpur

Legend:
- Illicit arms market
- Illicit arms point of origin
- Entry point for small arms trafficking
- Trafficking route, 2012
- Trafficking route, 2005
- International boundary
- National capital

Note: Illicit arms points of origin are cities and villages that host ad-hoc manufacturing and small arms storage facilities, reported as sources of illicit arms in circulation.
Sources: *Himalayan Times* (2012c); Khatri (2011); RAO (n.d.); *Times of India* (2005)

Figure 18 Perceived ease of acquiring weapons, 2011

		Very difficult	Complicated, but possible	Don't know or refuse to answer	Very easy
Area	Non-border (n=2,411)	60%	19%	18%	3%
	Border (n=637)	53%	29%	13%	5%
Ecological region	Terai (n=1,564)	56%	26%	14%	5%
	Hill (n=1,484)	62%	17%	20%	2%
	All (n=3,048)	59%	21%	17%	3%
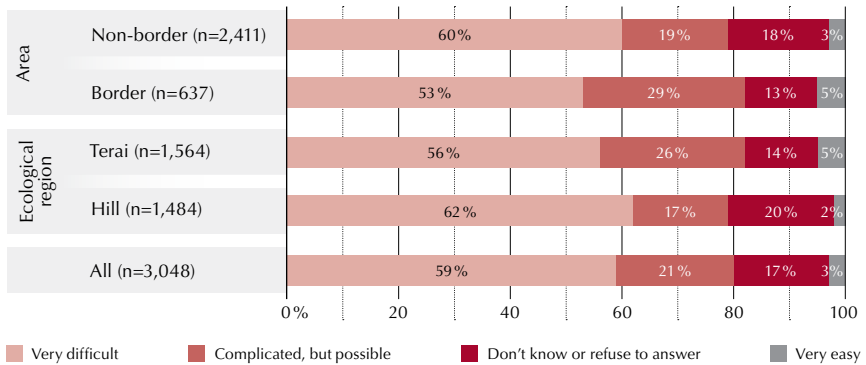
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Figure 19 Perceived sources of illicit firearms and ammunition

Legend: Gun-runners or illegal arms traders ■ Border areas ■ India ■ Don't know or refuse to answer
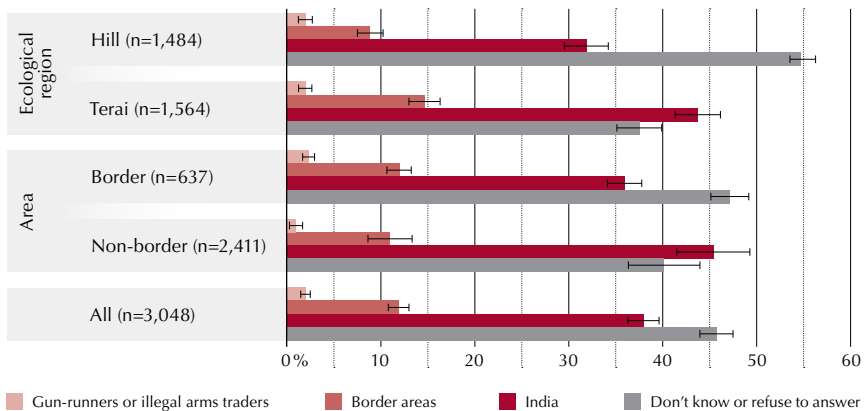
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

and Melauli (at the border of Dadeldhura and Baitadi districts) (RAO, n.d.). In time, Maoist smuggling routes also shifted to the Tibetan border, through the checkpoints in the districts of Humla and Darchula, or they moved to different checkpoints along the Nepal–India border (RAO, n.d.; see Map 4). Lucknow and Kanpur continue to function as the largest gun markets in the region (*Times of India*, 2005; Khatri, 2011).

After the end of the conflict, small arms trafficking from the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh persisted, with firearms originating in the towns

Map 5 **Percentage of the number of household that own firearms, per district, 2011**

Legend:
- >16%
- 11%–15%
- 6%–10%
- 2%–5%
- <1%
- Not in the sample
- International boundary
- District boundary

CHINA
(TIBET)

INDIA

km 0 100

District labels: JHAPA, PANCHTHAR, DHANKUTA, MORANG, SUNSARI, KHOTANG, SAPTARI, RAMECHHAP, DHANUSA, BHAKTAPUR, LALITPUR, SARLAHI, KATHMANDU, MAKAWANPUR, BARA, PARSA, CHITWAN, NAWALPARASI, LAMJUNG, KASKI, GULMI, KAPILBASTU, ROLPA, DANG, JAJARKOT, BANKE, BARDIYA, KAILALI, DADELDHURA, KANCHANPUR

Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

of Banbasa, Gourifanda, Jogbani, Louki, Lucknow, Mujjafarpur, Raxaul, and Sunouli (Khatri, 2011; *Himalayan Times*, 2012c; 2012e). Perhaps not surprisingly, most focus group participants and interviewees said they favoured tighter border controls to curb illicit trafficking. Some pointed out, however, that such measures needed to be planned carefully so as to minimize the impact on the livelihoods of border residents who are dependent on free movement between Nepal and India. As noted by an elderly Janajati man from Jhapa, 'Although controlling of border movement enhances security, it will negatively impact the daily lives of peasants and those who depend on Indian markets for daily commodities.'

The cost of firearms is directly affected by their availability and the distance to production sites. Survey respondents provided estimated costs of various firearms, indicating that firearms in Hill and non-border areas were significantly more expensive than in Terai and border areas (see Table 6). Portability appears to be in demand, as average pistols and revolvers were more expensive than rifles. The cost of a home-made gun was nearly 50 per cent lower than that of a factory-produced weapon.

Table 6 Perceived costs of firearms, 2011, in NPR

	All	**Ecological region**		**Proximity to border**	
Firearm type	Median cost	Median cost in the Terai	Median cost in Hill	Median cost along border	Median cost in non-border districts
Pistol or revolver	10,000 (USD 110)	9,000 (USD 100)	12,000 (USD 132)	10,000 (USD 110)	10,000 (USD 110)
Automatic rifle	9,615 (USD 106)	8,000 (USD 88)	10,000 (USD 110)	6,000 (USD 66)	10,000 (USD 110)
Home-made gun	6,000 (USD 66)	5,000 (USD 55)	6,000 (USD 66)	7,000 (USD 77)	5,500 (USD 60)

Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Recent reports have suggested that the final destination of many of these illegal weapons is no longer the Nepal plains, but high-density urban settlements and, particularly, Kathmandu Valley, which is estimated to house more than 10,000 illegal firearms (Khatri, 2011). In Kathmandu, firearms traffickers

reportedly secure five or even ten times the price they would normally receive in India for the same type of weapon (Khatri, 2011). Attracted by such high profits, they have stepped up their trade to a point where Metropolitan Police issued warnings of a threat to safety posed by illegal arms trafficking to residents and tourists alike. Most of these weapons enter through the Thamel and Tatopani areas of Sindhupalchok (NewKerala, 2012); some also pass through several points in Lalitpur and Bhaktapur (see Map 4).

Survey respondents corroborated the finding that firearms are concentrated in the Kathmandu Valley, with close to half of the interviewees in Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, and Lalitpur claiming that 'quite a few' or 'a majority' of households owned firearms in their area, more than any other districts in the country (see Map 5).

This finding supports earlier conclusions on the distribution of armed violence and crime and, in particular, on the emergence of a new rural–urban divide, one encouraged by financial opportunities, high population density, and, more recently, a concentration of small arms.

Higher concentrations of firearms are also apparent in a number of Terai districts near the principal trade routes (Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Parsa, and Sarlahi). Interestingly, Chitwan, although located in the Terai belt and housing a national park (a popular tourist destination), exhibits a lower perception of firearm ownership per household than its neighbouring districts. Cross-district variations in firearms distribution reinforce earlier findings regarding the need for a more localized, rather than a national, approach to the illicit small arms trade and related violence.

Perceptions of firearms

Understanding the demand for firearms in Nepal calls for a closer look at overall perceptions of small arms. A majority of survey respondents—more than 80 per cent—declared firearms a threat or promoter of insecurity (see Figure 20). This widely negative perception of firearms may be a response to the number of high-profile crimes committed with firearms in the year prior to the administration of the survey,[89] in addition to the organized crime activities associated with arms smuggling and firearms use (extortion, killings, threats, and violence committed by armed groups). Fewer than 10

per cent of respondents said that small arms promoted security and, among respondents who admitted owning a firearm, personal protection and tradition were the most cited reasons for holding the weapons.

Figure 20 Perception of firearms in terms of security, 2011
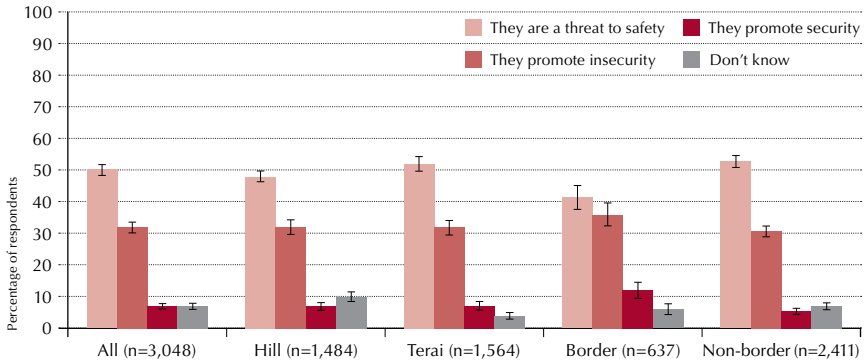
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

In contrast, respondents who said they did not own a firearm did not seem tempted to acquire one in the near future unless their security situation was dramatically altered; almost half of respondents claimed that their security circumstances did not warrant a firearm (see Figure 21). In addition, close to a third of respondents said they were convinced that firearms posed a danger to their families, increasing the risk of accidental injuries.

Figure 21 Reasons offered by respondents for not owning a firearm, 2011
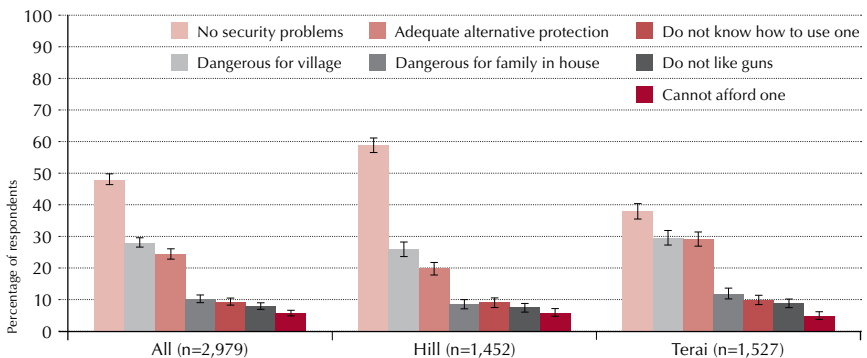
These findings suggest that demand for firearms is for the moment rather inelastic, although 8 per cent of respondents did mention they did not own a firearm because they could not afford one.

Asked which measures could be taken to ameliorate firearm-related insecurities:

- 82 per cent called for harsher sanctions for illegal possession of firearms or explosives;
- 78 per cent favoured greater enforcement of penalties for illegal possession of firearms;
- 66 per cent supported the introduction of a temporary weapons amnesty to allow surrender of illegal firearms without any prosecution; and
- 63 per cent said the enforcement of legal permits and licences for firearms would enhance control of firearms possession (IDA and Small Arms Survey, 2012).

While most interviewees agreed that greater enforcement of firearms possession would be beneficial, they also recognized that firearms can be used in self-defence. One young Dalit man from Sarlahi argued:

No one should possess weapons without a licence. Weapons can do both good and bad. We can protect ourselves in the absence of police if we have weapons. Nevertheless, unregistered weapons are a menace to society.

Interviewees were more divided over the question of amnesty, with a Dalit woman from Banke maintaining that 'allowing surrender of firearms without any prosecution will help in regulating illegal weapons'. Others claimed that, by offering a consequence-free way out, the government would in fact encourage the breaking of the law and, in the long term, this approach could have the opposite effect; one upper-caste woman from Sunsari even suggested that this tactic 'may increase crime'.

Conclusion

Armed violence in Nepal relies primarily on the use of crude or makeshift weapons—such as bicycle chains and sticks—as well as traditional bladed weapons (such as the *khukuri* knife), IEDs, and firearms. The precise number of firearms in civilian ownership remains disputed, though figures suggest a severe discrepancy between the number of registered firearms and the number of firearms in use, underlining the need for better registration practices. Whether guided by fear, a 'live and let live' attitude, or a lack of familiarity with the subject, respondents were particularly reluctant to broach the issue of firearms, suggesting that it remains highly sensitive at the local level.

The Kathmandu Valley and other urban hubs as well as a number of Terai districts are key destinations for illegal arms from black markets in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in neighbouring India. Tackling illegal arms trafficking without harming the local population remains a delicate matter, as does the collection of illegal firearms currently in civilian possession.

V. Security providers

In the face of evolving insecurities on the ground, the Nepali state authorities and local communities have devised a number of formal and informal mechanisms to promote security. The survey sought to catalogue the various initiatives, from the perspective of the average resident, and to grasp the overall reach and effectiveness of the principal security providers.

Arithmetic of security provision: who and how many?

Survey respondents identified numerous security providers in Nepal, from the Nepal Police and Armed Police Force to neighbourhood groups and local respected persons (see Figure 22 and Table 7).

Figure 22 Perceptions of who is the main security provider in the community, 2011

Political party activists/ leaders 5 %

Community security groups 6 %

Neighbourhood groups 5 %

Elderly and respected local persons 19 %

Don't know 3 %

Other 1 %

Police and armed police force 59 %

Leaders of ethnic groups 55 %

Private security guards 9 %

Local community 9 %

Army 18 %

Landlords 9 %
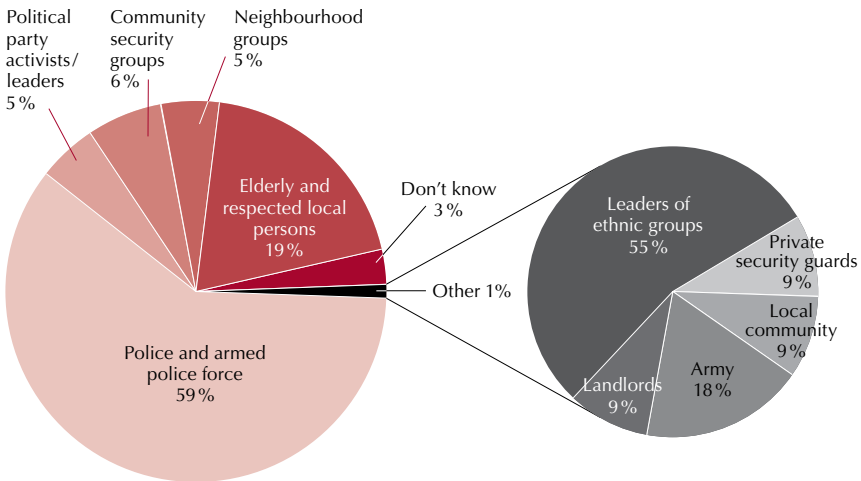
Notes: n=3,048.
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

More than half of the respondents (59 per cent) identified the Nepal Police and Armed Police Force as the main neighbourhood security providers. About a fifth (19 per cent) ranked elders and other respected local persons highest, and more than one in ten respondents (11 per cent) cited neighbourhood and community groups. The remaining respondents cited a host of other groups, from political parties to community security groups and even private security guards.

Table 7 Principal security providers at the community level, 2012

Nepal Police	Formally established in 1951—although it existed, in different forms, long before—under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Strength: 61,171, including 4,492 women (Nepal Police, 2012; CNTV, 2012).
Armed Police Force	A paramilitary force, formally established in 2001 and composed of combat brigades and combat support brigades (APF, 2012). Strength: more than 40,000 (Shresta, 2011), including 321 women (Thapa, n.d.).
Nepalese Army	Legal base: Articles 144 and 145 of the 2006 Interim Constitution (Nepalese Army, 2012). Under the purview of the Ministry of Defence and composed primarily of combat brigades and divisions. Estimated strength: 105,000 (Duquesne, 2011, p. 70), including 1,073 women (Nepalese Army, 2012).
Community and neighbourhood security groups	Involved in community policing; it is unclear how many of them are active in Nepal.
Political parties	Promote both security and insecurity at the community level; include armed wings of political parties, but also local party branches (IDA and Small Arms Survey, 2012).
Elders and respected local persons	Provide traditional forms of mediation at the local level. Mediation forms vary depending on the location (community or village) as well as the local ethnicity or religious affiliation, as each community has a particular mechanism of dispute resolution.[90]
Private security groups[91]	The number of private security companies grew exponentially after the end of the conflict, from 269 in 2006 to more than 700 in 2009 (DCAF, 2010, p. 226). They are established under the 2006 Companies Act and regulated by regional and local police (Phuyal and Urscheler, 2009); nevertheless, direct external oversight is limited. They rely heavily on income generated through the provision of services in other countries.[92] The renown of the Gurkha warriors[93] has contributed to an international demand for Nepali security personnel.

The estimated overall strength of state security providers—the Nepal Police, Armed Police Force, and Nepalese Army—exceeds 200,000, meaning around 770 per 100,000 inhabitants. The Nepal Police alone accounts for 225 security personnel per 100,000 inhabitants,[94] slightly surpassing the UN-recommended minimum presence of 222 per 100,000 (Chowdhury Fink, 2009, p. 1). In the region, Nepal's rate of police per inhabitant is nearly twice that of India (which stands at 130 per 100,000) and higher than that of China (which counts 205 per 100,000); nevertheless, it remains below the estimated global median of 314 per 100,000 (Florquin, 2011, pp. 1–5).[95]

These numbers must be interpreted with caution, since they do not take into account the geographical distance the police force must cover to reach certain crime scenes within their jurisdiction. In Nepal, a quarter of the population still has to travel more than one hour to reach the nearest police station (CBS, 2011b, p. 52). This percentage is much higher in rural areas, where less than half of the population can reach a police station in under 30 minutes, than in urban centres, where almost 90 per cent of the population can access a police post within half an hour (pp. 56–57).

While higher population density in urban centres may necessitate additional police personnel, the metropolitan police force counts around 3,100 personnel for Kathmandu Valley, or 169 officers per 100,000 inhabitants,[96] a much lower ratio than the national average. The government has undertaken efforts to enhance police equipment by providing Tata mobile vehicles, GPS and GIS positioning systems, and control room vehicles, which improve the speed with which police teams can reach a crime spot (Upreti et al., 2010, p. 218).

Both the police and the armed forces suffer from a strong gender imbalance, despite recent attempts to address this gap. The Nepal Police remains the security provider with the largest female contingent (3,457 officers), with 1,035 women added in 2012 (CNTV, 2012). Even with this addition, the overall percentage of women will remain low, at slightly more than 7 per cent.[97] Focus group discussants have emphasized the need for increased sensitivity on the part of police personnel towards women, in the hope of facilitating the reporting of violence against women. The gender imbalance is even more pronounced in informal security groups, which generally privilege elderly men as community mediators.

While the total number of private security guards operating in Nepal remains unknown, a closer look at the practices of neighbouring countries shows a strong preference for private security rather than state security provision. India, for example, has a rate of 619 guards per 100,000 while China counts 381 per 100,000 (Florquin, 2011). Although private security firms are growing in numbers at the national level, their presence at the local and community levels remains scarce (IDA and Saferworld, 2009, p. iii). They are used by public and business figures in Nepal, and their services are also offered abroad. Security guards generally include former army or police personnel (Phuyal and Urscheler, 2009, p. 91).

By using combatants as personal bodyguards, political parties have popularized the practice of personalized security provision (Upreti et al., 2010, p. 231). As a result, the role of formal security providers—and particularly civilian police—has not been cemented and youth wings have taken on new roles and functions. Today, some of the most visible youth wings that are directly associated with political parties include:

- the Communist Party of Nepal's Youth People's Security Force;
- the Madhesi Janadhikar Democratic Forum's Youth Democratic Forum;
- the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum's Nepal Youth Forum and Youth Force;
- the Rastriya Prajatantra Party National Democratic Youth Organization;
- the Tarun Dal of the Nepali Congress;
- the Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party's Youth Front and Youth Force;
- the Unified Communist Party of Nepal's Young Communist League; and
- the United Marxist Leninist Party's Youth Association Nepal (Carter Center, 2011).[98]

While their exact strength is still unclear, political parties report that these wings have anywhere from several hundred members (as is the case with the CPN–M Youth People's Security Force and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party National Democratic Youth Organization) to one million members, as reported by the UCPN–M for the Young Communist League (Carter Center, 2011).[99] These groups have reported being engaged in a range of activities, including membership drives, development work, community service (such as planting trees and supporting sanitation programmes), and public security

(such as tackling smuggling). Yet many reports also point to their involvement in activities that undermine public security, such as intimidation, forced donations, and interference in tender processes (Carter Center, 2011, p. 3).

A Dalit woman from Banke stated that 'groups affiliated with certain political parties are usually involved in harming—including through beatings, abduction, and murder—people who are not in their favour'. In addition, some of the respondents made the point that such groups are all motivated by self-interest rather than a desire to enhance social welfare or security.

Beyond the numbers: trust, performance, accountability

In addition to revealing that the police are seen as the principal titular security providers, the survey shows that a large majority of the respondents (81 per cent) would also turn to the police in the event of a crime or aggression. Yet almost two-thirds of the respondents said they would seek assistance from neighbours, while nearly half said they would also turn to family and friends if confronted by a violent event (see Figure 23).

Figure 23 Security providers identified by respondents as their principal recourse in the event of crime, 2011
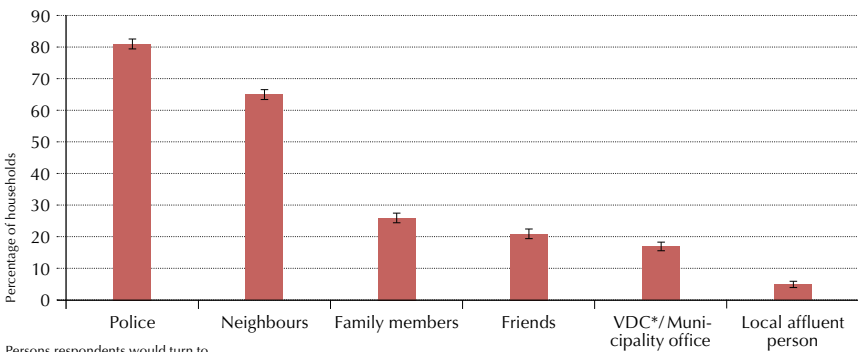
Notes: n=2,886. Multiple responses were permitted.
*VDC stands for Village Development Committee.

Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Formal mechanisms of justice and pursuit top the list of preferences, though survey respondents also appear to value informal mechanisms, such as the

help of neighbours, friends, and family members. These responses may testify to the strength of state institutions, but they may also show that traditional networks are still very strong, and perhaps more efficient in dealing with crime than formal mechanisms.

Interviewees expressed mixed feelings about informal security providers such as youth wings of political parties and ethnic, linguistic, or religious groups. Some villagers argued that they preferred to go to Village Development Committee offices,[100] while one young Janajati man from Khotang mentioned that 'such groups, especially the ones associated with political parties, are motivated by self-interest' rather than security provision. Though sceptical of the activities of youth wings and alternative security providers, a small minority of survey respondents admitted to being members of non-state security groups, mostly of community and neighbourhood watch groups (see Figure 24).

Figure 24 Stated membership in security groups, 2011
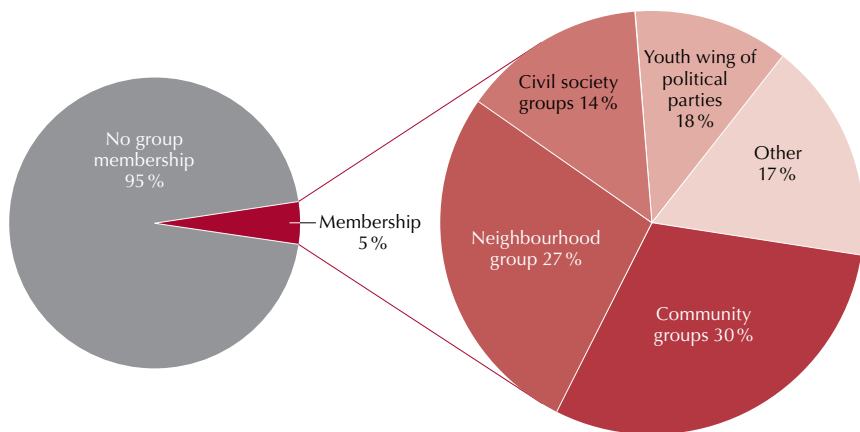
Note: n=3,048.
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

A majority of respondents who said they were members of a security group mentioned that they would seek assistance from the group in the event of a dispute. The vast majority (93 per cent) also noted that they felt confident that their group would intervene against any perpetrators.

In reviewing physical security measures taken by each household, the survey reveals that almost half of respondents (around 46 per cent) said that they had taken no security measures, while about a third of the households reported having fixed bars on windows, another third mentioned having installed lights around the home, and around a fifth said they kept bladed weapons at home for personal defence. These findings vary across the urban–rural divide and across regions. The proportion of those who had not taken any security measures was higher in rural areas than in urban and peri-urban areas, signalling a higher expectation of victimization in urban centres, and a desire to take personal preventive action. Similarly, households without any protective measures were significantly more numerous in Hill areas than in the Terai.

Asked to rank police, political leaders, traditional and community leaders, and local administrations (Village Development Committees or municipalities) with respect to trust, accessibility, and responsiveness, survey respondents rated community and traditional leaders highest on all three aspects, followed closely by the Nepal Police (see Figure 25).

Figure 25 Ranking of police, political leaders, traditional or community leaders, and administrations, 2011
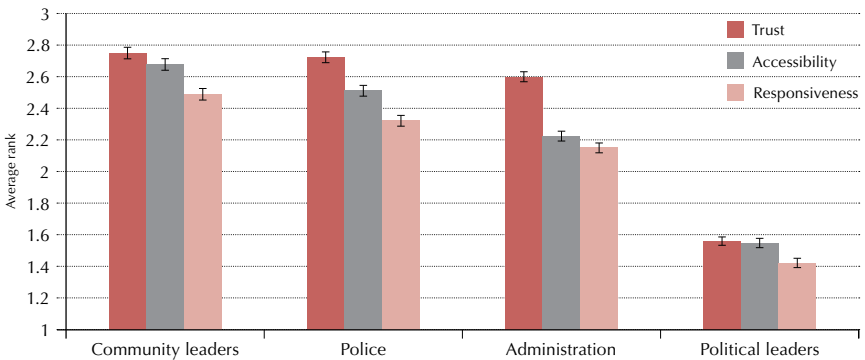
Notes: n=3,018; the scale ranges from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Political leaders notably received the lowest ranking, hovering between 'poor' and 'fairly poor' in terms of trust, accessibility, and responsiveness. The low

score is probably linked to escalating political instability as well as what many focus group participants described as the blatant and widespread interference by the political elite in police and judicial proceedings, most notably in the form of pressure to release imprisoned cadres (INSEC, 2011a, p. 8).

Box 4 Nepal Police in focus: strength, scepticism, and unstandardized service

The respondents' relatively positive general assessment of the overall security situation extended to their evaluation of police performance, with 47 per cent of interviewees claiming that police services had improved from 2010 to 2011 while 38 per cent declared it had remained the same. According to an upper-caste man from Hetauda:

Security arrangements are better compared to those of earlier years. The police force has become more active and we do not have to form any security task force as we used to some two to four years ago.

Some of the largest improvements appear to have occurred in the Terai districts (see Map 6).

Focus group participants were more reserved in their assessment of the role of the police in providing security. Some maintained that the police had in fact become more visible from 2010 to 2011; others remained sceptical of their ability to cater to their specific needs, citing political pressures and interference in criminal investigations, corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of adequate resources. One elderly upper caste-man from Kailali argued: 'Their numbers are not sufficient to match the criminals or to take proper note of the crime scene.' Yet other focus groups discussants offered another take, citing the need to improve skills and the working system of the police rather than just their numbers. A man from Parsa pointed out, 'Only the increase in number of police officers may not make any difference. What we need is quality, not quantity.'

A majority of interviewees supported the idea of further training for police officers, with clear targets concerning performance. One Newar housewife from Bhaktapur specified: 'Training empowers security personnel and gives them chances to learn various necessary skills that will help in the improvement of the security situation.'

Focus group participants also pointed out that police performance in Nepal lacks a standardized approach. One civil society member stressed that, 'The security situation gets better or worse depending upon the police chief'; another individual from Dhanusa argued that 'the role of the police depends upon the officers themselves'. Even respondents who were critical of police performance could recall particular police chiefs under whose leadership they had felt crime decreased in their localities. This raises the question of how to make police performance more uniform across the board, strengthening the performance of the institution as such, rather than having it function on a case-by-case basis.

Map 6 **Percentage of respondents who said police performance improved from 2010 to 2011, by district**

C H I N A
(T I B E T)

I N D I A

JHAPA
PANCHTHAR.
MORANG
DHANKUTA.
SUNSARI
KHOTANG
SAPTARI
RAMECHHAP
DHANUSA
BHAKTAPUR
LALITPUR
KATHMANDU
SARLAHI
MAKAWANPUR
BARA
PARSA
CHITWAN
LAMJUNG
NAWALPARASI
KASKI
GULMI
KAPILBASTU
ROLPA
DANG
JAJARKOT
BANKE
BARDIYA
KAILALI
DADELDHURA
KANCHANPUR

>65%
56%–65%
46%–55%
36%–45%
26%–35%
<25%%
Not in the sample
International boundary
District boundary

km
0   100

Map 6   Percentage of respondents who said police performance improved from 2010 to 2011, by district
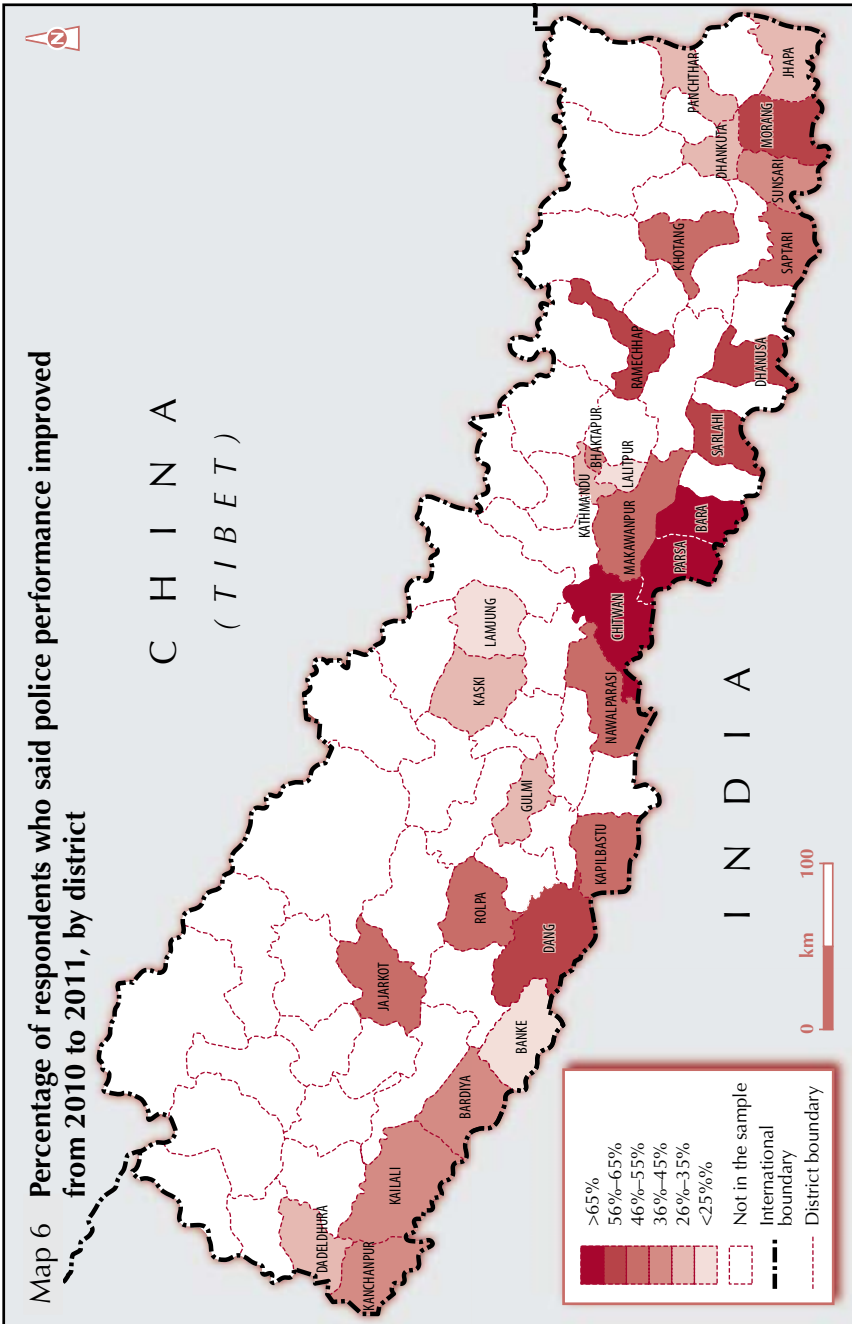
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Focus group participants claimed that 'political parties play 99 per cent of the role in making police ineffective'; one participant said that 'unless we improve the political situation, I don't think the police will be better'. The negative influence of the political elites was described as contagious by interviewees from Dhanusa, who said it contaminated both police and public administration and warned that, unless political stability was achieved, improvements in the performance of other institutions would remain unlikely. A respondent from a Terai Janajati community of Bardia added: 'The police alone is unable to maintain security and requires cooperation from community members and the political parties in order to improve the security situation.'

An overview of security programmes

As the understanding of security has moved away from one strictly limited to physical security, the demand for a wider array of security-enhancing programmes has grown. Post-conflict reconstruction brought about a flurry of initiatives from the state as well as local and international NGOs; these included the creation of Handicraft Villages and Product Development Centres, programmes for the improved utilization of agricultural land, public–private ventures for the expansion of irrigation, and regulations to stop money laundering, extortion, and hooliganism.[101] The Special Security Plan launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2009 is a notable security reform project designed to improve law and order, particularly in the Terai and eastern Hills (UNSC, 2009, p. 5).

Despite these new policy initiatives, a majority of respondents (75 per cent) were unable to identify any government-led programmes to enhance security in their communities. Whether this is due to a lack of visibility of these programmes or to their small scope is yet to be established. Police presence and physical security promotion projects were mentioned more often than programmes that focus on community development or gender issues (see Figure 26).

Figure 26 Awareness of government-led security promotion programmes, by region, 2011
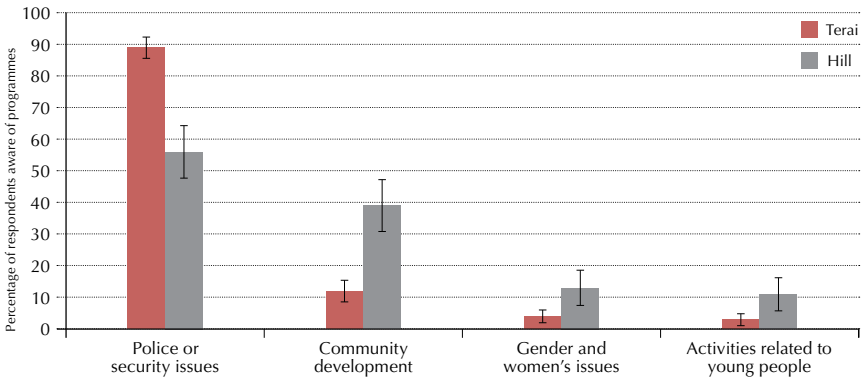
Notes: Terai, n=339; Hill, n=138.
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

This could suggest that ensuring physical security is the most visible goal pursued by the government, though regional variations are also present. Respondents in the Terai, for instance, were more likely to report on the existence of such initiatives than those in the Hill districts; this variation may reflect the government's attempt to address the security situation in the Terai, which had been labelled a hotbed of crime and violence (IDA et al., 2011). Respondents' awareness of different types of programmes implemented locally varies across the regions. Consequently, respondents in the Terai region largely identified programmes aimed at police and physical security, while inhabitants in the Hill region pointed to programmes focused on community development, gender issues, and youth issues.

The goals of these programmes differ depending on the sponsor. For example, NGO-led programmes paid more attention to the economic and gender dimensions, while police programmes dominated state-led initiatives. Interviewees and focus group participants have particularly praised the efforts of women's groups to control drug abuse and to establish women's reconciliation centres. Yet a man from Hetauda claimed that, despite these successes, many women are still reluctant to report instances of domestic violence to the authorities (IDA and Small Arms Survey, 2012).

To measure the supply against the demand for such programmes, the survey asked respondents to list the ones they considered the most useful in promoting security in their area. About 58 per cent cited programmes that generate employment as best suited to improving their personal safety and security. This finding strengthens the earlier conclusion regarding unemployment and poverty as economic drivers of violence. Respondents also identified programmes aimed at enhancing security and policing (28 per cent), economic development (26 per cent), and the safety of children, girls, and women (21 per cent) (see Figure 27).

Figure 27 Programmes that respondents said would best promote security in their area, 2011
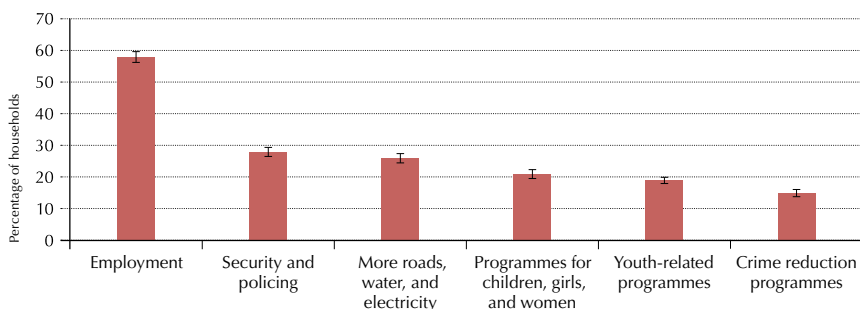
Note: n=3,048.
Source: IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012)

Focus group participants and in-depth interviewees reflected concerns regarding the pursuit of justice, including investigations, prosecutions, and convictions; they also called for programmes aimed at professional employment options, education, and social equality. One participant explicitly stated that 'the solution is not more policing but solving the unemployment issue'. Another contended: 'We need programs that give people jobs and make them engaged.'

Conclusion

Security provision in Nepal entails a mix of traditional mechanisms embedded in local customs—such as committees of elders and village leaders—and

state institutions striving to consolidate their authority. Respondents acknowledged the efforts of the police in improving security through increased patrolling, although they also emphasized shortcomings such as corruption, a lack of training, and political subordination. Some interviewees stressed the need for quality over quantity, citing the need to prioritize police training over increases in personnel, and calling for a standardization of police services. The survey also reveals that involvement by political elites and their influence on the police and judicial bodies make them a source of insecurity rather than of safety.

Operating with a broader definition of human security, state and non-state actors have devised a range of policies from physical security to economic development. Yet the survey finds a low awareness rate of both government and NGO-led security programmes in communities. It is, however, unclear whether this lack of awareness is a result of low visibility (finite resources and reach), limited scope (perhaps targeting a particular ethnic group within a village), or a genuine dearth of initiatives.

The survey also reveals a gap between supply of and demand for security programmes. While the government agenda is dominated, particularly in the Terai, by policing and security initiatives, respondents attached greater significance to programmes geared towards economic development. In contrast, NGOs appear to develop programmes that focus more on addressing economic, social, and gender-based inequalities.

VI. Concluding observations

While politically motivated violence was dominant during the civil war and the first years after the signing of the peace agreement, Nepal has recently witnessed a proliferation of economically motivated violence—primarily property crime, but also extortion and intimidation. By 2011, armed groups and youth wings of political parties, which claimed to champion identity politics and violently advocated political participation and minority rights, were increasingly perceived by Nepalis as engaging primarily in criminal activities and the extortion of funds, devoid of any ideological motivations.

Survey respondents appear positive regarding recent changes in the security situation, despite recent political volatility revolving around the renewals of the mandate of the Constituent Assembly and culminating in its dissolution. For many Nepalis, volatility and crises have become manifestations of a state of continuous transition. Yet few respondents reported on victimization that occurred in the past five years and few feared falling victim to violence in the future.

Though physical insecurity appears to be less of a concern in day-to-day interactions, economic insecurity has remained highly relevant. Unemployment, poverty, and limited access to health care and education have continued to be identified as key drivers of crime and violence. As might be expected, a number of respondents thus identified employment-generating programmes as crucial to improving their sense of security, emphasizing that the government and civil society organizations could do more to promote programmes designed to enhance safety and economic security.

In terms of the distribution of violence, the survey findings challenge the commonly held belief that the Terai is the most violent area in the country, shedding light on urban areas—particularly the Kathmandu Valley—as emerging hotbeds for criminal activity. While ranking among the most dissatisfied with the evolution of security in their locality, urban dwellers also

figure as having taken the most measures to protect their households, and as having reported a higher concentration of firearms than the rest of Nepalis.

Armed violence in Nepal relies primarily on the use of unsophisticated weaponry, such as crude or makeshift weapons—often everyday items such as bicycle chains or sticks—as well as traditional bladed weapons (the *khukuri*), improvised explosive devices, and home-made firearms. Though illegal firearms holdings among civilians are difficult to estimate, survey data from the sampled area alone is almost double the number of officially registered weapons. This finding supports the view that there has been significant undercounting of firearms in the country. Due either to stringent firearms regulations or to a fear of repercussions, many respondents were reluctant to share information about firearms and thus either ended the interview or refused to answer.

Survey respondents observed a cessation of local firearms production following the end of the conflict, and a relocation primarily to neighbouring India, as traffickers took advantage of the porous border between the two countries. The availability of firearms and the distance from production sites have an impact on the prices charged; consequently, prices in the Hill areas are twice those charged in Terai or border areas.

In the face of evolving insecurity, Nepali state authorities and local communities have devised a number of formal and informal mechanisms to promote security. Respondents acknowledged the efforts of the police in improving security through increased patrolling, though they also emphasized its shortcomings—namely corruption, a lack of training, and political subordination. The survey also finds a low awareness rate among respondents of government- and NGO-led security programmes in their communities as well as a gap between the supply of and demand for security programmes. While most programmes appear oriented towards physical security, respondents showed a preference for the ones that addressed economic and social needs.

Rocked by domestic political crises, and plagued by poverty and mounting trans-border threats (such as trafficking), Nepal has so far avoided a descent into a spiral of violence. Despite their low visibility, government and NGO initiatives as well as local informal mechanisms of security provision

appear to have contributed to the perception of general safety and of an improving security situation compared to previous years. Yet, more than five years after the end of a war that claimed more than 13,000 lives, Nepal and its inhabitants are still searching for lasting security, showing an inclination for hope rather than disenchantment, and a propensity towards progress rather than backtracking.

Endnotes

1   The precise number of victims of the Nepali conflict is still disputed, with figures ranging from 13,347 deaths (Bhatt and Murshed, 2009, p. 122; OHCHR, 2012, pp. 14, 26) to 15,000 (ICRC, 2009, p. 1).

2   For detailed information on bandhs in Nepal, see NepalBandh (n.d.).

3   See, for example, the case of a Supreme Court judge who was killed in a drive-by shooting in May 2012 (NYT, 2012a; *Kathmandu Post*, 2012a).

4   Such progress includes various agreements over reintegration of former combatants and state control over Maoist arms containers (SATP, 2011b).

5   See, for example, IDA and Saferworld (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011) and INSEC (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011a; 2012a).

6   These networks are particularly engaged in trafficking of weapons, drugs, money, and human beings, but also in valuable commodities such as red sandalwood (Saferworld, 2012; Ekantipur, 2012).

7   The Terai is Nepal's southernmost strip of land, stretching from east to west across the country, bordered to the north by Himalayan foothills and to the south by the plain of the Ganges River, and encompassing marshy grasslands, savannahs, and forests; it is also known as the plains or lowlands. Nepal's Hill region is a hilly belt that lies between the Terai to the south and the mountain regions to the north; it comprises the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal's political and cultural centre.

8   One such initiative revolves around a 2011 proposal for the creation of a regional police force; see Mittra (2011).

9   Drug users in Nepal generally consume the more affordable home-grown products; see Chapagain (2012a).

10 See *Himalayan Times* (2012c).

11 See, for example, INSEC (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011a; 2012a), IDA and Saferworld (2008; 2009; 2010), Nepal Police (2012), WOREC (2012), and United Nations reports of security incidents (UNNIP, n.d.).

12 For more information on the districts chosen, the method of selection, and other methodological details, see the methodological annexe (Small Arms Survey, forthcoming).

13 Confidence intervals in the bar graphs in this *Special Report* reflect unavoidable data collection errors caused by factors such as non-response and questionnaire validity problems. The intervals—or error bars—indicate the range within which the responses may be found, at a confidence level of 95 per cent. In other words, each range has a 95 per cent chance of including the responses of the sample.

    To determine whether different responses are significant, refer to the confidence interval lines. If a confidence interval of one bar overlaps with the reported value of another bar, those bars are not statistically different, even though they may appear to be. Thus,

depending on the number of responses, even a difference of ten percentage points or more between two answers to a question may not reflect statistical significance.

14 The Uppsala Conflict Data Program applies the following definition: 'An armed conflict is a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year' (UCDP, n.d.). Although categorized as an armed conflict since 1996 (with 44 battle-related deaths), the Nepal conflict is referred to as a 'war' beginning in 2002, when the number of battle-related fatalities reached 3,947 (UCDP, n.d.).

15 In 2002 the fighting intensified, with the number of deaths rising sharply compared to the previous conflict years (1996–2001). Following the declaration of a state of emergency and the mobilization of the entire army force to fight the insurgents, the conflict spread from the mid-western regions to engulf the entire country (Menon and Rodgers, 2011, p. 5; WHO, 2006, p. 1).

16 The 1990 pro-democracy street protests resulted in numerous arrests and deaths (BBC News, 2012). More recent clashes between police and demonstrators occurred on 30 May 2012, leaving more than 50 persons injured, six of whom were policemen (Yadav, 2012).

17 Hindu–Muslim riots took place in 1992, 1994, and 1995 in Nepalgunj (Lawoti, 2007, pp. 38–39).

18 Six civilians lost their lives in confrontations with the police during the bandhs of 8 February 2008; five of the six casualties died of bullet wounds (OHCHR, 2008, pp. 2–3).

19 See Deraniyagala (2005); Do and Iyer (2010); Macours (2011); and Upreti (2004).

20 See, for instance, INSEC (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011a; 2012a) and UNNIP (n.d.).

21 For more survey data, see IDA and Saferworld (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011) and IDA et al. (2011).

22 A 2011 report covering injuries sustained as a result of both firearm violence and explosions in 2010–11 concludes that such incidents are on the rise (INSEC, 2011b, p. 13). This *Special Report* disaggregates the two types of incidents.

23 See IDA and Saferworld (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011) and IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012).

24 See IDA and Saferworld (2008; 2009; 2010); INSEC (2012a); and the UN reports of security incidents from 2007 to 2011 (UNNIP, n.d.).

25 The Carter Center notes that violence and threats perpetrated by political parties increased in the electoral campaign leading up to the 2008 Constituent Assembly election. Election day itself, however, was generally calm, with only isolated incidents of violence and election fraud reported (Carter Center, 2008, p. 3).

26 In May 2010, the UN noted an increase in violence and human rights violations during a period of political stand-off between Maoist supporters and the Government of Nepal, following a stalemate in negotiations (UN News, 2010).

27 In 2012, the mandate of the Constituent Assembly was not renewed and, since the body had failed to agree on a new constitution for Nepal (the question of federalism being a key issue left unresolved), it was dissolved and new elections were called for November 2012. The Election Commission subsequently postponed elections until April–May 2013. For more information, see Asia Foundation (2012).

28 The *Kathmandu Post* tracks religiously motivated violence: 'During the democratic years of the 1990s, Nepalgunj witnessed several communal conflicts. Hindu–Muslim riots

occurred in October 1992, November 1994, December 1994, October 1995 and May 1997. Hindu–Muslim riots occurred again on Sept. 21, 2007 in Tulsipur, Dang. Several Muslim shops were looted, and their homes vandalised. This was a ripple effect of the hill-Madhesi communal violence of Sept. 16, 2007 in Kapilvastu where 14 people were killed, dozens injured and around 300 houses set on fire after the murder of a Muslim civil defense group leader' (*Kathmandu Post*, 2010).

29   The *Asian Tribune* reports that 'at least two persons were killed and 14 others injured Saturday morning when a pressure-cooker bomb went off inside a Catholic church at Dhobighat, Lalitpur, on May 23, 2009' (Koirala, 2009).

30   See, for example, Brown and Felbab-Brown (2012).

31   A 2012 report finds that IEDs serve as a 'weapon of choice' for non-state armed groups (GICHD, 2012, p. 27). Their use is a tactic inherited from civil conflict-era insurgents, who also relied heavily on IEDs (Silwal, 2012). On 15 April 2012, for instance, the Nepalese Army defused a tin bomb planted in a Village Development Committee office in Suda by the underground armed group Samyukta Jatiya Mukti Morcha, which demanded that a timely constitution be issued (INSEC, 2012c).

32   In a letter to the editor responding to a *New York Times* article that pictures Nepal 'on the brink of collapse', a member of the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the UN categorically refutes the thesis that the country is on its way to collapse and asserts that there is no institutional vacuum (Brown and Felbab-Brown, 2012; NYT, 2012c). Similarly, in another letter to the editor, Shneiderman and Turin of Yale University argue that the assessment that Nepal is collapsing 'oversimplifies and underestimates the democratic process in Nepal' while disregarding nationwide security-related achievements (NYT, 2012b).

33   See, for instance, the different opinion blogs on the topic of the protracted transition of Nepal to a democratic state (Lamsal, 2011; 2012).

34   INSEC yearbooks include aggregated data on types of violent incidents, including killings; injuries; arrest; torture; beatings; threats; racial discrimination; infringement of women's rights, the right of assembly, rights of the child, and economic and human rights; racial discrimination; inhumane treatment; and abductions (INSEC, 2012a, p. 4). These are sometime disaggregated by region or type of perpetrator; the main armed groups are the Terai Army, Madhesh Jagaran Terai Mukti Morcha, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist), the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Akhil Terai Mukti Morcha, the Janatrantrik Terai Madesh Mukti Party, and the state (INSEC, 2012a, p. 3).

35   INSEC estimates that, during the civil war, more than 85,000 people were abducted (Valente, 2011, p. 2).

36   Maoists generally released abductees after a few days of indoctrination (Valente, 2011).

37   This surge coincides with the campaign and the April 2008 election of the Constituent Assembly, both of which were marred by violence (IRBC, 2009).

38   The UN records a drop of 25 per cent in the number of killings for the same period (UNNIP, n.d.).

39   In post-conflict Nepal, the slow rate of decline in the number of killings appears linked to the availability of instruments of violence (bladed weapons and firearms), the difficulty state institutions have found in regaining a monopoly on the use of force, and surviving criminal networks (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, pp. 23–24).

40 See Chapagain (2012b).

41 See Ghimire, B. (2010).

42 The murder of journalist Pushkar Bahadur Shrestha in 2008, near Birjung, drew both national and international condemnation; see UNESCO (2008).

43 This report uses the terms 'kidnapping' and 'abduction' interchangeably.

44 For a definition of drivers of conflict and violence, see Jütersonke and Kartas (2010, p. 10).

45 Underemployment refers to the situation in which a person would like to work longer hours but is prevented from doing so by economic constraints (UNCTN, 2012, p. 3).

46 For more information on these attacks, which were condemned by the international community, see GCPEA (2012).

47 Alcohol in Nepal is home-brewed (in the varieties *raksi, tadi, chayang,* and *tomb*), produced nationally, or imported (WHO, n.d., p. 50).

48 Nepal has a literacy rate of 57 per cent, with a large disparity between men and women (71.6 per cent of men are literate, compared to 44.5 per cent of women) (CBS, 2011b, vol. I, p. 84).

49 Access to health care services is still problematic: '43 percent of the poorest quintile of the population do not consult any type of health care service provider' (Médicins du Monde, 2009, p. 1). Furthermore, frequent bandhs force medical and even emergency centres to close while the chronic lack of supplies and manpower have decreased the performance of the health care system overall (Sharma, 2010). The government has instituted a number of policies to address some of these challenges, such as the Healthy Nepal Initiative (Nepal GHI, 2010); yet more time, resources, and continued political will are needed to produce sustainable improvements.

50 For a discussion on the types of social and political exclusion and the role of informal institutions in perpetuating these practices, see Lawoti (2010).

51 For a discussion of the effects of lack of individual protection, among other causes of vulnerability, see UNCTN (2011, p. 18).

52 For a more detailed timeline of the political tribulations surrounding the writing of the new constitution, see IWPR (2011) and ICG (2012).

53 In 2009, the old CPN–M united with the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre Masa) to create the UCPN–M.

54 For an example of bandh-related violence, see *Nepal Mountain News* (2012).

55 See Small Arms Survey and IHRICON (forthcoming).

56 Lower-caste groups are found to bear a higher economic burden. Dalits or 'untouchables' were twice as likely as other caste groups to suffer from poverty (CBS, 2011b; 2011c, p. 21).

57 More than a third of all households with seven members or more are under the poverty line; the severity of poverty is also worse among large households (CBS, 2011c, p. 20).

58 According to Nepal's Central Bureau of Statistics, 'households with an illiterate household head are 4.5 times more likely to be poor than households where the head has completed 11 classes or more' (CBS, 2011c, p. 21).

59 The calculation was based on poverty estimates from CBS (2011c) and on IDA and Small Arms Survey (2012). Although the number of districts sampled is too small to allow for statistical significance, the results imply that poverty is negatively correlated with the feeling of security.

60   In addition to unemployment and poverty, respondents named alcohol (32 per cent of respondents), a lack of education (22 per cent), and drugs (19 per cent) as drivers of violence.

61   The rate of poverty has decreased compared to the 1995–96 pre-war period, from around 42 per cent of the population living below poverty line to around 31 per cent in 2011 (CBS, 2011c).

62   NGOs and health providers have increasingly lobbied for treatment, detoxification, and rehabilitation as preferable to the criminalization of drug and alcohol abuse (Jha and Plummer, 2012).

63   For a more detailed example of political protection and impunity in the case of threats issued by members of the Youth Force against journalist Khilanath Dhakal on 5 June 2011 in retaliation for unfavourable reporting, see AHRC (2011, p. 50).

64   For more information on such reports made to organizations such as the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions, the Nepal Trade Union Congress–Independent, or the Nepal Tourism, Hotel, Casino and Restaurant Workers' Union in 2011, see ITUC et al. (2011).

65   In February 2012 students were involved in violent protests over fuel price hikes (*Telegraph*, 2012).

66   See Lamichhane et al. (2011a); Chhetri et al. (2011); *Himalayan Times* (2011).

67   See Pietropaoli (2008); Saferworld (2011); and Upadhayay (2010). In certain areas of Nepal, as many as half of all new marriages involve girls under 12 (IRIN, 2012).

68   See Lamichhane et al. (2011b) and WOREC (2012). For additional information on acid attacks against women, see BVS Nepal (2011).

69   See INSEC (2012b; 2012d) and WOREC (2012) on rape and gang rape in Nepal.

70   See Onslow (2010, pp. 11–12) for an analysis of dowry-related violence.

71   For more on the laws banning dowry discrimination, see OneWorld South Asia (2009).

72   For an analysis of witchcraft accusations and associated violence, see Paudel (2011).

73   See Global Press Institute (2011).

74   See WOREC (2012) and UNFPA (2003) on psychological violence suffered by women in South-east Asia, including Nepal.

75   For more information on the targeting of women as weapons of war, on wartime rapes, and on gang rapes, see Silwal (2010).

76   See UNNIP (n.d); IDA et al. (2011); IDA and Saferworld (2008; 2009).

77   Kathmandu has a population density of 4,408 people per square kilometre and has exhibited the highest population growth in a decade, namely 61 per cent (CBS, 2012).

78   The small number of reported cases prevents a more detailed interpretation.

79   Around 46 per cent of those aged 20–24 lack stable, gainful employment (British Council Nepal, 2012, p. 14).

80   The Jana Andolan II or the People's Revolution refers to the 2006 democratic movement and 19 days of protests that led to the curtailing of the powers of the monarchy and the restoration of the Nepal House of Representatives.

81   These percentages are based on multiple responses (IDA and Small Arms Survey, 2012).

82   See NAVA *Issue Brief* on armed groups (Bogati, Carapic, and Muggah, 2013).

83   In a separate question about the perceived availability of different weapons in their area, about 90 per cent of respondents cited bladed weapons and around 70 per cent cited crude

84   weapons as the two most common types in their communities (IDA and Small Arms survey, 2012); multiple responses were possible.

84   For more information on cases of violence involving *khukuri*, see INSEC (2011b).

85   This number includes explosions as well as activities revolving around unexploded devices, such as IED deactiviation (UNNIP, n.d.).

86   The UN Mission in Nepal registered 32,250 Maoist soldiers, of whom 19,602 were verified as meeting the criteria adopted by the political parties (UNMIN, n.d.).

87   In estimating the range of households that own firearms in the sampled districts, this study takes three factors into account: (i) household size; (ii) the latest census data; and (iii) the rate of non-response for the particular question.

88   Sixers are craft or home-made guns that can hold six rounds at a time (Kala, 2001).

89   The crimes include the murder of Muslim activist Faizan Ahmed, the murder of jeweller Harka Bahadur Diyali, and the assassination of Supreme Court justice Rana Bahadur Bam in Lalitpur (*Himalayan Times*, 2012e).

90   For instance, a *kachahari* is a type of village court, presided by the village elders (IDA and Saferworld, 2010). Other such groups include *anjuman* (a committee of three men in Muslim communities), *maijan dewam* (a caste-based dispute resolution mechanism), *mukhiya* (which designates a Thakali elder), *pancha bhaladmi* (a council of five elders operating in eastern Nepal) (Saferworld, 2011, pp. iv–v). Historically, village *panchayats* (precursors of today's Village Development Committees) had a role in dispute resolution, one they have preserved informally in many localities (p. iv).

91   The category of private security companies was not identified by survey respondents, although a few did mention individual private security guards.

92   Nepali security guards are in demand in external markets. Qatar and Malaysia approached the Government of Nepal in 2010 with an offer to increase the number of Nepali security workers in their countries (Ghimire, P., 2010).

93   The Nepalese Gurkhas are famous for their fighting skills and determination. Initially noticed by the British East India Company around 1815, the Gurkhas formed a brigade, fighting alongside the British armed forces in the World Wars as well as the Falklands, Iraq, and Kosovo wars. Within the ranks of the British army, their numbers fell from 112,000 (a peak reached during World War II) to about 3,500 in 2010 (BBC News, 2010). Their signature weapon is the *khukuri* (Magnier, 2012).

94   This calculation was based on the 2012 figure of the strength of Nepal Police, excluding the Armed Police Force, and using the 2011 census data for the overall population estimate (CBS, 2011a).

95   The rates are based on 2010 figures; see Florquin (2011).

96   This figure was calculated using the 2011 census population estimates for the three districts of Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, and Lalitpur, which totals 1,851,656 (CBS, 2012), and the number of police personnel per district supplied by Nepal Police (2012). To see more information on the distribution of these figures according to rank, see Metropolitan Nepal Police (n.d.).

97   This percentage is calculated using the overall figure of women on the force and women to be recruited (thus 4,492 female officers), out of a total of 61,171 police officers, Female personnel account for 7.47 per cent of the force.

98 For a more detailed list of and information on political party youth wings, see Carter Center (2011).

99 These estimates refer to overall membership rather than active membership, which is likely to be much smaller (Carter Center, 2011, pp. 25–31).

100 Village Development Committees are administrative divisions in Nepal.

101 For more information on policies and programmes initiated or continued by the Government of Nepal in cooperation with a number of international and local partners, see Government of Nepal (2012a).

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