

small arms survey 2009

shadows of war



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FOREWORD

What I have learnt from a number of peace processes is that to overcome animosity and apprehension, the parties need to have a sustained, long-term commitment to peace. Peace agreements deserve to be celebrated; rejecting violence gives hope for the future. Yet experience shows that an agreement is only the beginning of a long and arduous road towards sustained peace. Building peace must involve all in the community. Support from the international community can play a crucial role in this process.

The commitment of the parties to a settlement is almost always challenged by a range of threats in the post-conflict period. Typically, they emerge from economic, governance, and security sector problems prevailing in war-torn societies. After armed conflict, public infrastructure is often ruined, state finances depleted, large numbers of people and entire communities displaced, and poverty aggravated. Institutions and agencies of the state must be rebuilt from the ground up. The scale of the challenge is not made any easier by the fact that the ethnic, political, or economic reasons for the conflict often remain unresolved.

The *Small Arms Survey 2009: Shadows of War* makes it clear that armed violence in the post-war period is particularly detrimental to any peace-building effort. Violence and insecurity can be worse than in wartime. Violence can inexplicably multiply and assume new forms, thus jeopardizing recovery. Consequently, managing armed violence is a priority concern for post-conflict societies and the multilateral and bilateral agencies working to support them.

If it takes into account the lessons available, the international community is increasingly better placed to respond to post-war violence. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration do not amount to a panacea, but increasingly integrated, flexible, and synergetic approaches need to be developed. Preventing violence and reforming the state security sector are recognized as essential elements of successful peace processes. Combining formal and informal measures of stabilization and 'second-generation' measures gives reason for hope, as highlighted in the pages of this volume.

Any armed conflict causes immense human suffering and should be brought to an end without delay. Achieving this in a sustainable way is a precondition for early recovery. This requires constant reassessment of the knowledge base and the tools available to assist war-affected societies in securing lasting peace and security. By providing informed reflection on recent developments in post-conflict security promotion, the *Small Arms Survey* makes a valuable contribution to this end.

—Martti Ahtisaari
Former President of Finland
2008 Nobel Peace Prize laureate

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ABOUT THE SMALL ARMS SURVEY

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and by sustained contributions from the Governments of Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Survey is also grateful for past and current project support received from the Governments of Australia, Denmark, France, New Zealand, Spain, and the United States, as well as from different United Nations agencies, programmes, and institutes.

The objectives of the Small Arms Survey are: to be the principal source of public information on all aspects of small arms and armed violence; to serve as a resource centre for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and activists; to monitor national and international initiatives (governmental and nongovernmental) on small arms; to support efforts to address the effects of small arms proliferation and misuse; and to act as a clearinghouse for the sharing of information and the dissemination of best practices. The Survey also sponsors field research and information-gathering efforts, especially in affected states and regions. The project has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, and sociology, and collaborates with a network of researchers, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

NOTES TO READERS

Abbreviations: Lists of abbreviations can be found at the end of each chapter.

Chapter cross-referencing: Chapter cross-references appear capitalized in brackets throughout the text. For example, in Chapter 8 on reintegration of former combatants in Aceh: ‘As in other post-war contexts, these acts of violence differed in nature from those of the war era (POST-CONFLICT SECURITY).’

Exchange rates: All monetary values are expressed in current US dollars (USD). When other currencies are also cited, unless otherwise indicated, they are converted to USD using the 365-day average exchange rate for the period 1 September 2007 to 31 August 2008.

Small Arms Survey: The plain text—Small Arms Survey—is used to indicate the overall project and its activities, while the italicized version—*Small Arms Survey*—refers to the publication. The *Survey*, appearing italicized, refers generally to past and future editions.

Web site: For more detailed information and current developments on small arms issues, readers are invited to visit the Small Arms Survey Web site at www.smallarmssurvey.org

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A fireman takes cover during a confrontation between militant supporters of toppled president Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the police in Posmarchan, Haiti, June 2005. © Ramon Espinosa/AP Photo

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The end of armed conflict does not always—or even typically—bring an end to pervasive armed violence. Peace agreements are signed, fighting forces disbanded, many of their weapons recovered and destroyed; nevertheless, guns continue to kill and injure large numbers of people. Parts of a country that were formerly insulated from the impacts of war may suddenly be transformed into killing fields. The civil war in Guatemala ended in 1996, but violence in the country, now at critical levels, has expanded to affect the entire society. The Democratic Republic of the Congo saw its violent death rates drop after the formal end of war in 2002, yet overall mortality has remained exceptionally high, with hundreds of thousands of people dying from easily treatable illnesses, such as malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia, and malnutrition—delayed, indirect consequences of war. In case after case, the much heralded ‘peace dividend’ is suppressed by the aftershocks of armed conflict.

Post-conflict violence is frequently fuelled by many of the same political, economic, and communal factors that give rise to war in the first place. Fragile state structures exacerbate the problem—for example, by enabling former warlords to seek new revenue streams through organized criminal violence. An abundance of (unregulated) small arms and light weapons, coupled with an increased social acceptance of armed violence, add to the mix. A shifting constellation of state agents and armed groups prey on these vulnerabilities. Among war’s many shadows is the very real risk that the society will return to full-scale armed conflict.

Given the extent to which post-war violence can undermine community security and socio-economic development, curtailing it is an obvious priority for affected states as well as the donor governments and international agencies that have invested heavily in the promotion of peace and state reconstruction. For this reason, the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants has been a staple of international peace-building for at least two decades. Much work has been done to distil and refine good DDR practices; the most prominent of these contributions is the United Nations’ set of Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), developed in 2006. Yet documents such as the IDDRS reflect a set of assumptions that may not apply in all contexts. Moreover, if the state cannot provide security for all of its citizens, weapons management programmes will have limited feasibility and reach.

The *Small Arms Survey 2009: Shadows of War* explores some of the many challenges facing countries emerging from war. It reviews how affected states, UN agencies, and donor governments respond to these problems, not only through DDR and other conventional programmes, but also using approaches that focus on identifying and counteracting risk factors for armed violence in the post-war period. ‘Interim stabilization’ measures, designed to create space before more formal, large-scale security promotion activities take place, are undertaken during the sensitive period coinciding with or immediately after the end of armed conflict. ‘Second-generation’ interventions accompany or follow DDR and security sector reform (SSR), addressing specific security challenges, often at the local level.

Other tools remain underutilized. The tracing of weapons and ammunition can help detect illicit trafficking and weak stockpile security, crucial findings in fragile post-conflict environments, where even a small number of arms can undermine security gains. For this reason, controlling arms flows and stockpiles will remain a priority for many post-war societies. At the same time, policy-makers are expanding their focus beyond the tools of armed violence in an attempt to shape not only weapons availability, but also the conditions that foster weapons misuse.

Chapter highlights

Four chapters in the *Small Arms Survey 2009* are devoted to the book's principal theme of post-conflict violence and security promotion. A chapter on post-conflict security, outlining the key challenges in this area, is followed by three case studies. A chapter on DDR in Aceh raises important questions about the application of the reintegration model to middle-income countries. Afghanistan serves as a vivid illustration of the difficulty inherent in building security while simultaneously creating a new state; it also exemplifies why the 'post-conflict' label may not always be appropriate after the formal end of a war. The thematic section ends with a chapter that explores perceptions of security in Southern Lebanon following the 2006 Hizbollah–Israel war. In an environment where the root causes of political violence endure, the population is cautious about government gun control yet surprisingly supportive of state security institutions.

This year's second theme, arms transfers, is addressed in the volume's three opening chapters. While the fate of the Arms Trade Treaty process was unclear at the time of writing, this edition's comprehensive review of export controls identifies some important control gaps and troubling differences in licensing practices among the world's major exporting states. In the chapter on authorized small arms transfers, new sources of data—and the expansion and refinement of existing sources—have allowed for a more precise estimate of the scale of the global firearms trade. The third chapter in the transfers section emphasizes the potential value of tracing weapons and ammunition in conflict and post-conflict settings, though it notes that, despite modest resource implications, the international community has yet to embrace this measure.

Additional chapters in the 2009 edition focus on small arms measures and impacts. The UN update chapter analyses developments at the United Nations in 2008, a year that opened up new possibilities for the *Programme of Action* and finally brought ammunition into the global arms control picture. A review of state-sponsored disarmament, weapons collection, and destruction concludes that these activities are most effective when accepted as legitimate. An overview of the impacts of small arms on children and youth rounds out the volume.

Transfers section

Chapter 1 (Authorized transfers): New sources of data—and the expansion and refinement of existing sources—are resulting in greater understanding of the international trade in small arms and light weapons. As in previous years, the transfers chapter uses customs data compiled by the UN (UN Comtrade) as the basis for its analysis of the global authorized trade but, in part of the chapter, supplements it with information from other sources including the UN Register of Conventional Arms and national reporting.

Using UN Comtrade data, the chapter identifies a 28 per cent increase in the value of worldwide transfers of small arms and light weapons from 2000 to 2006. Using multiple data sources for 53 exporting countries, it estimates the value of documented firearms transfers at approximately USD 1.58 billion in 2006. This figure includes USD 140 million in firearms transfers that were not captured by customs data. This study is the first phase of a multi-year project aimed at developing a more precise estimate of the global trade in small arms and light weapons, including their parts, accessories, and ammunition.

Definition of small arms and light weapons

The Small Arms Survey uses the term 'small arms and light weapons' to cover both military-style small arms and light weapons as well as commercial firearms (handguns and long guns). It largely follows the definition used in the Report of the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (UN doc. A/52/298):

Small arms: revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, and light machine guns.

Light weapons: heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, recoilless rifles, portable anti-tank missile and rocket launchers, portable anti-aircraft missile launchers, and mortars of under 100 mm calibre.

Chapter 2 (Export controls): This chapter provides an overview of the export controls of the world's major exporting states. It compares the legislative and administrative frameworks governing the licensing of military small arms exports and explores the associated decision-making process, including the government agencies involved in licensing decisions and the criteria they apply.

Strong export controls are a vital tool in the fight against diversion and illicit trafficking. This chapter highlights the diversity among states' export control arrangements and exposes some of the gaps in the implementation of their international and regional arms transfer commitments. The most glaring weaknesses seem to affect post-shipment controls—and end-use monitoring in particular—making it difficult for states to determine whether their export control systems are effective in preventing the diversion of weapons to unauthorized end users and end uses.

Chapter 3 (Conflict tracing): The international community has come to recognize that the ability to trace weapons—from their place of manufacture to their use in the world's conflicts of concern—is an important component of efforts to control illicit small arms proliferation. Despite more than a decade of attention to small arms identification and tracing, however, the international community has yet to make full use of these significant tools in conflict and post-conflict contexts. Efforts to control illicit trafficking need to be founded on firm evidence if they are to be successful. To this end, this chapter explores the processes and competencies required to identify weapons and track their transfer routes. It is intended to serve as a practical guide to the tracing of small arms, light weapons, and their ammunition, one that could facilitate the development of more effective tracing by states and organizations working in conflict and post-conflict societies.

Spotlight issues

Chapter 4 (UN update): The UN update chapter reviews three main developments at the United Nations in 2008: the Third Biennial Meeting for the *UN Programme of Action* (BMS3), an experts' report on ammunition stockpiles, and initial discussions of a possible Arms Trade Treaty. Although the BMS3 outcome and *Ammunition Report* offer a wealth of possibilities for international small arms work over the coming years, the chapter stresses that, for the moment, these remain possibilities, not realities.

The documents agreed in 2008, coupled with earlier ones on weapons tracing and brokering, help establish a set of benchmarks for implementation in the areas they cover. This should facilitate the evaluation of progress in the implementation of the *Programme of Action* and other instruments, especially if accompanied by more systematic and rigorous reporting, including an analysis of reporting. Fundamentally, the production of new documents, important as they might be, is only progress on paper. Eight years after the adoption of the *UN Programme of Action*, the priority remains implementation.

Chapter 5 (Disarmament): Small arms and light weapons disarmament measures are becoming routine and widespread. This chapter provides an empirical review of their contribution to conflict and violence abatement. It focuses on systematic weapons collection and destruction among civilians, the state, and non-state combatants. The data and case studies show that, whether they are a cause of change or a correlate, collection and disarmament activities are usually associated with reduced armed violence and enhanced political stability. The prospects for further small arms collection and disarmament are considerable. At least 40 per cent of state arsenals—some 76 million small arms—appear to be surplus to requirements and highly suitable for destruction. Collection and destruction seem readily feasible for approximately 20 per cent of all civilian firearms—another 120 million or more. The experiences recounted in this chapter indicate that disarmament is neither a universal antidote for armed violence and political instability, nor, when undertaken with public consent, a threat to liberty or security.

Chapter 6 (Children and youth): Those seeking to understand and mitigate the impacts of armed violence increasingly recognize children and youth as a distinct stakeholder group. It is widely understood that male adolescents and young men are disproportionately the direct victims (as well as perpetrators) of armed violence. An expanding body of research is also highlighting the specific—and often long-lasting—effects of such violence on broader groups of children and youth. This chapter shows that while the direct impacts of armed violence are highly visible and measurable, the indirect impacts, including disrupted schooling, disease, and malnutrition, affect many others. Despite their vulnerabilities, it also appears that, as a group, children and youth demonstrate enormous resilience to the effects of armed violence. Further study is needed, however, to understand how these coping mechanisms function and how they can be strengthened.

Post-conflict section

Chapter 7 (Post-conflict security): Armed violence can persist long after the formal end of war. Managing such violence is essential to the long-term recovery of affected societies, yet conventional approaches to post-conflict security promotion, such as DDR and SSR, are often unable to meet these security needs. This chapter reviews the factors that influence the distribution and intensity of post-conflict armed violence, including the persistence of war-time patronage networks and changing motivations of violence entrepreneurs. It also examines some of the new strategies that seek to address the risks and dynamics of post-conflict violence. These include the deployment of interim stabilization measures in the period before DDR and SSR can get under way and second-generation interventions, which typically target key security challenges. In contrast to many of the larger, more conventional programmes, these measures are tailored to the local context and based on identified needs and risk factors.

Chapter 8 (Aceh): The transition from secessionist conflict to peace in Aceh, Indonesia, has been hailed as a model. Following the 2005 peace agreement between the Free Aceh Movement and the government, disarmament proceeded smoothly, former rebels became legitimate political figures, and security gains were realized. Yet the reintegration of former combatants has not proceeded effectively, and peace dividends are unequally distributed across communities.

Based on surveys of ex-combatants and civilians, conflict monitoring, and poverty assessments conducted over three years, the chapter finds that reintegration programmes have failed, in part because of false assumptions about ex-combatants and their relations to the community. Orthodox DDR theory presupposes low levels of social cohesion between ex-combatants and civilians and, moreover, assumes that the former will face economic disadvantage

upon their return to civilian life; yet neither assumption held true in Aceh. Cash distributions without technical assistance or monitoring, and the absence of long-term assistance to conflict-affected areas, are other key reasons for the disappointing reintegration outcomes.

Chapter 9 (Afghanistan): Since the overthrow of the Taliban regime in late 2001, the international community has supported efforts to build an effective security sector, facilitate the development of a nationally representative government, and reduce the widespread influence and authority of armed groups in Afghanistan. These activities have involved the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the Afghan Military Forces (AMF) and follow-on measures targeting AMF and other groups that were missed during DDR.

Three years after the DDR effort ended, some important gains have been realized, including the disarmament and demobilization of some 63,000 AMF and the collection of approximately 100,000 weapons and 30,000 tons of ammunition. The disbandment of illegal armed groups project has also reduced the numbers of warlords, drug lords, and other illegal armed group leaders in the government. But the persistence of commander–militiamen linkages and continuing—even growing—insecurity in the country have demonstrated the limits of what can be achieved when state-building, peace-building, counter-insurgency, and counter-narcotics operations coincide.

Chapter 10 (Southern Lebanon): The Lebanon chapter presents the results of a household survey conducted in the south of the country in March–May 2008, nearly two years after the Hizbollah–Israel war. It supports independent reports of some 1,000 deaths and widespread property damage in the south as a result of the 2006 war and helps shed light on attitudes towards arms and security in the region.

Although Southern Lebanon has long been characterized as a Hizbollah stronghold, its people appear to have more confidence in state security institutions than previously believed. The study reveals strong support for the Lebanese army and police, but also points to the limits of public confidence in state security providers. While significant numbers of southerners back government regulation of civilian gun ownership and the banning of non-state armed groups, many others oppose such measures. Continuing tensions, both within the country and with Israel, are a likely source of caution on weapons issues.

Conclusion

The shadows of war are many and overlapping. In some countries, the conflict–post-conflict distinction has lost its meaning. In others, the risk of a return to war persists because the motivations for conflict remain, as do the means. It is unreasonable to expect a country emerging from many years of war to make a smooth and painless transition to peace. This edition highlights the numerous hazards this transition entails, as well as some of the measures—whether well-established or less conventional—designed to put war-torn societies on a path to sustainable peace.

In this volume, the Small Arms Survey continues its exploration of the causes, consequences, and correctives to the problem of armed violence, with a particular focus on small arms and light weapons proliferation. The 2010 edition of the *Survey* will continue to investigate these issues with a special emphasis on weapons use and armed violence perpetrated by urban gangs and other groups, including some of the interventions now being deployed to address this problem of growing concern. ■

—Glenn McDonald and Emile LeBrun
Editors