

## **FACTS ABOUT ARMED VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT**

### **Fatalities**

- Each year more than 740,000 people—over 2,000 per day—die as a result of the violence associated with armed conflicts and large- and small-scale criminal violence.<sup>1</sup>
- The majority of these deaths—490,000—occur in non-conflict settings.<sup>2</sup>
- Over 90 percent of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>3</sup>
- Armed violence is the fourth most common cause of death for persons between the ages of 15 and 44 worldwide.<sup>4</sup>

### **Impact on Development**

- Armed violence destroys lives and livelihoods, breeds insecurity, and hampers prospects for human development. According to the most recent estimates, the total cost of armed violence in non-conflict countries amounts to USD 163 billion—more than the total annual spending on official development assistance.<sup>5</sup>
- War-related violence decreases the annual growth of conflict-affected countries by an average of 2 percent per year for the duration of the conflict. The annual cost of a new conflict is estimated at over USD 64 billion.<sup>6</sup>
- In El Salvador, firearm violence costs the state and its citizens 11.5 percent of GDP—more than twice the budget for education and health (4.8 percent of GDP), according to the most recently available figures.<sup>7</sup>
- 22 of the 34 countries furthest from reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are in or emerging from conflict and experiencing high levels of armed violence.<sup>8</sup>
- Years of civil war and sustained levels of armed violence in conflict states such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Sri Lanka have led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and to a massive loss of livelihood for millions, greatly increasing the number of people living in poverty and inhibiting the achievement of MDG 1.

### **Small Arms and Light Weapons in Circulation**

- An estimated 875 million small arms and light weapons (SALW) are in circulation today, three-quarters of them in the hands of civilians.<sup>9</sup>
- As many as 60 percent of all homicides are committed with firearms<sup>10</sup>; In El Salvador, eight out of ten homicides are committed with firearms.<sup>11</sup>
- Illicit traffickers are leading purchasers of SALW, fuelling the cycle of armed violence.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2002), *Development Held Hostage*. Geneva: UNDP. & United Nations Development Programme (2005), *Securing Development*. Geneva: UNDP.

<sup>2</sup> Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008), *Global Burden of Armed Violence*. Geneva: Geneva Declaration Secretariat.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation (2008b), *Preventing violence and reducing its impact – How development agencies can help*. Geneva: WHO.

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organisation (2008b), *Preventing violence and reducing its impact – How development agencies can help*. Geneva: WHO.

<sup>5</sup> Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008), *Global Burden of Armed Violence*. Geneva: Geneva Declaration Secretariat.

<sup>6</sup> *Conflict and Development: Peace-building and Post-conflict Reconstruction* Government of the United Kingdom // UK House of Commons International Development Committee (Oct. 2006)

<sup>7</sup> Carlos Acevedo *Los costos económicos de la violencia en Centroamérica* Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Publica, 2008

<sup>8</sup> *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the MDGs*, UN Millennium Project, 2005

<sup>9</sup> *Small Arms Survey Yearbook 2007*

<sup>10</sup> Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008), *Global Burden of Armed Violence*. Geneva: Geneva Declaration Secretariat.

<sup>11</sup> Carlos Acevedo *Los costos económicos de la violencia en Centroamérica* Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Publica, 2008

<sup>12</sup> SEESAC [Guns, Planes and Ships: Identification and Disruption of Clandestine Arms Transfers](#) 2008

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- An estimated 50 to 60 percent of the global small arms trade is legal—but legally exported weapons often find their way into the illicit market, destabilizing already fragile states in conflict.<sup>13</sup>

### Gender

- Young men are the main perpetrators and victims of armed violence. In some countries “at peace” more young men are killed through armed violence than in countries with ongoing armed conflicts.<sup>14</sup>
- Women constitute the majority of the victims of violence in domestic settings and of sexual abuse and exploitation in community/public settings; much of this is enabled or exacerbated by the presence of illegal arms.<sup>15</sup>
- Systematic violence against women inhibits development by assigning women a lower position in society. Only 28 percent of “fragile countries” are on track to achieve the gender equality MDG by 2015.<sup>16</sup>
- In many violence-prone countries, female-headed households face the double challenge of diminished income (often due to the violent death of a male breadwinner) and discrimination (due to social or political stigma).<sup>17</sup>

### UNDP in Action

- UNDP currently supports 27 countries worldwide to address the proliferation of weapons and related violence. To achieve weapons control and reductions in armed violence, UNDP promotes an integrated, evidence-based approach drawing on a range of programmatic tools:
  - Baseline assessments that identify the nature, scale, frequency and dynamics of armed violence in a particular environment.
  - Development of livelihood opportunities in armed violence-affected environments through micro-grants and training, and other income-generation activities that tackle the root causes of armed violence.
  - Awareness-raising on the impact and cost of armed violence through information and advocacy campaigns.
  - Strengthening of national and local capacities (legislative, regulatory, service provision) for armed violence prevention and reduction.
  - Strengthening of national and local capacities to collect, store and – where pertinent – destroy illicit small arms, and to limit their civilian circulation.
- Recognizing that women and families can play a critical role in promoting peace and reducing armed violence in their communities, UNDP empowers women and families to actively deter the use of arms.
- UNDP has developed a partnership with a number of UN agencies (WHO, UNICEF, UNODA, UN-Habitat and UNODC) through the global Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP); providing an effective platform for directing UN agencies’ armed violence prevention resources at the policy and programme level.

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<sup>13</sup> SEESAC [Guns, Planes and Ships: Identification and Disruption of Clandestine Arms Transfers](#) 2008

<sup>14</sup> In Certain countries “at peace” violent death rates reach as high as 64/1000; in some of the hottest war zones, violent death tolls reach only 48/1000.

<sup>15</sup> Sanam Naraghi Anderlini *Idle Minds, Empty Pockets: Men as Perpetrators and Victims of Violence in Crisis Settings* 2010 (Draft)

<sup>16</sup> DFID *Agenda 2010: Background paper on fragile states*

<sup>17</sup> Sanam Naraghi Anderlini *Idle Minds, Empty Pockets: Men as Perpetrators and Victims of Violence in Crisis Settings* 2010 (Draft)

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- UNDP supports regional small arms clearinghouses in Central America and southeastern Europe to counter the cross-border, regional nature of arms trafficking.

### **Global Efforts**

- In June 2006, UNDP and the Government of Switzerland co-hosted a summit that resulted in 42 states endorsing the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, an initiative designed to achieve measurable reductions in armed violence by 2015. As of March 2010, 108 states had signed the declaration, and efforts with core group members and signatory-states are underway to ensure armed violence reduction is at the center of development policies and programmes.
- Building on the work of the Geneva Declaration, UNDP and the Government of Norway are working with Member States to build further international momentum to ensure that commitments to armed violence reduction and prevention are included in the High Level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs, and are reflected in subsequent MDG and developmental strategies through 2015.
- UNDP co-chairs the OECD/DAC INCAF Task Team on Statebuilding, Peacebuilding and Security, which has produced a policy paper on armed violence reduction and is developing operational programming notes on urban violence and youth violence.

### **Call to Action**

To achieve the MDGs by 2015, governments, donors and development actors must:

- Include commitments on armed violence reduction and prevention and the strengthening of the rule of law in MDG achievement strategies through 2015.
- Develop systematic measurement and monitoring of the incidence and impact of armed violence at national and sub-national levels.
- Develop and apply a set of targets and indicators to assess progress in efforts to achieve measurable reductions.
- Recognize the rights of victims of armed violence in a non-discriminatory manner, consistent with existing international obligations, including provision for their adequate care and rehabilitation, and for their social and economic inclusion.
- Integrate armed violence prevention and reduction strategies into international, regional, national and sub-national development plans and programmes, and support such programmes through international cooperation and assistance.
- Stem the proliferation, illegal trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons and ammunition, and support the implementation of effective weapons reduction and small arms control initiatives.

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