

Executive Summary

The incidence of armed conflict and combat deaths has been declining in recent years. But the number of people killed by *armed violence* has not. Approximately 740 000 people die as a result of armed violence each year. The majority of these deaths occur in countries not affected by conflict; they are instead due to homicide and interpersonal violence.

Armed violence includes the use or threatened use of weapons to inflict injury, death or psychosocial harm, which undermines development. For policy makers, the armed violence perspective offers a broader view than armed conflict alone by also including situations of chronic *violent crime* and *interpersonal violence*. This is because armed violence in non-conflict settings can have as significant an effect on security and development as it does in societies affected by war.

The human and developmental costs of armed violence are far-reaching. Armed violence can destroy lives and livelihoods, disrupt access to and delivery of education, health and other social services, induce mass displacement, and restrict mobility, investment and trade. It can also undermine governance, fuel illicit economies and informal nodes of power, destroy social and human capital, and feed cycles of violence, poverty and socio-political exclusion. Ultimately, armed violence makes development impossible and undermines attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. It also imposes significant economic costs in terms of lost productivity and welfare; those costs range in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

Armed violence is also a *security threat*. Real and perceived insecurity generated by violence affects households, communities, countries and regions. It also undermines efforts to ensure global security. The perpetrators of armed violence are wide-ranging – they include criminals, militants, insurgents, gang members, vigilante groups and terrorists, as well as individuals, and in some cases members of the police, military and private security forces. And while the perpetrators and victims of armed violence are primarily young males, armed violence in fact affects the young and old, rich and poor, men and women, boys and girls.

Armed violence trends and programming gaps

A focus on armed violence highlights emerging trends in insecurity that are blurring the dividing lines between armed conflict and crime, fragility and stability, and community, national, regional and global security. Examples of these trends include:

- The incidence of armed violence in many non-conflict countries exceeds that of certain countries affected by war.
- There are growing linkages in certain countries and cities between socio-political conflict and crime.
- Societies emerging from armed conflict are prone to higher-than-expected rates of armed violence.
- Armed violence is escalating in rapidly urbanising cities and towns.
- Under-governed spaces are emerging and expanding, particularly in fragile contexts and collapsed states.
- State actors are colluding with non-state criminal groups and enterprises.

These emerging patterns of armed violence are symptomatic of deeper global processes that are interacting to transform the basic conditions of security and underdevelopment around the world. Examples include the relative weakening of national institutions in relation to global macroeconomic stability and financial confidence; the growing empowerment of non-state actors; rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation; environmental degradation; and major demographic transformations such as the growth of young and frequently unemployed populations. Globalisation and the relative freedom of movement of capital, goods and individuals have also enabled thriving global illicit markets in weapons, commodities and financial flows.

The new landscapes of insecurity reveal eight development programming gaps:

- Inadequate capacity to deal with the convergence of conflict and criminal violence.
- Ineffective or narrowly conceived programmes during the post-conflict transition.
- Failure to correctly identify the risks and impacts of armed violence.
- Difficulties in planning and programming at the sub-national and regional levels.
- Lack of experience programming on armed violence-related issues in urban areas.

- Dealing with the challenges of youth gangs and youth at risk with regard to armed violence.
- Insufficient understanding of and investment in violence and crime prevention.
- Inadequate awareness of the relationships between underdevelopment and (transnational) organised crime.

Armed violence reduction and prevention, and the armed violence lens

Armed violence reduction and prevention (AVR) aims at reducing the risks and impacts of armed violence. AVR is not a new form of programming. Rather, it is an emerging set of practices that builds on existing frameworks, approaches and lessons learned in areas such as conflict prevention, peacebuilding, crime prevention and public health. Many development practitioners and their national partners now agree that more comprehensive approaches are needed to reduce and prevent armed violence. Hard-won lessons have revealed the limitations of narrowly conceived responses for controlling the misuse of weapons, reintegrating ex-combatants, and fighting crime and dealing with youth gangs. Experience also underscores the ineffectiveness of top-down strategies that fail to address the security needs of communities and citizens.

Ongoing AVR programming in the field, while still in its infancy, is signposting a number of critical ways forward. An emerging lesson is the importance of integrated and multi-sectoral approaches that combine developmental and preventive approaches with more effective law enforcement efforts. Likewise, multi-level responses are needed, which address armed violence risk factors at the local, national, regional and global levels.

AVR practitioners have also learned that although each situation of armed violence is unique, different manifestations of armed violence – from armed conflict and post-conflict to criminal – often share common patterns of structural and proximate risk factors. Identifying and acting on these commonalities can open up new opportunities for the cross-pollination of conflict, crime and public health approaches to diagnosing and responding to armed violence.

Based on this accumulated knowledge, this policy paper introduces an “armed violence lens” that captures the key elements and levels that shape armed violence patterns, namely: the *people* affected by armed violence, the *perpetrators* and their motivations, the availability of *instruments* (arms), and the wider *institutional/cultural* environment that enables and/or protects against armed violence.

The lens underscores the way violence transcends different development and security sectors. It also emphasises how local manifestations of armed violence are shaped and influenced by national, regional and global factors. In so doing, it encourages practitioners to think outside of particular programming mandates and consider the entirety of the problem at hand. Shared analysis based on the lens can help bring together a diverse array of actors who work on different aspects of armed violence, but not necessarily with each other.

Assessments: Applying the armed violence lens

Genuinely effective AVR interventions require clear diagnostics of the context-specific geographic and demographic patterns of armed violence, as well as the risk and protective factors.

The armed violence lens does not supplant existing assessment and programming tools such as conflict or stability assessments, analysis of the drivers of change, governance and criminal justice assessments or the public health approach to violence prevention. Rather, it serves as a complementary framework that can help identify how different tools and data sources can be mixed and matched for more sophisticated diagnostics and targeted responses.

AVR encourages development policy makers and practitioners to draw on multiple methods and data sources to build a solid evidence base on which to plan programming. The four most directly relevant tools include:

- Conflict and stability/fragility assessments, which analyse the underlying structural conditions of instability, institutional capacities and fragilities, socio-economic and political dynamics, and key actors. AVR recommends that conflict assessments be adapted and applied in non-conflict contexts affected by armed violence.
- A public health approach, to map armed violence patterns, “hot spots”, risk factors and protective factors.
- Governance and justice sector assessments, which can generate vital information on the role, capacities and challenges of the formal institutional environment with respect to enabling, or protecting against, armed violence. They can also serve as a barometer of government legitimacy.
- Various survey instruments, such as victimisation surveys, security and safety audits, and small arms and multidimensional armed violence surveys. Various existing surveys can help capture people’s views of insecurity, as well as data related to the availability, trade and demand for weapons.

Tools to capture risk factors and linkages at the regional and global levels remain inadequate. Overall, more work is needed with end-users to determine how multiple sources of information can best be gathered, shared and translated into effective programming, in a way that is both practical and realistic.

Programming implications and approaches

The AVR approach expands development programming horizons in a number of directions, by encouraging:

- Creative adaptation of conflict, crime and violence prevention approaches, as field practitioners are already doing from Colombia and Brazil to Bangladesh and South Africa.
- Sub-national and local-level programming. The local level is where armed violence is experienced most directly, and is also where some of the most active and promising initiatives and partnerships have been taking place.
- Programming efforts at the regional and global levels to tackle key risk factors, such as arms transfers and transnational organised crime.

While strong focus is needed on the sub-national and regional levels, the national level remains a vital programming arena that is critical to the sustainability of efforts – including successes achieved at the local level. National-level strategies offer the opportunity to bring together development and security actors around a common vision of AVR, and to synchronise cross-sectoral efforts. National development frameworks and public security strategies can help to prioritise interventions and co-ordinate whole-of-government responses.

Development programming *in or on* situations of armed violence involves high stakes, given the inherent complexity and possibility of actually doing harm. As such, it is important that all development programming be AVR-sensitive. While conflict-sensitive assessments are now routinely applied in conflict and post-conflict contexts, they should also be adapted and deployed in other situations in which there is armed violence.

AVR has two main programming approaches: direct and indirect. Direct programming aims to explicitly prevent and reduce armed violence. Indirect programming requires development agencies to adapt existing sector-specific strategies and interventions in order to better address known risk factors that contribute to armed violence or to enhance protective factors. Established programming streams particularly suited to integrating indirect AVR sub-goals include: poverty reduction, governance, security system reform (SSR), health and education, gender and the environment.

Direct AVR programming is an emerging and indeed growing area of practice around the world. Many ongoing interventions – in Latin America, the Caribbean, eastern and southeastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia and the South Pacific – are signposting important programming directions in the areas of community security; urban armed violence reduction; gangs and youth at risk; and organised and petty crime. The paper concludes with a brief look at these emerging programming areas. While systematic evaluation of these efforts will be required,

It is already clear that many of them share the following organisational principles:

- A rigorous diagnostic of the local situation using multiple methods and data sources.
- Local ownership and leadership.
- A bottom-up perspective on security.
- An understanding of the multifaceted and multi-level nature of armed violence.
- The introduction of multi-sector responses that address elements and relationships captured by the armed violence lens.
- Investment in prevention by identifying and responding to risk factors and strengthening the resilience of communities, societies and states.

Armed violence reduction and prevention (AVR) and other OECD-DAC priorities

The annexes to this paper situate AVR with respect to other OECD-DAC policies. They show how the AVR approach reinforces and enhances member investments in SSR, and how AVR can build on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Importantly, AVR also holds strong promise for pursuing the broader goals of state-building. This is because chronic armed violence signals a fragile situation. The AVR approach stresses the importance of bottom-up perspectives on insecurity and institutional responsiveness. This perspective helps practitioners to focus on the local political processes and relationships that shape armed violence dynamics (rather than on transferring generic institutional models and solutions). In this way, AVR provides a clear opportunity to train attention on the design of effective strategies to strengthen the legitimacy and resilience of state-society relations. In so doing, it helps to navigate the terrain between the *Paris Principles* and standards for *Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*.

Next steps

The OECD-DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) will take forward work on AVR based on this policy paper and in line with the INCAF Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for 2009/2010.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	13
Armed violence trends and programming gaps	14
Armed violence reduction and prevention, and the armed violence lens.....	15
Assessments: Applying the armed violence lens	16
Programming implications and approaches	17
Armed violence reduction and prevention (AVR) and other OECD-DAC priorities ..	18
Next steps.....	19
Introduction	21
Armed violence reduction and prevention (AVR).....	22
Reader’s guide	24
Chapter 1. What is Armed Violence?	27
1.1 The impacts and costs of armed violence for development.....	28
1.2 Key features of armed violence.....	31
1.3 Key drivers: Structural and proximate factors	33
Chapter 2. Armed Violence Trends and Programming Gaps	35
2.1 Global factors influencing armed violence trends	37
2.2 Development policy and programming gaps	40
Chapter 3. Armed Violence Reduction and Prevention (AVR) and the Armed Violence Lens	45
3.1 Lessons learned that are shaping AVR	46
3.2 The armed violence lens: A strategically integrated approach.....	49
3.2.1 The four core elements: People, perpetrators, instruments and institutions	51
People.....	51
Perpetrators	52
Instruments	53
Institutions.....	54
3.2.2 The four levels: Local, national, regional, and global	56

Chapter 4. Assessments: Applying the Armed Violence Lens	59
4.1 Adapting and combining existing assessment methods	60
4.1.1 Making existing tools more AVR-sensitive	61
4.1.2 Combining existing tools around the armed violence lens	61
Strategic conflict assessments, in both conflict and non-conflict contexts	61
Public health approach: Mapping armed violence and building the evidence base ...	64
Governance and criminal justice assessments	68
Survey instruments	68
4.1.3 Promising tools and new data sources	69
4.1.4 Exploring data gaps and additional data sources	70
4.2 Emerging principles for good practice in assessments	72
4.3 Implications for monitoring and evaluation	73
Chapter 5. Programming Implications and Approaches	75
5.1 Programming implications: Expanding horizons	76
Conflict, crime and violence prevention	76
Local-level programming	76
Global and regional levels	78
National level	80
5.2 AVR programming approaches	85
5.2.1 Indirect AVR programming: Sensitive and inclusive	87
5.2.2 Direct AVR programming	88
Community security and development	92
Urban armed violence and municipal government	92
Armed youth gangs and youth at risk of organised armed violence	99
Crime and violence prevention	103
Proposed next steps	106
Annex A. AVR and other OECD-DAC priorities	107
A.1. State-building and fragile situations	107
A.2. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention	109
A.3. AVR and security system reform	111
Annex B. Examples of regional instruments for AVR	113
Annex C. Additional examples of indirect programming	115
Bibliography	123
Organisations (Universities, Research Centres and NGOs)	135
International Organisations	136

Figures

Figure I.1. OECD-DAC Guidance: Policy and programming gaps	25
Figure 3.1. The armed violence lens	50

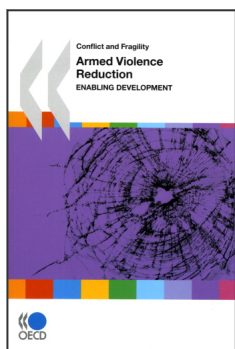
Tables

Table 4.1. Comparison of conflict assessments and public health approach	66
Table 5.1. Health and education: Examples of AVR programming sub-components.....	89
Table A.1. Examples of regional instruments for AVR.....	113
Table C.1. Poverty Reduction: Examples of AVR programming sub-components	116
Table C.2. Governance (not including SSR): Examples of AVR programming sub-components	117
Table C.3. Security System Reform and indirect AVR programming: Examples of AVR programming sub-components	119
Table C.4. Environment: Examples of AVR programming sub-components.....	121

Boxes

Box I.1. AVR, aid effectiveness and implications for state-building	23
Box 1.1. Armed violence obstructs attainment of the MDGs.....	30
Box 1.2. Armed violence and women: Bearing the burden	32
Box 2.1. Young guns and the demographic risks of armed violence	39
Box 2.2. Armed violence in post-conflict contexts	41
Box 2.3. Conflict prevention under-funded in Haiti	43
Box 3.1. Preliminary questions for understanding people’s security needs	52
Box 3.2. Preliminary questions for understanding the motivations of, and risk factors affecting, perpetrators	54
Box 3.3. Preliminary questions about the supply and demand of instruments.....	55
Box 3.4. Preliminary questions for understanding the institutional environment	57
Box 3.5. Synchronising whole-of-government efforts	58
Box 4.1. Many assessments, not enough coherence	62
Box 4.2. Armed violence lens and data sources	63
Box 4.3. Public health approaches to mapping risks of armed violence.....	65
Box 4.4. Applying surveys in southern Sudan	69
Box 4.5. Tools for operations, analysis and advocacy: Geographic Information Systems..	71
Box 4.6. AVR programme monitoring indicators from the Viva Rio initiative in Brazil ..	74
Box 5.1. Combining conflict and violence prevention in Brazil, Colombia and Bangladesh	77
Box 5.2. Community-based AVR: Bottom-up disarmament in Somaliland	79
Box 5.3. Global and regional instruments relevant to armed violence reduction.....	81
Box 5.4. International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala	82
Box 5.5. National and “citizen” security strategies in Jamaica and Brazil.....	85

Box 5.6. Using evidence to mobilise government action on armed violence in El Salvador . . .	86
Box 5.7. Direct AVR programming in Brazil	90
Box 5.8. Community-based programming, viewed through the armed violence lens	93
Box 5.9. Safer communities: A promising AVR approach	94
Box 5.10. Urban AVR programming, viewed through the armed violence lens	96
Box 5.11. Armed violence in an urban context: The Medellín case	97
Box 5.12. The World Bank: Supporting municipal-led AVR	100
Box 5.13. Youth gangs and youth-at-risk programming, viewed through the armed violence lens	102
Box 5.14. Targeting young guns in the Caribbean	103
Box 5.15. WHO: Promising strategies for reducing the incidence and effects of violence	104
Box 5.16. The need for long-term monitoring of prevention initiatives	105



From:
Armed Violence Reduction
Enabling Development

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264060173-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2009), "Executive Summary", in *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264060173-2-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.