

Securing the Peace

POST-CONFLICT SECURITY PROMOTION

Armed violence often festers long after a war comes to an end. In certain 'post-conflict' settings, violence can present even more direct and indirect threats to civilians than the war itself. What is more, this violence is often expressed in diverse ways, challenging policy-makers and practitioners to think differently about how to achieve stability and security. In fact, there are comparatively few examples of security promotion programmes that adequately deal with the many faces of such violence. Ceasefires, peace agreements, and elections do not always go far enough in protecting civilians.

This chapter highlights why and how the transition from war to peace is often so precarious. It documents how efforts to impose victors' justice can unintentionally worsen the situation and the ways certain armed groups—especially senior officers and commanders from the 'losing side'—may be dissatisfied with the new political dispensation and therefore fuel future instability. What is more, the chapter shows how the factors shaping post-war violence are deeply embedded and can include predatory networks and patronage structures associated with the war economy, which may remain intact and even emerge strengthened after protracted warfare. Societies emerging from war can experience a surge in predatory and organized criminal violence due to risk factors and vulnerability associated with the war and post-conflict period. As such, the causes of armed violence—whether political, economic, or communal—may shift in complex ways (see Table 7.4).

This edition of the *Small Arms Survey* is first and foremost concerned with identifying ways of quelling post-war armed violence in order to promote peace- and state-building. In considering some of the challenges inherent in defining a society as 'post-conflict', this chapter examines the patterns and trends of armed violence in post-war contexts such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and countries in Central America. It observes how homicide and victimization rates can stay high and even escalate soon after war ends. It then turns to nascent security-promotion measures that, when combined with conventional interventions such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programmes, can reduce the risks of armed violence and promote personal safety and long-term stabilization of war-ravaged communities.

A selection of key findings from the chapter:

- Certain post-conflict societies and population groups suffer rates of direct armed violence comparable to (or even higher than) those experienced during armed conflicts.
- Excess (non-violent) mortality can also remain high in post-conflict societies—often much higher than violent death rates—long after the shooting stops.
- The risk of armed conflict recurring in post-war societies appears to be greater than the risk of war erupting in societies that have not experienced armed conflict.
- Proximate and structural risks in post-conflict environments—from alcohol, narcotics, and arms availability to high rates of unemployment among men and dense concentrations of displaced populations—can influence the onset, intensity, and duration of post-war armed violence.
- Conventional security promotion activities such as DDR have a mixed record and, on their own, may not be suited to deal with many of the dynamic forms of post-conflict armed violence.
- Interim stabilization measures, tightly connected to the overarching peace- and state-building framework, serve as 'holding strategies' in the immediate post-conflict period.
- Second-generation security promotion interventions—routinely undertaken in combination with or following DDR and security sector reform (SSR)—are evidence-led and community-focused.

More optimistically, this chapter reveals an abundance of strategies that are designed to prevent and reduce post-war armed violence around the world. Nevertheless, solid evidence of what works and what does not is still lacking. Beyond expectations of security, order, and reductions in armed violence, clear benchmarks of 'success' are seldom established. There are comparatively

Table 7.4 Types of post-conflict armed violence

Type of violence	Indicators	Examples
Political violence	Extra-judicial killings, explosives attacks, kidnappings, routine torture, population displacement, organized riots	Cambodia, Guatemala, South Sudan
Routine state-led violence	Excessively violent law enforcement activities, encounter killings, social cleansing operations, routine torture	Angola, Mozambique
Economic and crime-related violence	Armed robbery, extortions, kidnappings for ransom, control of markets through violence	Afghanistan, El Salvador, Guatemala, Liberia
Community and informal justice	Lynchings, vigilante action, mob justice	Liberia, Mozambique, Northern Ireland
Post-conflict property-related disputes	Clashes over land, revenge killings, small-scale 'ethnic cleansing'	Afghanistan, Guatemala, Kosovo, Liberia

Source: Chaudhary and Suhrke (2008)

few credible impact or cost-benefit evaluations of such activities. Nevertheless, a modest but convincing evidence base suggests that 'interim stabilization' and 'second-generation security promotion' interventions offer promising means of diminishing the risks and effects of post-conflict violence.

Taken together with more conventional approaches such as DDR and arms control, these measures comprise a broader, more sophisticated set of tools for enhancing security in the aftermath of war. Interim stabilization initiatives are undertaken during the sensitive period coinciding with or immediately following the end of armed conflict. Designed to create space before more formal and large-scale security promotion activities take place, they can include activities such as the promotion of civilian service corps, military integration arrangements, transitional security forces, dialogue and sensitization programmes, and differentiated forms of transitional autonomy. Second-generation measures are usually deployed later, overlapping with or following DDR and SSR. They include community security and safer-city interventions, weapons for development programmes, and more targeted evidence-based activities focusing on at-risk youth and hot spots. Key factors distinguishing such initiatives from conventional security promotion

include their data-driven approach, a municipal or community focus, and emphasis on risk and symptom mitigation.

Conventional security promotion frequently lacks clear standards of effectiveness. More fundamentally, because it aims at establishing political stability, this type of intervention is often unable to contend with the criminal and quasi-political violence that frequently overtakes politically oriented violence in the post-conflict period. Interim stabilization and second-generation security promotion—by focusing on key risks, enhancing resilience in affected communities, and concentrating on reducing indicators of armed violence—can complement and reinforce conventional security promotion. While no panacea, these measures may be especially useful if targeted at specific groups at risk for, or vulnerable to, armed violence, and at potential 'spoilers' of war-to-peace transitions. ■



A former child soldier hands ammunition over to the UN, Monrovia, Liberia, December 2003. © Sven Torfinn/Panos Pictures