GENEVA DECLARATION

URBAN VIOLENCE IN AN URBAN VILLAGE
A Case Study of Dili, Timor-Leste

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The Geneva Declaration

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Further information about the Geneva Declaration, its activities, and publications is available at www.genevadeclaration.org.

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List of abbreviations

ABRI   Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia
(Indonesian Armed Forces)

APODETI   Associação Popular Democrática de Timor
(Popular Democratic Association of Timor)

BRIMOB   Brigade Mobil (Indonesian paramilitary riot police)

CAVR   Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation

CEPAD   Centre of Studies of Peace and Development

CNRT   Conselho Nacional de Reconstrução do Timor
(National Congress for the Reconstruction of East Timor)

FALINTIL   Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste
(Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor-Leste)

F–FDTL   FALINTIL–Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste
(FALINTIL–Timor-Leste Defence Force)

FORKAMTIL Communication Forum for Timor-Leste's Martial Arts Groups

FRETILIN   Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente
(Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor)

IDP   Internally displaced person

IOM   International Organization for Migration

ISF   International Stabilisation Force

MAG   Martial arts group

MSS   Ministry of Social Solidarity

NGO   Non-governmental organization

PIDE	Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (International and State Defence Police)
PNTL	Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (National Police of Timor-Leste)
PSHT	Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (Lotus Faithful Heart Brotherhood)
TLAVA	Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment
UDT	União Democrática Timorense (Timorese Democratic Union)
UN	United Nations
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste

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Acknowledgements

Executive summary

Over the past decade, multilateral and bilateral agencies have periodically registered concern over acute outbreaks of collective violence in Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. But the experience of urban violence in Dili is not restricted to the recent independence period. Rather, the incidence of conflict can be situated on a historical continuum spanning generations. Earlier manifestations of urban violence generated important consequences in relation to the social and physical morphology of the city and its periphery. In Dili, as in many 'fragile cities' around the world, the past is present. A thorough understanding of the city's historical development is critical to identifying the risks shaping the onset, duration, and severity of urban violence and strategies to contain and reduce it.

This study finds that the town and, more recently, the city of Dili was seized by paroxysms of collective violence on several occasions over the past six decades: in 1942, 1975, 1980, 1991, 1999, 2002, 2006, and 2007. Each episode of acute violence was succeeded by extended periods of low-level tensions, punctuated by spikes of collective violence, then returning to lower rates, as experienced earlier. This pattern of urban violence was routinely accompanied by escalations in homicide rates (including revenge killings), severe and widespread trauma, the degradation of infrastructure, forced and opportunistic migration, land grabs and disputes, and a widespread sense of social injustice and impunity. What is more, each outbreak of collective urban violence contributed to the progressive militarization of Timorese society, as communities and 'violence entrepreneurs' prepared to defend themselves for the future.

Crucially, an understanding of the subtle causes, duration, and dynamics of urban violence in Dili requires looking not only to history but also well beyond the city to the country's hinterland. Indeed, the origins and character of urban violence are influenced by political, economic, and social dynamics that are both external and internal to the geographic and administrative boundaries that define the city. It is the 'interaction' of these external and internal dynamics that informs and shapes the nature of violence in the country's urban spaces. As is well known to most analysts of Timor-Leste, communities residing in

Dili experience a close physical, emotive, and historical relationship with the mountains and outlying districts.

In a way, what is considered an 'urban' manifestation of violence is often fundamentally connected to grievances in rural areas, and vice versa. Dili can and should be understood as an 'urban village'—a set of interconnected and clustered villages that represents extensions of rural communities in an urbanized setting. In this context, residents from one side of the country often live cheek by jowl with villagers from other areas. Those who aim to intervene to prevent and reduce urban violence must be cognizant of this geospatial interaction.

Drawing on a randomized household survey, focus group interviews, and an extensive literature review undertaken between June and December 2009, this study considers the structural and proximate factors shaping urban violence in Dili. These include the presence of informal security actors, erstwhile internally displaced persons (IDPs), permanent and seasonal population movements, land and property disputes, and persistent and glaring socio-economic inequalities. The report also focuses on the objective symptoms of urban violence, including (the comparatively low) homicide rates, the relatively high rates of robbery, the high prevalence of sexual and domestic violence, the relationship between alcohol consumption and the onset of violence, the seemingly ambiguous and distrustful attitudes towards formal security providers, and the interconnections between systemic unemployment and protracted violence. In terms of subjective experiences of urban violence, the study finds that most residents describe their neighbourhoods as generally free from violence, their communities as safer than surrounding communities, the security of their neighbourhoods as adequate, and their neighbours as willing to look out for one another. The tendency towards increased transience and anonymity, owing in part to an exploding population and urbanization, may threaten these social networks of reciprocity.

The study finds that urban violence in Dili can often shift from collective to interpersonal forms in dramatic fashion. Owing to the weak state of crime and health surveillance and the fact that most minor incidents are dealt with through customary means, if at all, it is difficult for international and domestic authorities to anticipate the onset of acute forms of urban violence. While recognizing a comparatively low incidence of overall violent victimization in Dili since 2007, the study observes that muscular coercive and security-led interventions seeking to deter urban violence are more commonly pursued by the government than informal, voluntary approaches that seek to prevent and reduce victimization in the long term.

In the context of wider debates on urban violence in fragile states, it is worth mentioning that the Timor-Leste experience may be atypical. Since 2006, for example, the country has developed a petroleum fund valued at roughly USD 5 billion in total and projected to be worth many times this amount in the coming decade (BPA, 2009). This has allowed the Timorese government to boost public spending by 400–550 per cent in the past 36 months. As a result, the propensity for urban violence may have decreased, as groups and individuals have become rent-seekers in leveraging support from the public authorities. While this shifting relationship may not address many of the fundamental risk factors shaping urban violence, it has, in the words of leading government members, including the prime minister, facilitated the 'buying of peace' in the country. This study concludes with a descriptive overview of various attempts to contain and regulate gang violence and promote more predictable and transparent property rights regimes.

Introduction

In 1915 a notable foreign visitor described Dili as a 'highly pestilential place' (Conrad, 1915, p. 62).

In 2010, Timor-Leste's capital, Dili, is widely considered a moderately safe city. But this was not always the case. Moreover, neglecting existing fault lines may result in a failure to anticipate the onset and spread of urban violence. Prior to independence and until the late 1990s, the province of Timor Timur was the least urbanized of Indonesia's 27 provinces (Nixon, 2008, p. 196). Today, Dili is the sole urban centre of a small country of just over one million inhabitants, dominated in every sense by rural issues, interests, and dynamics.[1] Whereas it can be judged a relatively safe city by international standards, routine interpersonal violence and victimization is a daily occurrence in virtually every *bairro* (neighbourhood).

In fact, despite comparatively low rates of interpersonal violence, Dili has experienced bursts of intense collective violence throughout its history. Most notable in the contemporary era are the Japanese invasion and occupation from 1942 to 1945, the Indonesian invasion of 1975 (and occupation until 1999), the Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste (FALINTIL)[2] attack of June 1980, the Santa Cruz Massacre of 1991, the 1999 Popular Consultation, the 2002 Dili riots, and the events of 2006–07. These events left physical, psychological, symbolic, and material marks on urban residents. Owing to the complex relationships between Dili and other districts in Timor-Leste, urban unrest in the capital profoundly affected all of Timorese society. Indeed, even a casual observation reveals how few people actually identify themselves as being from Dili, but rather as hailing from one of the country's 12 outlying rural districts.[3] So whereas urban violence in Dili may express older or ongoing tensions in rural areas, it is also frequently a driver of rural violent conflict. Put succinctly, violence in Dili reverberates throughout the rest of the country, and vice versa.

Notwithstanding the importance of Dili as the administrative and economic heart of Timor-Leste, the political and demographic centre of gravity has always resided in the rural periphery. For example, in 2007, more than 70 per cent of the population was categorized as rural residents drawing their liveli-

MAP 1 Dili

LEGEND:

- ● Bidau — Settlement
- Becora — Suco
- -▪VERA▪- — Sub-district
- -▪DILI▪- — District
- ▨ — Built-up area
- ━━ — Main road

Metinaro

Dili

Tasi Tolu

Meti-Aut

Tibar

D I L I

LIQUIÇÁ

A I L E U

Bebonuk

Pantai Kelapa

Bidau Lecidere

Beto   Comoro

Bebora

Colmera

Bidau

CRISTO REI

Kampong Baru

Ai Mutin

Bairro Pite

Caicoli

Caicoli

Quintal Kiik

Kuluhun

Perumnas

Quintal Boot

Santa Cruz

Manumeta

Taibessi

DOM ALEIXO

Vila Verde

NAIN FETO   Becora

VERA CRUZ

1km

Lahane Occidental

Lahane Oriental

MAP 2 Timor-Leste

INDONESIA

TIMOR-LESTE

Savu
Sea

Timor
Sea

INDONESIA
Timor

30 km

Timor-Leste

International
boundary

AILEU District

Ossu Sub-district

Tutuala

LAUTÉM
Lospalos

Lautém

Luro

Laga

Iliomar

Uatucarbau

Baucau

Quelicai Baguia

BAUCAU

Venilale

Uatolari

Ossu

VIQUEQUE

Viqueque

Vemase

Laleia

Manatuto

Laclo

MANATUTO

Laclubar

Soibada

Barique/
Natarbora

Laclo

Turiscai

Fatuberliu

Alas

Nain Feto
Cristo Rei

DILI
Metinaro

Remexio

Liquidoe

MANUFAHI

Same

DILI

Lautara

AILEU

Maubisse

Hatu-
Udo

Ataúro

Aileu

Vila

Hatu-

Vera Cruz

Dom Aleixo

Letefoho

Bulico

Ainaro
AINARO

Zumalai

Bazartete

Railaco

ERMERA
Atsabe

Liquiça

LIQUIÇA

Hatolia

Bobonaro

Lolotoe

Suai

Maubara

Atabae

Cailaco

BOBONARO
Maliana

Forohem

COVALIMA
Tilomar

Malikasar

Balibo

Fatululic

Fatumean

Pante
Macasar

Passabe

OECUSSI
Oesilo

Nitibe

DILI

hoods directly from a subsistence-based agricultural economy (WBG and ADB, 2007, p. 9). Traditionally, the economy of Timor-Leste was dependent on so-called 'family gardens', cattle rearing, and modest cash crops, such as coffee and, to some extent, timber (in particular, sandalwood and teak). In the past few years, however, the structure of the economy has started to undergo a profound transition: it is fundamentally oil-driven and is flirting with the so-called 'Dutch disease'.[4] This economic transition has not occurred instantaneously. In fact, in the wake of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975, the demographic, economic, and, to some extent, political focus was purposefully shifted towards the then emerging urban centre of Dili. It is useful to recall that, while Dili was originally the capital of Portuguese Timor, the Indonesian province of Timor Timur, and today of the independent country of Timor-Leste, it is nevertheless a comparatively new 'city', only emerging as such in the 1970s.

Divided into six sections, this study highlights the findings of an urban violence assessment administered between June and August 2009. Overall, it finds that patterns of contemporary urban violence are fundamentally connected to the historical development of Dili and the interaction between the city and its rural periphery. Notwithstanding violent outbursts in 1999, 2002, and 2006–07, the study finds comparatively low rates of violent victimization in the capital in 2009 and 2010. Although one in five Timorese reports of having experienced a robbery and two in ten reports of having experienced some form of domestic or sexual abuse, most respondents say they felt safer in 2009 than in the previous year.

The first two sections of this study consider the physical, social, and historical context of urban violence in Dili. Sections three and four then explore the methods and findings from household survey and focus group research in selected *bairros* of the capital.[5] The fifth section of the report turns to a range of recurrent factors shaping the origins, onset, and duration of urban violence. The final section reviews violence prevention and reduction strategies under-taken over the past five years.[6]

I. Spatial, demographic, and social characteristics of Dili

In geographical terms, the city of Dili straddles swampy and arid lowlands just above sea level and rests in the shadow of a coastal mountain range. In 1975, the city was limited to the small area in and around what is now referred to as 'central Dili'. Swift and frequently unregulated urbanization and population growth over the past three decades has led to the rapid expansion of Dili. The city came to encompass a 12 km stretch of land bounded by sea to the north, with mountains rising rapidly just 3 km south of the coastline.

From 1975 onwards, as Dili began its graduation from town to city, the city witnessed a startling population explosion. Fulfilling a 2004 projection, the population of Timor-Leste soared above 1.1 million by 2009 (OCHA–UNMIT IHCT, 2008, p. 2). Urban population growth appears to have been driven by a combination of factors, including the centralization of economic activity in the capital, forced displacement during repeated episodes of collective violence, a spiralling fertility rate, and a kind of 'capital fetish' among many Timorese. The demographic transition was unprecedented: the overall population grew 13-fold in less than 35 years, with most of that growth concentrated in adults under 30 years of age. The unregulated manner in which population growth occurred generated the conditions for various forms of urban violence, as witnessed in the post-independence period and especially during the 2006–07 crisis.

Owing to their critical influence in shaping subsequent patters of urban violence, the specific dynamics of population growth warrant closer inspection. In 1966, Dili reported a population of just 17,000, with permanent settlements located in the 3x3 km area consisting of the Caicoli, Vila Verde, Farol, Bidau, Lecidere, and Santa Cruz neighbourhoods. Traditional village settlements were scattered around the periphery of this 'urban' core. Significantly, in 1975, the population almost doubled to 28,000 residents (CAVR, 2005, p. 2). During this period, the 'modern' neighbourhoods of Ailok Laran, Bairro Pite, Bebonuk, Becora, Delta (I, II, III, and IV), Fatuhada, Manleuana, Pantai Kelapa, Surik Mas, and Tasi Tolu (among others) were only emerging as permanent urban settlements, if they existed at all (Durand, 2006, pp. 64–65).

Currently registering among the highest birth rates in the world, with an annual population growth of 5.3 per cent between 2001 and 2004, Timor-Leste is witnessing what amounts to a demographic explosion (NDS, 2004, p. 29). According to the 2004 national census, the population of Timor-Leste was 924,642, with 175,730 located in the Dili district, representing 19 per cent of the total population. This in itself represented a dramatic increase compared to previous estimates of 123,305 in 1990 and 123,474 in 2001 (NDS, 2004, p. 29). Timor-Leste's population is growing at about 3.2 per cent per year and has a fertility rate of 6.53 per family, amongst the highest rates in the world. With more than 50 per cent of Timorese under 18 years of age, Timor-Leste's population is set to double in the next 18 years (Brady and Timberman, 2006, p. 2). Assuming that the population in Dili is growing in proportion to the national rate, conservative estimates place it at 209,000 residents. It may, in fact, be much larger due to the 2006 outburst of violence and the increase in Dili-based economic activity, which is fuelled by a large international presence and the unprecedented rise in government spending linked to the petroleum fund (BPA, 2009).

Dili's spectacular population growth is also connected to the relative freedom of movement enjoyed by Timorese in the post-1999 period. Under the Indonesian occupation, restrictions limited physical and social mobility. These constraints were eased from independence onwards. Moreover, not unlike other transitional contexts, the city features attractions not enjoyed in other parts of the country. To be sure, the majority of economic, educational, and social opportunities exist in Dili, and many rural youths view migration to the 'city' as their only option for socioeconomic advancement, spurring on rural–urban migration. Research undertaken as part of this report reveals that since 2006 new neighbourhoods have appeared in the Kampong Baru, Meti-Aut, and Tasi Tolu areas. Moreover, wealthier residents are buying land in Tibar, some 15 km to the west, as well as Metinaro, 25 km to the east, in anticipation of Dili's urban expansion. If statistical projections are realistic and history is any guide, Dili's population could swell to more than half a million inhabitants before 2024.

From a sociological perspective, Dili constitutes a social microcosm of Timor-Leste's entire population. As the sole genuinely urban centre and a magnet for rural labour, Dili brings together various strands of Timor-Leste's population, often for the first time. The idea that the country's citizens share one 'civic' identity is more notional than real: Timor-Leste is home to approximately 15 distinct ethno-linguistic language groups and about 35 different dialects. These range from the small Makalero group from Iliomar, in the district of Lautém, which numbers fewer than 7,000, to the largest group, the Mambai, which numbers over 180,000 and hails from the central mountain range

encompassing parts of Aileu, Ainaro, Ermera, Liquiçá, and Manufahi.[7] Timorese grow up speaking a regional language first and the lingua franca (Portuguese, Tetun, or Indonesian) second.

A combination of limited transportation and communication infrastructure during the Portuguese era, armed conflict during the Indonesian era, and a successful independence movement generated a situation in which the Timorese had a state before they became a nation. Thus, Dili serves as the primary location where these groups intermingle and subsequently compete in the markets, over land, and for political power. Indeed, the so-called 'east–west divide', which became most prominent in 2006, can be partially explained by competition between the two largest ethno-linguistic groups in the country: the western-based Mambai versus the the eastern-based Makassae (which is second largest with 130,000 members), based primarily in districts such as Baucau and Viqueque, and a handful of areas in Lautém.[8]

Owing in part to the aforementioned periods of occupation and violent confrontation—as well as weak governance generally—Dili experienced a combination of repeated physical destruction, successive waves of migration (those fleeing the city and those seeking shelter, safety, and resettlement options), illegal land annexation and alienation, and decaying infrastructure. Indeed, the city's population has expanded and contracted in a manner that has prevented organized and predictable urban planning, a functional property rights regime, and the development and maintenance of key infrastructure and associated services. The road network is chaotic and dilapidated, and poorly maintained. The sewage and waste disposal system is under-resourced and offers limited coverage. The electricity grid was completely destroyed on at least one occasion in 1999, and badly damaged during others. Indeed, the power supply is subject to routine blackouts, especially since 1999 but also as recently as September 2009. Moreover, the piped water supply system is seriously degraded; in some of the newer outlying neighbourhoods, such as Tasi Tolu, it is cut off for weeks or months at a time.[9]

Notwithstanding repeated outbreaks of collective violence in Timor-Leste, in virtually no cases were perpetrators held accountable for their crimes. Neither the Portuguese nor the Indonesian administrations (nor their security forces) were subject to credible justice processes for crimes committed during their periods of occupation. Indeed, pro-Indonesian Timorese protagonists during the civil war also benefited from the Indonesian occupation with positions of power and influence. Even though calls for justice intensified in 2009, little substantive justice was meted out either in Indonesia or in Timor-Leste for perpetrators of the violence of 1999. The 2002 Dili riot also remains an inadequately resolved justice issue. Finally, few people—if any—responsible for crimes

committed during the 2006–07 crisis have been convicted, and even fewer still are serving time for the meager sentences meted out.[10] As of 2008, 4,700 outstanding criminal cases dating from 2000 were still under consideration with the Office of the Prosecutor-General (OHCHR, 2008).

This lingering culture of impunity provides ample tinder for situations in which collective violence can flare up once more. As a result, for many urban youths, the leadership in the *bairros,* political parties, and security institutions, certain forms of violence are regarded as profitable business. To many, public and private institutions can be held to ransom by either threatening or carrying out acts of violence. Rewards include ministerial posts, seats in parliament, command posts in the uniformed services, and other positions of influence as well as access to sizeable resources, government contracts, material hand-outs, and land.

II. Historical overview of urban violence

It is important to situate contemporary patterns of urban violence in Dili within their historical context. In Timor-Leste, topography and competing ethnic identities have played a central role in shaping the dynamics of present-day tensions. For example, the Timorese mountain areas have traditionally yielded key figures that surrounded themselves with groups of armed followers or militias. These groups, in a historical sense, were usually associated with a *liurai* (king), who alternately challenged central authority in Dili or were employed and deployed by those same authorities against their peers.[11] In the modern period and with the urbanization of Dili, the dynamic of 'the big man and his cohort' has reconstituted itself in the city or seeks to influence the city from the mountains. Leaders of militias, martial arts groups, gangs, and elements of the security institutions have evolved into politicized actors with a central influence over patterns of criminal and political violence in Dili.[12] While fulfilling the interests and filling the coffers of a few, this is a dynamic that systematically undermines social cohesion, the integrity of public institutions, and trust in government authority.

Dili has frequently served as a site of violence and resistance, both real and symbolic. For example, when Portugal extended its administration into the Timorese interior during the 19th century, it was challenged by at least seven major rebellions, some of which included thousands of armed belligerents and lasted several decades before the 'rebels' were subjugated. On at least one occasion in 1886, the Portuguese were compelled to deploy troops in Dili itself as residents rioted, primarily in the Bidau area (Field, 2004, p. 45). The War of Manufahi (1908–12) was the largest insurrection, claiming the lives of an estimated 15,000–25,000 Timorese—five per cent of the then colony's population of 400,000 (Durand, 2006, p. 56). This conflict is understood to have taken place in the mountains 50–75 km south of Dili. Yet followers of the rebellion's leader, Dom Bonaventura, sacked the government palace in Dili and paraded the heads of two Portuguese officials through the streets (Field, 2004, p. 362). As a result, Dom Bonaventura is mythologized by many Timorese as the country's first genuine 'resistance leader'. From 2006 to 2008, another man from the Manufahi area, Maj. Alfredo Reinado, became the latest rural challenger to those holding power in urban Dili.

In 1942, Dili fell to Japanese invasion, with little resistance but considerable physical destruction due to Japanese naval bombardments and subsequent Allied bombing. Japanese reprisals for an Australian-led guerrilla campaign resulted in the killing of between 40,000 and 70,000 Timorese. Following the resumption of Portuguese rule, Viqueque was the site of the last major armed revolt in 1959. Portugal's response was decisive and, with the extensive use of Timorese proxies and African troops, at least 1,000 Timorese were killed (Taylor, 2003).[13] In order to quell future rebellious activity, the Portuguese administration introduced its secret police, the Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (PIDE), to Dili. When compared retrospectively to the Indonesian occupation, the Portuguese period has been romanticized by some observers as a period of relative tranquility. Most critics argue the opposite. One anecdote, as related by Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao to the Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation (CAVR), is indicative of the commonplace nature of violence in Portuguese Timor in the 1960s:

> I saw prisoners whipped in [government] posts. They groaned because they were forced to stand on coral stone, hot from the scorching sun, with their feet shackled. Sometimes during my adventures with school friends—*liurai* children—I also saw officials or locals being sent out in groups or returning with people covered in blood all over, because they had not turned up for their corvee work building roads, or for their work as *asu-lear* [indentured workers] on the properties of colonists, Chinese or assimilated Timorese (CAVR, 2005, p. 11).

The full extent of Portuguese brutality remains a matter of hot debate in Timor-Leste. The CAVR found, for example, that the colonizers' tactics of playing social groups against each other kept indigenous political alliances weak—an exemplary case of divide and rule. This strategy restricted the development of unity required for self-determination and nation-building. As a result, Timorese were unable to develop a tradition of self-governance to overcome collective action dilemmas. Indeed, most Timorese existed in subjugation to a latent feudal system. What is more, and typical of most colonial administrations, the Portuguese did comparatively little to develop or institutionalize any formal tradition of democratic rule (CAVR, 2005, p. 7). Analysts claim that the mistrust fostered by the Portuguese contributed to cycles of Timorese-on-Timorese violence that persist to the present day. The absence of democratic traditions (and resulting cycles of violence) seems most likely to occur in Dili, where competing constituencies live in much closer proximity to each other than elsewhere in the country.

The 1970s

The so-called 'Carnation Revolution' in 1974 witnessed the end of the Salazar regime in Portugal and the beginning of a political awakening in Timor (Dunn,

2003). Portugal was determined to oversee a rapid process of decolonization. With the prospect of Dili becoming the capital of a Timorese state, the town became the locus of domestic political competition for the first time. Despite being small, Dili was the capital of Portuguese Timor and remained its only 'urbanized' centre. Almost by definition, then, Dili was the site of most urban violence, both during a civil war and then during Indonesia's invasion. During this period, a number of political parties were formed in Dili, including the Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (FRETILIN), União Democrática Timorense (UDT), Associação Popular Democrática de Timor (APODETI), Klibur Oan Timor Asuwain, and Trabalhista.

In less than a year, the tiny territory of Portuguese Timor was expected to emerge from its condition as a poor and isolated 'police state' to a full-fledged liberal democracy. Such aspirations were, of course, extremely ambitious, given the relative immaturity of the colony's political establishment and institutions. Predictably, domestic political competition led to political violence in Dili and outside the capital. Such violence was also expertly manipulated by its neighbour, Indonesia, and rapidly exacerbated by overloaded and insecure armouries (TLAVA, 2008). Civil war was almost inevitable in such a context. It is critical to note that many of the leading protagonists in the civil war are still in leadership positions today, and current politics remains informed by these events.[14]

In the months preceding July 1975, the two largest Timorese parties, FRETILIN and UDT, co-existed in a loose alliance, with both of them wary of Indonesian efforts to absorb East Timor. However, Indonesian intelligence agents and sustained propaganda campaigns drove a wedge between them. FRETILIN's revolutionary rhetoric both terrified and offended many in UDT. In the meantime, FRETILIN, UDT, and APODETI began developing paramilitary capacities. APODETI aimed for an advanced capacity in the Indonesian border regions and FRETILIN focused its attentions on politicizing the army barracks in Taibessi, Dili. UDT sought to garner support from the army barracks in Maubisse in addition to securing alliances with elements of the police. In the absence of any real national unity as well as in an increasingly aggressive political climate, violence became prevalent. In testimony to the CAVR, Xanana Gusmao recalled how:

> Each party presented their views as the national interest, but didn't take into consideration that we are all people of Timor, nor what the nation as a whole was striving for. And because of this we noticed a lack of will on the part of the party leaders to reduce the level of violence, to address what was going on. Sometimes we noticed that the parties were quite happy when their supporters would come and say: 'We beat up this person' or 'We killed that person'. It was regarded as a small victory [. . .]. If a party had the most number of people in a

sub-district, they [sic] didn't let other parties campaign in that area. And so when other parties would go to those places people would attack, block their way, boycott, throw rocks at each other and beat each other (CAVR, 2005, p. 29).

Early expressions of political violence were generally more intense in rural outlying areas but ended up reverberating on the streets of Dili. For example, on 27 July 1975, UDT held a large demonstration in the centre of Dili and called for the expulsion of the FRETILIN 'communists'. In a show of force the next day, some more aggressive elements inside FRETILIN put 50 men on the streets of the central Colmera area of Dili, armed with G3 semi-automatic rifles (Nichol, 2002, p. 303). Fearing a FRETILIN attack, UDT moved first and took control of the city on 10–11 August 1975. UDT gained access to the police armoury and detained hundreds of FRETILIN members, including several of the party's leaders, at its headquarters in Palapaço, Dili. There, they were abused, and some were killed. Hundreds more were detained by UDT supporters throughout the territory (CAVR, 2005, p. 41).

FRETILIN launched a counter-attack on 20 August 1975, enabled by the Timorese regulars in the Taibessi Portuguese Army barracks, along with their armoury.[15] While violence was sparked in Dili, it rapidly spread across the country within days. As news reached communities that their counterparts were engaged in hostilities in the capital, the rural fringe took the lead in carrying out reprisals. Casualties were greatest in the rural areas, where political tensions overlaid long-standing clan feuds and personal grudges—primarily in Ainaro, Ermera, Liquiçá, Manatuto, and Manufahi (CAVR, 2005, p. 42).

Outbursts of collective violence were seldom reserved for expressions of political differences; they were often based on past grievances, parochial or otherwise. As a former FRETILIN leader, Rogério Lobato, from Liquiçá, testified before the CAVR:

Sometimes this wasn't because they had a problem with them about this [political] situation, but from an old problem. I know that sometimes it was because someone had taken someone else's girlfriend and so now he used it as a chance to beat him. I know this. People took advantage of this war to beat others and to take justice into their own hands (CAVR, 2005, p. 43).

During the course of the August–September 1975 civil war, between 1,500 and 3,000 people were killed, hundreds of political prisoners were executed, and 40,000–50,000 civilians were displaced to Indonesian West Timor (CAVR, 2005, p. 43). With a preponderance of men under arms and wide popular support, FRETILIN and its armed wing FALINTIL defeated UDT.[16] This series of events remains contentious among the older generation in Timor-Leste to the present day.

Having consolidated their control over the Timorese territory, FRETILIN was distracted from the matter of establishing a viable government due to the growing threat from Indonesia.[17] For example, Bobonaro district was the scene of numerous border incursions by Indonesian forces in October and November 1975. These were often supported by APODETI and UDT auxiliaries.[18] Faced with the prospect of imminent invasion, FRETILIN decided to make a unilateral declaration of independence on 28 November 1975. A few days later, José Ramos-Horta, Mari Alkatiri, Roque Rodrigues, and Rogério Tiago Lobato were sent abroad to seek assistance from the world community (Durand, 2006).[19] They would not return until after 1999.

Dili served as the gateway to the invasion of Timor,[20] and on 7 December 1975 (Durand, 2006),[21] Indonesian forces arrived by air, land, and sea in the largest operation ever carried out by Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (ABRI).[22] Notwithstanding the presence of more than 10,000 FALINTIL fighters (composed of 2,500 regulars and 7,500 irregulars), Dili rapidly succumbed. Indonesian forces immediately began undertaking arbitrary killings, massacres, and prearranged and targeted assassinations of civilians and Timorese leadership.[23] Baucau and other towns also fell in the following weeks and months. Pro-independence Timorese, forming the majority of the population, fled their settlements across the country and took to the mountains behind FALINTIL lines.[24]

Conventional warfare continued from 1975 to 1980, with FALINTIL fighting ABRI from behind lines encircling mountain redoubts.[25] However, the sheer mass of the Indonesian resources—both human[26] and material[27]—led to the eventual destruction of FALINTIL as a conventional fighting force. Indonesia declared Timor pacified in March 1979. But in a final act of defiance, FALINTIL launched an attack on Dili in June 1980, managing to penetrate as far as the outskirts of Dili in the Lahane and Becora neighbourhoods. Hundreds of people were arrested and more than 120 executed in that operation (CAVR, 2005). In response to continued occupation and repression, Xanana Gusmao was selected to lead FALINTIL in 1981, with just a few hundred men under his command. During the ensuing guerrilla war, an estimated 180,000 civilians are alleged to have died of exposure, famine, and disease as a result of the occupation (CAVR, 2005).

The 1980s

Dili gradually assumed the role of a centre of administration and intelligence for Indonesian occupiers. Indeed, many Timorese civilians who remained in the city were subjected to a range of constraints, and those suspected of harbouring sympathies with FALINTIL were frequently detained and tortured.

In the wake of wholesale war, Indonesia established what was tantamount to a police state: 'informant networks, identity cards and limited freedom of movement and arbitrary arrest were all features of this tightly controlled society' (CAVR, 2005). Abductions, torture, and disappearances were the norm, especially in Dili. The island of the north coast and within sight of Dili—Atauro—was converted into a penal colony with a prisoner population of 6,000 until the mid-1980s. In the interior of Timor, many of the surviving population were forcibly relocated from the mountains into positions where the Indonesian administration could control and regulate their movements. In the process, Dili's population expanded dramatically, from an estimated 28,000 in 1975 to 67,039 in 1980 (CAVR, 2005). Like similar exercises in transmigration and 'villagization' undertaken by the Indonesian authorities elsewhere, this pattern of forced urbanization enabled the military apparatus to monitor the population with greater ease.

The Indonesian regime succeeded in militarizing Timorese society through the deployment of a large occupying force and the creation of dozens of civilian defence and paramilitary organizations. Indeed, during the 1981 ABRI Operasi Keamanan (Operation Security), the Indonesian military deployed at least 15 territorial battalions (around 12,000 soldiers) from outside Timor-Leste and an unknown number of additional troops in a combat role. Large numbers of civilians were forcibly recruited as operational support personnel—some 60,000 to 120,000 civilians in addition to Wanra and Ratih civil defence units (CAVR, 2005, p. 91). In the process, tens of thousands of Timorese participated first as guerrilla combatants in the civil war and then in the armed resistance to Indonesia's invasion and occupation. Hundreds of thousands more were victimized. Virtually no Timorese were left untouched by these developments.

The protracted conflict and subsequent militarization of civilians directly shaped the dynamics of urban violence in the capital. Despite a short-lived ceasefire between FALINTIL and the Indonesian administration in March 1983, hostilities resumed in August 1983. The resistance movement used the lull in hostilities to reformulate its strategy and assumed a different shape and character from the mid-1980s onwards. Specifically, FALINTIL was determined to wage a guerrilla campaign from isolated mountain areas with a view to harassing, but not directly confronting, ABRI; to expand civilian-based clandestine resistance in Dili; and to develop diplomatic activities abroad. These actions and Indonesia's response radically exacerbated urban violence.

Specifically, from the late 1980s, Dili was at the centre of the clandestine resistance. While this network comprised Timorese men and women of all ages, it relied heavily on young men to carry out dangerous tasks. In 1988, Timorese students studying in Indonesia and enjoying the relatively free

environment of Java and Bali, but with extensive links to the Dili clandestine movement, established a student resistance organization, RENETIL. In Dili, the clandestine resistance became widely known in 1989 when, during a mass of 100,000 held by Pope John Paul II in Tasi Tolu, the student resistance staged a demonstration.[28] Its leaders were imprisoned or fled the country, though many are in positions of leadership today.

The 1990s

Indonesia resorted to terror and violence in order to quell the civilian movement. In the early 1990s, Indonesian special forces and intelligence services implemented a counter-insurgency campaign in Dili, activating its so-called 'ninja' units, whose purpose was to abduct, torture, and execute members of the clandestine resistance. They were supplemented by a wide range of informants, paramilitary units, politicized youth groups, and civil defence organizations.[29] Indonesia also introduced large numbers of paramilitary riot police units—the Brigade Mobil, or BRIMOB—into Timor, especially Dili.[30] On 12 November 1991, Dili witnessed its most severe instance of urban violence since 1980. During a funeral march for a pro-resistance youth killed by Indonesian security forces, BRIMOB and ABRI units opened fire. At least 271 people were killed, an unknown number wounded, and up to 250 listed as missing (Lowry, 1996). Nevertheless, with the downfall of the Suharto regime in 1998, the independence movement regained momentum.

Youth and paramilitary groups established during the 1990s played a pivotal role in the urban violence that occurred during the 1999 Popular Consultation, which resulted in independence. The history of one group, in particular, is especially instructive in explaining how youths were militarized and converted into agents of Indonesian oppression. In 1995, the GADAPAKSI (Young Guards Upholding Integration) was formed in Dili. GADAPAKSI was basically a continuation of the earlier 'ninja' entities, originally designed to target the clandestine resistance. But in this case it was openly established and received official resources. With close links to the Indonesian special forces ('Kopassus'), it was personally founded and managed by President Suharto's son-in-law, Col. Prabowo Subianto.[31] Originally conceived as a business development group, it evolved into a criminal organization generating income from smuggling, gambling, and extortion. By 1996, GADAPAKSI had registered more than 1,200 members in Dili, with hundreds receiving paramilitary training in Aileu and Java (Robinson, 2003).[32] By 1999 it had morphed again into the so-called Aitarak militia.

Before and after the 30 August 1999 vote for independence, the Indonesian military and militias were reportedly involved in killing between 1,200 and

1,500 Timorese (CAVR, 2005). The Aitarak militia was especially notorious, though other militias from neighbouring districts, especially Besi Merah Putih from Liquiçá and Daderus Merah Putih from Ermera, were responsible for considerable violence in Dili. These militias largely comprised unemployed young men, many of whom had been members of previous incarnations of Indonesian-sponsored paramilitary youth organizations during the 1990s. In addition to ordinary civilians involved in small-scale trading or social mobilization, their targets were often the leaders and members of opposing pro-independence youth groups, especially the Seguranza Civil of the Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorese (National Council for the Timorese Resistance) and FALINTIL's estafeta (clandestine messenger) network.

Urban violence assumed many forms in the late 1990s. In 1999, for example, repressive violence included the mass killing of at least 400 people and as many as 1,500 more in isolated executions (CAVR, 2005, p. 46). Other forms of urban violence included collective and interpersonal violence, ranging from beatings and assaults to torture, sexual violence, forcible transfers of populations, arson, and theft, especially in Dili and its surrounding munici-palities.[33] Such violence was perpetrated with multiple vectors, ranging from modern firearms and assault rifles supplied by the Indonesian military to bladed weapons, darts, explosives, and blunt instruments. Remarkably, more than half of the territory's population—some 550,000 people—were forcibly displaced, including 250,000 who were deported to West Timor (CAVR, 2005, p. 46). Approximately three-quarters of Timor's buildings and much of its critical infrastructure were destroyed, especially in Dili.[34]

The material and human costs of independence-related violence were espe-cially felt in the capital. During the run-up to the Popular Consultation, tens of thousands of Indonesian civil servants and the families of soldiers and police officers from other parts of Indonesia fled Dili. In the wake of the final Indonesian withdrawal, large amounts of land and housing (much of it semi-inhabitable) became available. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) transported 53,000 returnees to Dili and contributed to an urban migration that led to the illegal occupation of approximately half of the houses in the city (Knezevic, 2005, p. 28). The subsequent influx of numerous migrants into Dili, a city and economy already seriously degraded by war, and the ad hoc process by which land was appropriated, laid the groundwork for the communal urban violence that flared up in 2006–07.

Since independence

With the arrival of a major international presence, urban violence appears to have diminished somewhat between 1999 and 2002. Apart from the absence

of Indonesian occupiers, the decline can be attributed to post-independence euphoria and the presence of a large United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission. Nevertheless, as the international presence was subsequently drawn down and the external threat presented by Indonesian militia receded, the incidence of urban violence once again began to rise in Dili. In a highly traumatized society, it proved relatively straightforward to trigger a return to violence.[35]

Although independence provided the space for Timorese to begin to explore the existential features of nationhood, the ground realities of reconstituting de facto governance presented daunting challenges. Indeed, the combination of generational resentment, political posturing, an expanding caseload of unemployed youth, and marginalized groups of veterans created a tinderbox. Clashes between the new police service, the national police service (the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste, or PNTL), and civilians occurred in several areas around the country during April to November 2002.[36] Dili, in particular, witnessed a large-scale riot on 4 December 2002 in which a number of people were killed and wounded by the PNTL, in addition to considerable destruction of property. Some of this violence was targeted explicitly at the national parliament and the prime minister's residence, suggesting the hand of a range of politicized interests and actors.

Between 2002 and 2005 Timor—and Dili in particular—witnessed the (re-)emergence of a large number of mobilized veterans and youths as well as martial arts groups, in addition to countless gangs. Drawing on a heterogeneous combination of political agendas, ritualistic belief systems, kinship and patronage structures, attraction to recreational outlets, and other influences, they came to dominate Dili street life. Many were offshoots or extensions of organizations that had emerged to either resist or promote Indonesia's occupation of Timor during the 1990s. Membership of these groups extended deep into political parties, including the police, the defence forces, and other key institutions. Loyalties to and membership of these various armed groups were fluid and multivariate.

Dili itself fosters the conditions for recruitment into these groups. The city features an expanding youth population that has little adult supervision and is remote from rural, traditional, and family support and control mechanisms. Combined with poverty and rampant unemployment, it was comparatively easy for 'big men' to build cohorts of young followers.[37] While some were, and remain, positive community-oriented groups, others have resorted to crime and, at times, political activism.

During the first half of 2006, the newly independent country experienced its most severe political security crisis, primarily centred in Dili, but drawing in

protagonists from across the country. The proximate cause of the crisis can be traced to weak, dysfunctional, and competitive security institutions, the PNTL and the FALINTIL–Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (FALINTIL–Timor-Leste Defence Force, or F–FDTL). As noted previously, structural risks shaping the crisis include a weak economy, the growth of unemployed urban youth, the advent of armed civilian militias, the absence of a visible 'peace dividend', and a poor justice and governance record dating from 1999.[38] Proximate factors included highly polarized views of the history of the resistance combined with poor management of the defence force, which, in turn, generated an internal split between 'westerners' (*loromunu*) and 'easterners' (*lorosae*). As a result, a large number of the former group left and were subsequently dismissed from F-FDTL in March 2006. An outbreak of urban violence was ultimately triggered when a protest by the western 'petitioners', as they came to be known, was hijacked by a ritualistic ex-resistance group, Colimau 2000, on 28 April 2006 (Peake, 2009). The subsequent riot led to PNTL losing control and likewise fracturing along political and communal lines. A number of protesters and police were killed in central Dili. The defence force was called in to restore order, resulting in several more killings in the western *bairro* of Rai Kotuk. After considerable escalation of tensions, the Australian-led Joint Task Force 631 was called in to Dili to restore order.[39]

Photo ▲ Australian Defence Force personnel Joint Task Force 631, Dili. © ADF 2006

Instances of collective and interpersonal violence continued for several weeks in Dili until Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri resigned at the end of June 2006. Overall, the violence resulted in the killing of at least 37 people from 28 April to 26 May. It also generated sustained anti-government protests by western youths relocated to Dili at the foot of the Palacio Governo, widespread intimidation and targeted arson against political figures and opposing eastern and western communities, the forced displacement of more than 100,000 Dili residents, and protracted street fighting[40] between groups of youths in contested *bairros,* such as Ailok Laran, Bairro Pite, Bebonuk, Beto, Comoro, Fatuhada, and Kamea, to name but a few.[41]

Between July and October 2006, Dili remained comparatively peaceful, while international actors established a modicum of law and order and a new UN peacekeeping mission—the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)—was mandated in August.[42] A traumatized population observed a self-imposed dusk-to-dawn curfew. However, violence once again erupted subsequent to the October publication of the UN Independent Special Commission of Inquiry report, in which nearly 100 people believed responsible for crimes were recommended for prosecution.[43] This violence manifested itself in a renewal of street fighting and arson attacks across the city but centred on markets, IDP camps, and neighbourhoods in which outstanding communal and land grievances were present.[44] A selective review of news reports and UNMIT situation reports from October 2006 to April 2007 suggests that as many as 100–150 people were killed in Dili during this period, far exceeding that of the infamous April–May 2006 period, in which Dili experienced a sharp and temporary influx of uncontrolled firearms.[45]

The persistence of east–west communalism is a complex dynamic very much nested in the urbanization of Dili. In the wake of rapid unregulated population growth and combined with unequal access to resources, competition over control of markets and land, and rising unemployment, communal tensions were aggravated. According to Dionísio Soares, fighting between eastern and western youths in the markets of Dili during 1999–2001 pitted entire communities against one other.[46] These contests arose over differing views of the others' respective roles in the resistance but, more tangibly, over land and markets. According to Soares,

> abandoned properties in particular parts of Dili (Delta, Komoro Mota Ulun, Quintal Boot and Quintal Kiik) were occupied in the post-1999 period by 'easterners'. Other areas, meanwhile (Bairro Pite, Bebonuk, Manleuana and Manumeta) were occupied by 'westerners'. Other parts again (Soares refers to Becora, Bebora, Caicoli, Comoro, Kuluhun and Vila Verde) were apparently occupied by both groups (Nixon, 2008, p. 262).

Many of these areas were the focus of communal violence designed to eject rival communities in 2006 and 2007, a subject discussed in subsequent sections of this study.[47]

In mid-2007, Timor-Leste held parliamentary and presidential elections. While generally peaceful, suggesting that political control could influence communal violence for better and worse, there were sporadic incidents of violence, but almost none in Dili proper.[48] When the Parliamentary Majority Alliance coalition was appointed to govern in August 2007, Viqueque (and Baucau) was the scene of major communal fighting in the area most associated with the 1959 rebellion, with hundreds of properties being destroyed and several thousand people being displaced. In Dili, however, the new government asserted its mandate in December 2007 by reactivating, against UNMIT's wishes, the PNTL Dili Taskforce. Criticized for its heavy-handed tactics by international observers, it was welcomed by the city's population, as street fighting came to a virtual halt within two weeks. By January 2008, the population of Dili began to break curfew.[49]

Notwithstanding assassination attempts launched against the president and prime minister on 11 February 2008, levels of violence in Dili dissipated throughout 2008 and 2009. With the death of Maj. Reinado during these attacks, the focus of anti-establishment groups all but evaporated. Moreover, in the subsequent 18 months, all IDP camps were closed, the petitioners demobilized, and economic life in Dili received a major boost with a 400 per cent increase in the government budget in 2008 as compared to 2005.[50] This increase in funds is based entirely upon income from Timor-Leste's petroleum fund. While a substantial sum at approximately USD 5 billion,[51] this fund is not boundless when considering Timor-Leste's massive development challenges and the pressures it will experience on its resources due to its pending population explosion (BPA, 2009).[52]

Even so, the seeds of future instability remain. Most recently, the PNTL initiated Operation Ninja in 2010. The operation involved action in the western border districts (Covalima and Bobonaro) in January to sweep up 'ninjas' after the murder of a woman one month previously. The murder was highly politicized after it was claimed that the unknown assailant(s) may have been connected to FRETILIN. Hundreds of people were arrested (and later freed) during the sweeps despite the protests of human rights groups. These actions have contributed to feelings of tension and animosity as the population anticipates the 2012 elections. 🜚

III. Surveying contemporary urban violence in Dili

A meaningful empirical assessment of the risks and effects of urban violence requires reliable and valid longitudinal baseline data. Such evidence can potentially be generated on the basis of disaggregated national and metropolitan population surveillance data produced by public health and policing authorities. Yet in Timor-Leste, as in many other fragile states, such information is not readily available. Indeed, there is limited sentinel surveillance, much less disaggregated incident data associated with violence outside of the UN and the bilateral aid community (see Box 1).[53] The absence of such data can be traced to the negligence of colonial authorities and occupiers but also limited investment by the international aid community and Timorese authorities. In order to prioritize, design, and evaluate urban violence prevention and reduction efforts, a minimum requirement is routine data collection and analysis.[54]

In order to overcome this data information lacuna, the World Bank commissioned the Small Arms Survey to undertake household surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews in Dili and neighbouring districts between June and July 2009. The following section considers the methodology adopted by the research team and a range of preliminary findings. At the outset, it is important to note that the urban-based household survey included the identification of a single household as an individual unit or case. Any individual member of this household older than 17 years was eligible to participate in the survey. Only one member from each household was interviewed.[55]

The household survey sample was determined according to a two-stage cluster process. First, it included the pre-selection of three different neighbourhoods within Dili, with respondents randomly sampled from Perumnas (357); Delta III (117); and Ai Mutin (141). A pilot was administered in a fourth neighbourhood, Fatuhada. These areas were selected on the basis of interviews with key informants in order to generate a representative profile of different characteristics of urban violence in the capital. Second, the survey targeted 615 respondents selected randomly from the pre-designated pilot sites. In order to achieve a representative sample in relation to the entire city, the confidence intervals were expanded to 4 with a confidence level of 95 per

Box 1 Hospital-based surveillance of armed violence: 2006–09

There is a marked absence of quantitative data on the scale and distribution of collective and interpersonal violence in Timor-Leste. Few, if any, efforts have been made to assemble mortality and morbidity data from the country's hospitals, trauma wards, clinics, or mortuaries. On the basis of a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Health, the Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment (TLAVA) assembled preliminary data on 2,600 trauma patients admitted to the emergency wards of hospitals in Dili, Maliana, and Baucau.

The objectives were twofold: to produce a retrospective analysis of intentional violence on the basis of trauma caseloads and to investigate changes in patient record management for hospital-based surveillance.[56] This study was designed to serve as a pilot to stimulate critical reflection among international and domestic authorities on the state of population health surveillance and external injury.

In order to assess longitudinal trends in violence since the 2006 crisis, trauma patient records were abstracted for sample periods of three months over three consecutive years (2006–08). During the observation period, the Dili hospital emergency room tended to 1,464 trauma patients. Of these, 52 per cent were 'externally injured' by traffic and other 'accidents'.[57] Intentional violence was the known or suspected cause in 45 per cent of the cases. No cause was noted for three per cent of cases. This represents a relatively high caseload of violence incidents when compared to other 'fragile city' contexts.[58] Figure 1 shows data on accident- and violence-related trauma patients, as collected by the statistical unit of Dili Hospital in 2006 and 2007.

Notwithstanding the partial nature of the data, the incidence of violence appears to have transformed dramatically over time. In line with the general improvement of security in Dili, the share of victims of violence appears to have fallen from 2006 to 2008 from 59 to 36 per cent.[59] In Dili, another important change concerns the use of weapons in committing violence. While the numbers of ▶▶

Figure 1 Trauma patients, Dili hospital, January 2006–June 2007

■ Accidents ■ Violence ■ Male-to-female ratio, all trauma patients
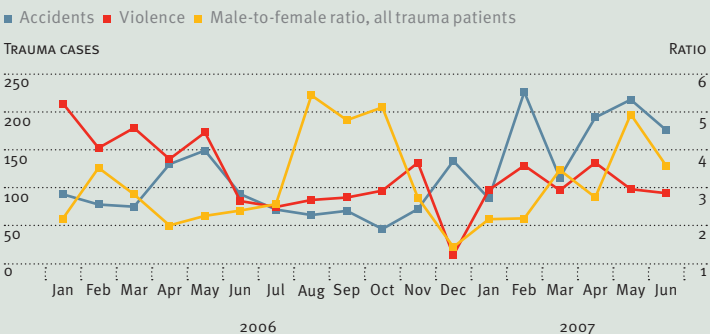
Source: TLAVA (2009c)

Figure 2 Age distribution: hospitalized violence victims vs. population

■ Male violence victims in Baucau and Dili emergency rooms   ■ Male population 2004

PERCENT IN PARTICULAR AGE GROUP

AGE GROUP
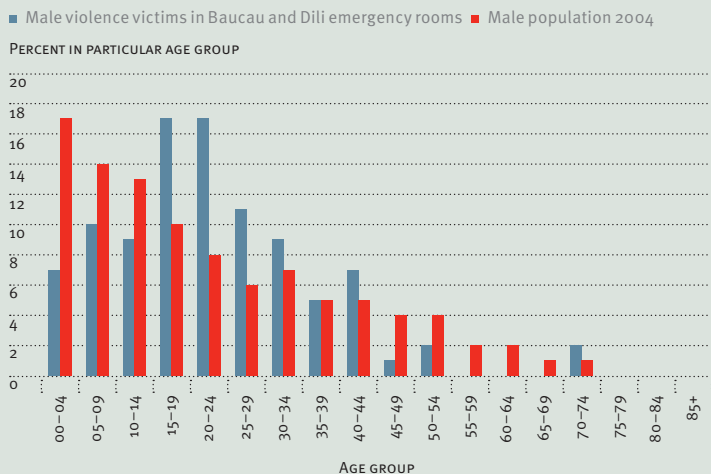
SOURCE: TLAVA (2009c)

persons injured with fists, stones, or sticks remained constant, there was a clear reduction in injuries owing to arrows, knives, and machetes—typical weapons of urban gang warfare. Firearm injuries were never prominent among hospitalized persons, but their incidence may be underreported. The profile of victims of violence appears to be consistent with country (and international) patterns more generally. Compared to the population at large, victims of intentional violence are highly prevalent among adolescents and young adults. For men, the risk group comprises 15- to 34-year-olds (see Figure 2). For women, risk is elevated for the ages 20 to 29. Many intentionally injured women may have been subject to domestic violence. This was the stated cause of injury for 30 per cent of the female trauma patients in this age bracket.

Further, hospital-based data was compared, for overlapping periods, to that of UNMIT's Joint Operations Centre incident database, which was launched in 2007. However, the trends were not correlated, chiefly because UNMIT reported a steep increase in arson attacks during mid-2007. This 'violence' led to more displacement but did not necessarily increase the burden of trauma for patients who had safe access to the Dili National Hospital. Hospital data management has been a concern of the Ministry of Health ever since it managed a surprisingly effective transition from hospital services led by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to those led by the government in the early years of independence. Yet the capacity for data management to create analytical and human resource value has remained modest. This concern is being addressed by the government with support from the World Health Organization within a wider health care management reform framework.

cent. In order to sample households rapidly, three teams of four interviewers were placed in the centre of the neighbourhood and were directed outwardly until the limits of the neighbourhood were reached. The small population size of each neighbourhood allowed the teams to survey virtually every household in the area, thereby presenting a near-perfect representation in terms of sampling reach.

The main grouping variable used for the sampling strategy was the level of violence present in the community within the past 12 months. Three different levels of violence were considered: 'low', 'moderate', and 'high'. Level of violence was defined in terms of both the frequency and the intensity of violent victimization events. Frequency was defined by the number of times a violent event occurred in the past 12 months, whereas intensity was defined by the number of people involved. Data used to determine the levels of violence was based on informal interviews with the UN Police, discussions with youth group members in Perumnas as well as Radio Timor-Leste journalists, discussions with partner staff with projects in Delta III and Ai Mutin, and consultations with local residents of these areas. In descending order of levels of violence, the selected neighbourhoods were Perumnas (high), Ai Mutin (moderate), and Delta III (low).

For the focus group discussions, four groups were organized in each neighbourhood. Specifically, semi-structured discussions were conducted in neighbourhoods analogous to those included in the survey: Fatuhada (pilot), Ai Mutin, Delta III, and Perumnas. Individuals were grouped in terms of age (17–34 and 35+) and sex, and discussions were held for between 90 and 120 minutes. Given the sensitivity of the issues discussed, female facilitators were employed to moderate the women's sessions. Prior to undertaking the household survey and focus groups, the research team met with community leaders to inform them of the assessment, its goals, and the desire to include their community. If the leaders consented to offer their community to the study, they would also agree to inform their residents of the team's impending arrival. A thorough consent procedure was conducted with all prospective participants prior to recruitment and questioning for both the household survey and the focus groups.[60] Participation in the study was contingent upon a respondent's verbal agreement to participate after the consent form had been read aloud by the interviewer or moderator.

The rate of refusal was zero per cent, perhaps attributable to the fact that each location had already received permission from the local community leader. Each community leader made it a point to inform residents that the research team would be coming and that they should participate. Residents may have felt obliged to participate out of respect to their community leader's wishes.

This hypothesized passive consent by local residents may invoke bias in responses; however, reliability checks within the questionnaire have shown the contrary.

Meanwhile, reliability checks were integrated into the survey tool to ensure that respondents were answering truthfully and consistently. Triangulated questions that were inversed were scattered throughout the questionnaire. All cases, save two, showed correlations that indicated consistent and reliable accounting; the two cases that did not were removed from the analysis. Moreover, in order to ensure that the questions accurately addressed key issues while simultaneously ensuring cultural relevance, appropriateness, and sensitivity, the survey tool was passed through a rigorous cultural validation process. Three local Timorese residents reviewed each question and pointed out areas of concern.[61] Questions were revised according to their suggestions and then passed through a double translation process. That is, the questionnaire instrument was translated first into Tetum by a local Timorese resident bilingual in English and Tetum and then translated back into English by another local Timorese resident. Both translators were unaware of the study and its objectives.

On the basis of piloting and reliability and validity checks, a number of substantive changes and omissions were made to the original blueprint questionnaire supplied by the World Bank. Specifically, in order to ensure a rapid and efficient interview with prospective respondents, information related to their biological children and levels of education were stripped from the questionnaire. Likewise, questions that were modified maintained a varying portion of the original content related to current violence prevention and reduction programmes and attitudes towards them. Where culturally relevant, questions were removed per input from the cultural validation process. A topic that was irrelevant, or non-existent, in Dili, for example, is 'mob justice'. Therefore, any questions pertaining to mob justice were removed. Finally, questions removed in the interests of ethical integrity, sensitivity, and avoiding survey fatigue related to personal experiences with sexual violence and domestic violence.

There were two principal reasons for these changes and omissions. The first was in the interests of time. The initial questionnaire instrument would have required at least 90 minutes to administer—unthinkable, given the conditions in the neighbourhoods and the overall deadlines attached to the research assessment. The questionnaire was thus distilled into a version that would allow the interview to be conducted in 30 minutes (on average), while still meeting the criteria of the terms of reference. The second and, arguably, more important reason was in the interests of ethics and protecting the well-being of both the respondent and the interviewer. According to the international

research ethics protocol, any direct questions enquiring about personal experiences with gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault, were removed.[62] This is a demonstrated ethical concern, and without qualified interviewers trained extensively by qualified professionals, such questions cannot be asked. This is in alignment with the World Health Organization's ethical standards on interviewing women.[63]

In addition to the aforementioned temporal and ethical factors in relation to administering research in fragile cities is the issue of survey fatigue. Timor-Leste may well be one of the most heavily surveyed countries on earth.[64] In many cases, surveys that are poorly developed and screened not only yield unreliable outcomes but also endanger the safety of respondents. A decision was made by the principal researchers of this study to omit questions related to domestic and sexual and gender-based violence on the advice of local experts. Specifically, Phyllis Ferguson, an adviser for UNIFEM and the East Timor Crisis Reflection Network, observed how:

> In Dili, as a result particularly of the crisis of 2006–07, those residing in IDP camps and those in the *bairros* of Dili have been the objects of repeated and continuous interviews. This has been with a view to have comprehensive, safe resettlement and IDP camp closure, with the assistance of the government of Timor-Leste, its ministries, and many international and local NGOs. While the general focus of the many surveys was on humanitarian assistance and security issues, due to the heightened amount of community and IDP camp violence, questions particularly about domestic violence (DV) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) featured prominently. The issues of DV and SGBV are the more sensitive as often they are related to alcohol and drug abuse. Both sexes have reached the limits of cooperation with interview surveys on these topics and the questions raised were demonstrated to be potential catalysts for further violence.[65]

IV. Preliminary characteristics of urban violence in Dili

As noted in previous sections of this study, urban violence in Dili has traditionally featured peaks of collective violence followed by sporadic incidents of interpersonal victimization. Following comparatively dramatic surges of urban violence in 2002 and 2006, the household survey confirms qualitative assessments of comparatively low overall incidences of real and perceived victimization since 2007.[66] Specifically, out of the entire sample there was only one report of a household member being (intentionally) killed. Rather, the main category of victimization event experienced was personal robbery, with 20 per cent of the sample (n = 615) reporting that they had been robbed at least once in the previous year. It is noteworthy that several of these robberies were described as burglaries during which the victim was either sleeping or not present at the time. In addition, data shows Ai Mutin to have a significantly higher number of respondents reporting robbery than both Perumnas and Delta III (p < 0.05) (see Figure 3).

Gender-based violence was comparatively prominent, though other forms of victimization appeared to be comparatively low. Specifically, sexual abuse reporting ranged from 10 to 12 per cent of the entire sample, whereas domestic violence reporting ranged from 17 to 18 per cent of the responding sample (n = 611). There were far fewer reported personal experiences of physical

Figure 3 Percentage of respondents reporting on household robberies, per neighbourhood (n = 614)*

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS

Neighbourhood
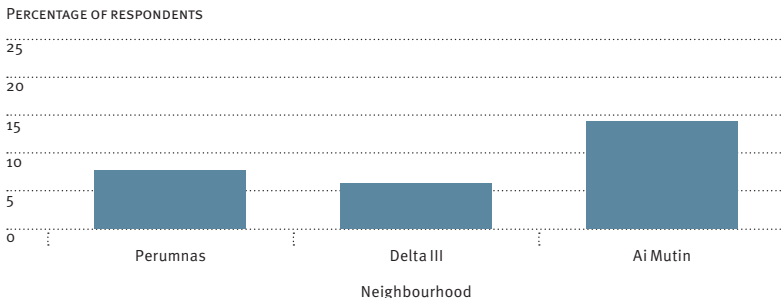
* Reports of household robberies were significantly higher in Ai Mutin than in both Perumnas (p = 0.048) and Delta III (p = 0.046).

confrontation (such as assault and arson). In fact, the reported incidence of assault or arson in the previous year constituted less than five per cent of the sample.

The household survey also highlighted generally positive feelings of safety among respondents. Although rates of violence and victimization in sampled neighbourhoods were high when compared to rates in most upper-income countries,[67] they were nowhere near the levels experienced in 2006–07 and appeared to be relatively low in regional terms.[68] Yet there are also grounds to be cautious with the interpretation of these findings. In many cases, various forms of victimization go unreported and events are not registered by international or domestic authorities. Likewise, major and minor offences can go unpunished, contributing to escalating grievances.[69] Indeed, local responses to disputes and inter-personal violence are frequently mediated via traditional or customary authorities and processes, which themselves appear to be weakening in Dili's transient environment. A consequence of this is that lower-order tensions can fester out of public view but then suddenly burst into open conflagration without a readily legible cause. Ultimately, investment in routine crime and health surveillance would serve as an essential contribution to violence prevention and reduction more generally.

Geographic distribution and incidence of urban violence

The geographic distribution of urban violence in 2009 was fairly even across the sampled neighbourhoods. There were, however, some variations, particularly with respect to certain forms of theft, which appeared to be significant. All three neighbourhoods were comparable in terms of their reporting of violent events, except when reporting household members' experience with robbery. Specifically, Ai Mutin had significantly more reports of household members' experiencing robbery than both Perumnas and Delta III (see Figure 3). Focus group discussions provided additional insight and information that complemented survey data. Almost half of the focus group respondents reported assaults and robbery to be the most prevalent forms of violence (5 of 12 focus groups), followed by arson and homicide (3 of 12 focus groups).

Residents of Ai Mutin, Delta III, and Perumnas reported that their neighbourhoods were generally free from violence in 2009. Specifically, they noted that their communities were safer than others, that levels of security in their neighbourhoods were adequate, and that people in the community could be trusted to look out for one another. However, this did not prevent respondents from observing that community residents were still primarily looking out for themselves, rather than investing in wider community safety. This appears to be the case in Ai Mutin more so than in the other two neighbourhoods.

Still, according to household survey data, residents of all three neighbourhoods exhibit a general (but again, ultimately relative) feeling of safety inside or outside the home or at the marketplace during the day or evening.

Focus group discussions with selected population groups appeared to contradict certain elements presented in the survey data, showing elevated reports of psychological and emotional trauma, fear, depression, and anxiety about one's security, future, and the safety of loved ones. This is not altogether surprising, given the way focus group methods reveal more subtle forms of social experience than do household surveys. Moreover, focus group discussions deliberately concentrated on the pernicious and cyclical nature of urban violence, unemployment, and personal experiences of fear. These focus groups demonstrated how violence can induce immobility, thus preventing the individual from moving about freely in his or her community. Constraints on mobility prevent individuals from seeking legitimate employment, thus crippling their income and livelihood. According to focus group participants, the resulting poverty can induce stress, anxiety, anger, aggression, and even violence or banditry in order to make ends meet.

Perceptions of security providers in urban contexts

Confidence in the formal and informal security apparatus was uneven across all three surveyed neighbourhoods. Specifically, across all neighbourhoods, only 20 per cent of sampled residents reported any knowledge of the presence or activities of formal or informal security entities in their neighbourhood. It should be noted, however, that the presence of police in the area may also generate a (hidden) positive effect on individual perceptions of security and safety. For example, in Perumnas, where police comprise 95 per cent of the known security force, reported feelings of safety were high (in comparison to Delta III and Ai Mutin). Perumnas also registered a significantly higher reporting of 'youth/martial arts group-related crime' when compared to Delta III. Meanwhile, in Delta III, an increased security presence also appeared to improve local perceptions of community safety. Specifically, the reporting of a security force in the area was significantly related to a sense of 'there being too much violence' in the area. Respondents in Perumnas exhibited the same trend. By way of contrast, residents in Ai Mutin, who reported police as comprising just 68 per cent of the known security presence in the area, not only talked about elevated fear 'when outside the home', but also reported a greater 'dissatisfaction overall with the security in their area', including a host of other security issues discussed below. In addition, there appears to be a greater presence of youth gangs and martial arts groups as well as higher levels of community participation in Ai Mutin than in the other sampled neighbourhoods.

PHOTO ▲ Traditional warriors attend a traditional oath-taking ceremony during meetings between political leaders to promote peace, 10 December 2006. © Candido Alves/AFP

Focus group findings, however, highlight the diverse sources and forms of security provision across urban Dili. Intriguingly, they show that the police were often the least preferred option for promoting security and safety. Rather, 'traditional authorities' were often considered more important in mediating local neighbourhood disputes, even if there were mixed feelings about their capacity to perform these functions effectively. Specifically, traditional leaders reportedly require a longstanding social and familial relationship with members of the community in order to consolidate their authority and exert influence. In Dili, where many people are transient, including 'leaders', it is often difficult to resolve conflicts through ostensibly traditional or customary means.[70] Notwithstanding donor appetites to support local-level conflict mediation through traditional leadership and their formalization in law,[71] outcomes have been mixed (Cummins, 2009).

Vulnerability to victimization and dynamics of perpetration

A key question explored by the survey and focus groups is whether residents of urban Dili—particularly Ai Mutin—were more at risk of being victims of violence in 2009 than in the past. A closer inspection of the data suggests that they were not. On the one hand, the incidence of collective violence since independence, while episodic, is considerably lower than in previous decades.

Moreover, documented rates of interpersonal violence, such as homicide, were relatively low and appear to be declining in Dili and in the neighbourhoods under review. Likewise, third-party accounts of sexual abuse and domestic violence suggest no significant differences when compared to other neighbourhoods. Indeed, apart from moderately elevated reporting of household members being robbed, Ai Mutin revealed no difference when compared to Delta III or Perumnas in terms of personal experiences with robbery, assault, or arson; nor were there differences with respect to household members' testimonies of assault, arson, or homicide. Indeed, the widely reported accounts of household members being robbed were perhaps contributing to Ai Mutin's subjective experience of insecurity, as there was a significant relationship between accounts of household members' experience with robbery and the respondents' belief that security in their area was inadequate.

According to the data, youth gangs and martial arts groups do not seem to have been the main perpetrators of robberies in Ai Mutin. In fact, there could be an underlying collective factor that precipitates robberies. Trust in others as well as community cohesion appear to be significant factors influencing the reporting of robberies. Figure 4 shows how the number of personally experienced robberies is higher in neighbourhoods where there is less faith that neighbours will care for each other's safety ($p = 0.033$). Figure 5 shows an elevated reporting of robberies associated with a stated belief that people are only 'looking out for themselves' ($p = 0.026$); however, this relationship appeared strongest in Delta III and Ai Mutin. Finally, and more anecdotally, the idea of indifference or callousness towards the other may also be supported by a marginally significant correlation discovered in Ai Mutin between the reporting of a robbery in the household and the number of rooms shared between household members. That is, households in which a member was robbed had fewer rooms than households in which a member was not robbed ($p = 0.069$). Could family members who are forced to share quarters with one

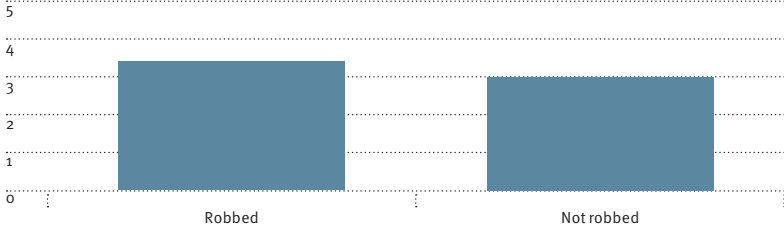**Figure 4** 'People in this neighbourhood can be trusted to look after one another' (n = 614)*

TRUST LEVEL (1 = LOW; 4 = HIGH)
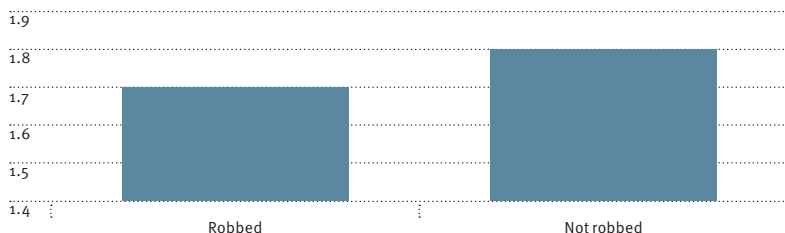
* Those who reported being robbed personally also reported significantly lower trust levels in their neighbourhood residents.

Figure 5 'Most people are only looking out for themselves' (Delta III and Ai Mutin, n = 257)*

AGREEMENT LEVEL (1 = LOW; 4 = HIGH)

* The sample includes only Delta III and Ai Mutin respondents; when Perumnas was included, the findings were no longer significant. Those who reported being robbed personally also agreed significantly more that people are only looking out for themselves.

another be stealing from one another? Perhaps this could further explain the reporting that Ai Mutin residents were only looking out for their own interests, a contention that was significantly higher than in both Perumnas and Delta III. Still, there are probably other factors that, if unaccounted for, contribute to the increase in robberies and feelings of insecurity.

What, then, are the main risk factors for urban violence in Dili? A range of structural risks shaping the onset and duration of urban violence is connected to socioeconomic inequality, widespread youth unemployment, rapid rural–urban migration, and ethno-linguistic grievances. Likewise, as discussed above, the rise, spread, and politicization of youth gangs and martial arts groups appears to have contributed to the normalization of urban violence in the post-independence period. While these structural risks persist, they are also being affected by the dramatic rise in public spending due to oil revenues. It is likely that some risks—including inequality, migration, and grievances—may intensify, unless carefully managed by public authorities. Meanwhile, youth gangs and groups may become increasingly formalized—together with the private security companies that are flourishing—as building and maintenance contracts are issued (Parker, 2009).

According to survey findings and focus group discussions, however, the proximate risks of both collective and interpersonal violence appear to stem from access to alcohol, alcoholism, and chronic unemployment. These factors are hard to distinguish independently, as they most probably influence one another. Focus group participants themselves stressed how unemployment can cause a rise in depression, anxiety, and anger. Alcohol may be used to help mitigate these personal challenges and disturbances. Once intoxicated, the individual can lose control and lash out at family members or community residents. Likewise, unemployment also potentially plays another important

Figure 6 Currently the greatest concern in the community (n = 558)
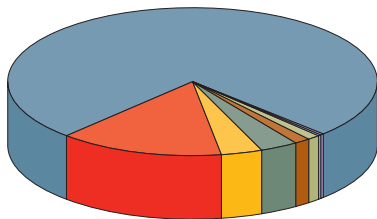
Legend:

- Unemployment (75.6%)
- Violence and crime (14.3%)
- Lack of/poor sanitation (3.8%)
- Lack of/poor drinking water (3.2%)
- Lack of/poor education (1.3%)
- Roads in poor condition (1.1%)
- Lack of/poor health facilities (0.4%)
- Lack of/poor transportation (0.4%)

role in catalysing violence through the perpetuation and exacerbation of economic (vertical) and social (horizontal) inequality. Although disparate incomes and varying levels of assets do not appear to be strongly connected to collective violence, social inequality and unemployment appear to be heavily related to the onset and persistence of community and domestic violence.

Assessing local security priorities

When asked about their 'security priorities', residents in all three neighbourhoods selected unemployment as the overwhelming concern (75.6 per cent, n = 558), with close to half of the respondents (45 per cent) identifying themselves as unemployed (n = 593). The next greatest concern was the presence of routine violence (both 'domestic' and 'communal') and crime (14.3 per cent, n = 558). It is worth noting that unemployment was considered by respondents to be significantly more of an issue in Perumnas than in Ai Mutin, whereas violence was significantly more of an issue in Ai Mutin than in both Delta III and Perumnas. These views were echoed in the focus groups. Eleven of the 12 focus groups considered unemployment to be either a main 'risk' or a 'catalysing factor' for violence and crime onset and severity. Ultimately, unemployment was described as the top concern across all three neighbourhoods and, more anecdotally, for urban residents in Dili as a whole (see Figure 6).

The role of youth gangs and martial arts groups

Not surprisingly, youth and martial arts group (MAG) activity was identified as a primary 'source' of urban violence in all three surveyed neighbourhoods. More than 90 per cent (n = 549) of all respondents said that youth and MAG violence generated the greatest negative impact in their community. When disaggregated by neighbourhood, however, feelings about youth and MAGs were more differentiated. In both Perumnas and Delta III, for example, youth group violence reportedly generated the greatest negative impact on one's

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Figure 7 Type of violence with the greatest negative impact in one's community (Perumnas, n = 315; Delta III, n = 103; Ai Mutin, n = 131)

■ Perumnas ■ Delta III ■ Ai Mutin

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IDENTIFYING CATEGORY
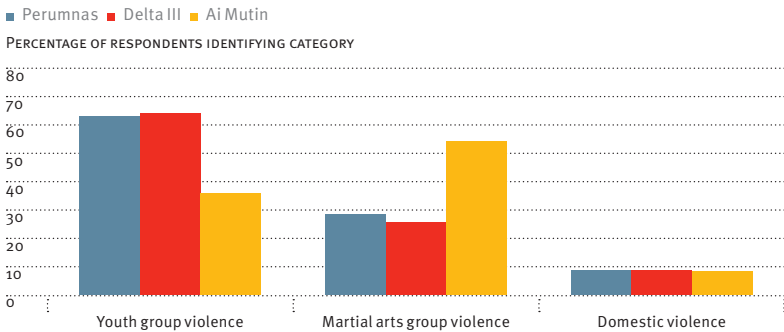
community. However, in Ai Mutin, MAGs were held responsible (see Figure 7). In Ai Mutin, for example, most surveyed residents claimed that there was at least one youth or martial arts group present in their neighborhood; in Perumnas and Delta III, however, the majority of respondents said there were no youth or martial arts groups present in their neighbourhoods.

While much attention has focused on the role of violent MAGs and gangs in the 2006–07 violence, it is useful to recall that there is considerable diversity in the types of group in Timor-Leste. Much overlooked are local, socially oriented youth groups that assist their community with a variety of civic programmes, such as helping the poor, cleaning the streets, and organizing recreational activities and artistic pursuits (Scambary, 2009). The Perumnas focus groups alluded to a (now deceased) respected and popular former gang member turned youth leader who played a role in disciplining local youth for their violent or miscreant behaviour.

More positively, the presence of youth and martial arts groups was not significantly related to personal experiences or household experiences with robbery, assault, or arson. The only exception was in Perumnas, where the presence of one such group was positively related to the number of personal experiences of being robbed. The elevated number of reported robberies in Perumnas may be partially explained by the level of income in that neighbourhood. Perumnas appeared to be poorer than the other two neighbourhoods. As a result, it was receiving significantly more investment and support than Ai Mutin and Delta III, and its unemployment rate was significantly higher than Ai Mutin's. Consequently, there may be greater desperation to earn livelihoods and therefore a heightened inclination towards predatory behaviour.

This data suggests a contradiction: respondents overwhelmingly rate youth and martial arts group activity to be the primary source of violence, but there

Figure 8 Reported perpetrators in personally experienced violent event
(Robbery, n = 101; Assault, n = 19; Arson, n = 7)

■ Robbery ■ Assault ■ Arson

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IDENTIFYING CATEGORY
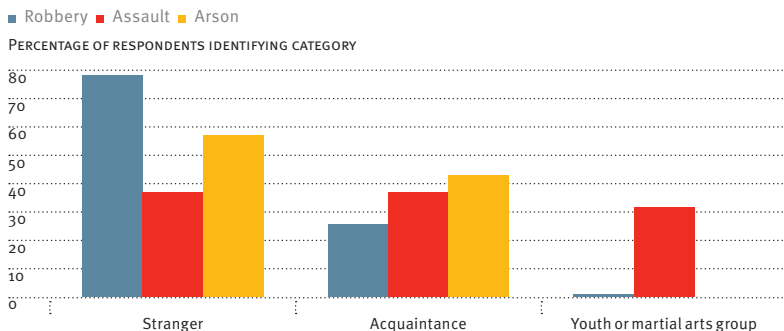
are no significant correlations in the data that appear to support this link, with
the exception of Perumnas' experience with robbery. Data suggests that
'strangers', followed by 'acquaintances', are the most likely perpetrator(s) of
violent acts in these neighbourhoods. Regarding personal experiences with
robbery, roughly 78 per cent were purportedly strangers, and about 25 per cent
were acquaintances (n = 101). Meanwhile, in the case of personal experiences
with assault, approximately 37 per cent of the perpetrators were reportedly
strangers, whereas another 37 per cent were acquaintances (n = 19). In per-
sonal experiences with arson, some 57 per cent were strangers, while roughly
43 per cent were acquaintances (n = 7). Youth and martial arts groups were
not even mentioned in personal experiences with arson (see Figure 8). Still,
it is important to recognize the small sample sizes when inferring general
perpetration trends.[72]

Overall, youth and martial arts groups appear to be less obvious perpetrators
of robbery, assault, and arson.[73] While the research team could not rule out
youth and martial arts groups as potential perpetrators, data suggests that
their criminal activity may not be executed as a group venture. It is quite
possible that membership or affiliation with a youth or martial arts group is
pervasive within the surveyed communities. Moreover, if an individual aims
to commit a crime, an affiliated youth group may come into question in news
and media sources, thereby saturating news media with mentions of youth
groups, despite the absence of any direct link. Over time, the mention of youth
and martial arts groups may be commonplace in discussions of violence;
while such references are not necessarily accurate, they may echo the story
that is being portrayed by media and verbal accounts. Whatever the reason
may be, when a violent incident is reported or narrated, it is generally
assumed that the perpetrator was a member of a youth gang or martial arts
group. Owing to the fact that a considerable proportion of the entire male

PHOTO ▲ Mother and child standing in front of gang insignia, Dili, 2008. © James Scambary

population of Timor-Leste is affiliated with such groups, a causal assumption may link a person's affiliation with a specific martial arts group to a particular act of violence. In most cases, however, there is little supporting evidence of this relationship. The fact that the antagonist is a member of a martial arts group is often inconsequential with regard to the crime being committed. ⛎

V. Recurrent factors shaping urban violence in Dili

The following five factors emerge as central variables shaping the character and outcomes of urban violence in Dili:

■ informal security groups;

■ the return of IDPs;

■ regular and seasonal population movements;

■ land and property disputes; and

■ significant socioeconomic inequalities.

It follows that, on the basis of more comprehensive evidence, policies and programmes to prevent and reduce urban violence could usefully be designed to recognize these factors.

Informal security groups

Since at least the 1970s and, most recently, since 1999, Timor-Leste has been unusual in the way the society appears to have factionalized into a diverse array of groups. These groups include localized gangs, loosely organized entities composed of ex-resistance fighters and impoverished rural villagers, and large-scale, hierarchical martial arts groups. The subject of considerable political and media attention, about 15 of these MAGs are distributed through-out the country's 13 districts. The two principal groups boast up to 10,000 members, and some estimates put total membership at more than 90,000 (TLAVA, 2009a). Whereas numerous different groups and communities were involved in the violence and destruction of 2006, MAGs comprised the bulk of the 'combatants' or violence entrepreneurs. MAGs have consistently figured in conflict assessments and briefings since independence and allegedly pose a threat to the young country's stability. But it is also important to recognize that their real contribution to violence remains limited and a far cry from what media headlines insist.

While the veterans groups and militant social movements largely disbanded or declined in influence or numbers, MAGs have endured and even consolidated

PHOTO ▲ A Timorese youth holds a homemade weapon as he guards his neighbourhood in Dili, 27 May 2006. © Firdia Lisanwati/AP Photo

their presence. Indeed, since 2006, they now have more defined territories (or 'turfs') carved out between them. These territories constitute no-go zones not only for members of opposing MAGs, but also for their family members and relatives, placing a significant degree of restriction on public mobility. The violence of some of these groups also places restrictions on movement within the zones they control. Focus groups undertaken by the research team in three out of the four neighbourhoods reported that participants and their families felt unsafe in their own villages due to the activity of these MAGs. The incidence of violent crime and sexual and gender-based violence was also higher where these groups were most numerous. Some of the more violent MAGs have displaced the more socially oriented youth groups within their territory since 2008, a significant loss for local youth and their communities in terms of alternative recreation and role models.

While these MAGs and gangs sometimes exist outside of the community, in many cases, these groups are embedded within them. The conflict dynamics in 2006 reveal a striking symmetry between MAG membership and kinship networks.[74] More specifically, each suburb of Dili is divided into separate villages. Each village roughly corresponds to the territory of one extended

family, and it is not unusual for an entire village to belong to one particular MAG. This phenomenon is underscored by the fact that most conflicts in Timor-Leste are between villages, not within them. What can sometimes appear to be a MAG dispute is often a communal dispute, as each community mobilizes its youth to defend its territory. This pattern occurs throughout the country, so that longstanding conflicts are sometimes masked as MAG or gang conflicts. This was a feature of the 2007 gang and communal violence. Enduring parallels ensure that MAG and gang conflict is highly unpredictable and notoriously difficult to mediate.

Most gang violence, fortunately, is non-lethal and in many cases largely symbolic. As reported in earlier sections, despite the intense and widespread nature of the communal and gang violence that shook the country in 2006 and 2007, the number of fatalities was comparatively low. But homicide rates and reported external injury rates can often be quite misleading, tending to downplay the actual extent of 'disorder' (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008). While the number of fatalities in the 2006–07 violence was relatively low, the city was often witness to incidents of ritualized gang conflicts that frequently involved several hundred people. It is also important to note that Timorese society is still very traditional, with robust spiritual and social taboos prohibiting murder. If a person is killed, a family vendetta is often activated, which, in some cases, can skip generations. In addition, suspected 'witches' are occasionally murdered. Importantly, as traditional society comes under pressure, and in the absence of social safety nets, violent crime can also become normalized—even in the case of homicide.

As reported elsewhere, most gang warfare is waged with rocks and impro-vised weapons. The use of manufactured weapons in Timor-Leste is mostly limited to gang members from within the PNTL or armed forces (TLAVA, 2009b). Given the links between gangs and the security forces, however, there is a strong likelihood that all the major gangs have access to such weapons. Indeed, a joint UN Police–International Stabilisation Force raid in gang strongholds in January 2007 revealed an arsenal of weapons plus a range of homemade projectiles and even crude bombs (UNMIT, 2007).

The 2006 crisis and the subsequent gang violence of 2007 also appears to have cemented the links between gangs and MAGs and organized crime. Protection rackets, for example, have long been a scourge affecting legitimate businesses and small and medium traders in Timor-Leste, particularly during the Indonesian period. To assess current levels of extortion, approximately 50 key informant interviews were carried out around Dili with all manner of private-sector actors, including taxi drivers, shopkeepers, and (private) bus drivers. While most agreed that the extortion problem had abated since 2007,

nearly all reported that they had heard of other businesses experiencing similar problems or had experienced it themselves.[75] Nevertheless, focus group participants highlighted how some areas were more affected than others. In Perumnas almost all businesses reported that they were experiencing routine theft, threats, or criminal damage at the time of the focus group.

The most affected appear to be Chinese enterprises, suggesting a potential element of racism and social jealousy.[76] Some Chinese pharmacies have acquired regular security, a considerable expense for small family businesses.[77] Importantly, few business owners reported violence or victimization-related incidents to the police, either local or national. They attributed their decisions not to report incidents either to a fear of reprisal from the gangs or to scepticism regarding the effectiveness of police interventions. Some Chinese vendors who were interviewed said that police frequently did not respond at all to requests for assistance or follow-up; others reported that in some cases, members of the PNTL were explicitly involved in 'criminal' activities.[78] Likewise, a number of businesses reported being threatened by uniformed PNTL. Given the involvement of gangs and MAGs in protection and extortion rackets, the infiltration of the PNTL by these groups would serve as a strong indication that certain PNTL members are actively involved in organized crime.

There have been many attempts to tackle the protection racket and extortion issue. In early 2008, for example, the Dili PNTL Taskforce conducted a door-to-door investigation of local businesses to appraise the extent of racketeering, extortion, and intimidation. According to key informants working with international police personnel, the response-based forces, including the Taskforce, appear to be less effective than regular police foot patrols in addressing these and related challenges, given the hit-and-run nature of the attacks. Nevertheless, the more mundane requirements of policing will take place only after the PNTL returns to regular duties. Whereas the PNTL may be largely ineffective as a police force, focus group participants agreed that visibility still generates certain deterrent effects.

Both PNTL and UN Police sources agreed that more highly defined gang and MAG territories occasionally give rise to violent competition between these groups.[79] One of the lesser-known motivations shaping the 2006 outbreak included competition for stall space as well as the protection rackets around the three main commercial areas in Becora, Taibessi, and Comoro. Ethnically eastern-dominated gangs were being driven out and gradually replaced by western gangs. Indeed, control over commercial zones is central to controlling labour opportunities and, ultimately, employment. The ability to dispense jobs as a form of patronage to families and local community structures wins these gangs strong community support, approval, and, ultimately, political power.

One objective of intimidation and petty extortion by gangs and MAGs—beyond access to alcohol or resources—is to ensure that they are recruited to provide security and protection. Indeed, the proliferation of private security firms around Dili and the presence of security guards outside the smallest of businesses attest to the widespread nature of such practices.[80] MAGs are frequently involved in such rackets. Indeed, these security firms are among the largest private-sector employers in Timor-Leste. The fact that a high proportion of the personnel of the two major security companies is composed of members of a MAG is of concern, as it suggests that these MAGs can simultaneously generate the 'problem' and present themselves as the 'solution'. According to PNTL sources, much of the extortion is small-scale and carried out by so-called 'street corner gangs'. Nonetheless, one PNTL source said that larger groups—not just Timorese but also Chinese mafia from the Chinese mainland—could also be controlling these street corner gangs.[81]

A number of counter-narcotics and anti-prostitution raids in Dili since 2008 have also revealed the existence of 'foreign' organized crime elements, with up to four syndicates operating in Dili directed by Chinese Timorese and Indonesian nationals. Local gangs and MAGs provide security to the brothels, poker machine operations, and nightclubs run by these syndicates. The smuggling activities of these gangs and MAGs—some of which have links with former militia and corrupt elements of the PNTL and Indonesian army—have led to rising tensions over the control of border crossing points. There is continuous inter-MAG conflict, for example, over the Maliana market in the west, a principal smuggling route. The apparently growing linkages between local gangs and MAGs to organized crime syndicates make the infiltration of the police and armed forces by MAGs of even graver concern.

The emergence of human trafficking and an incipient narcotics trade in Timor-Leste makes crime a more compelling option for MAGs and gangs. The potential for violent competition is high, given the sheer scale of some of these groups. Moreover, the potential of tapping oil revenues for development, as has been promised by the government, and a loosely regulated construction boom spurred by the increased international presence, represent a magnet for international organized crime, and, therefore, business for these MAGs and gangs. Connections between gangs and MAGs and political parties, or individuals within them, also appear to be on the rise. A case in point is the Timorese-born but Jakarta-based underworld figure, Hercules Rozario Marçal.[82]

Moreover, a number of MAG leaders are in senior positions within ministries in the current government, as are figures who organized violent political front groups during the violence of 2006. The endorsement of such violent groups by public figures is also of deep concern. President Ramos-Horta, for

example, employed a notorious paramilitary leader as his district campaign manager in the 2007 presidential elections.[83] This paramilitary leader had been recommended for criminal investigation by the UN Special Commission of Inquiry for leading an attack on the army in May 2006, resulting in the death of five people (OHCHR, 2006, para. 120).

Returning the displaced

Approximately 150,000 people were displaced throughout the country by the fighting of 2006, and an estimated 5,590 homes of various qualities were destroyed (IOM, 2009, p. 4). In January 2008, the Timorese Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS), in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and a range of international development agencies, commenced the process of reintegrating IDPs. As part of this process, the MSS, supported by the UN Development Programme, conducted an intensive dialogue and cash handout process to facilitate the return of IDPs to their villages. As a result, the most up-to-date figures report that almost two-thirds (65 per cent) of the households displaced in 2006 and 2007 'returned' to their villages by mid-2009.[84]

While the process succeeded in relocating large numbers of IDPs, it has come under heavy criticism. Many involved in the process report that, under pressure from international donors, the government rushed the returns without preparing adequate normative or legislative safeguards or undertaking the necessary sensitization of both the IDPs—to prepare them for their return—and the villages to which they were to be returned.[85] One report argues that the MSS mediation process was largely ineffective, as it focused too much on information about government legislation, rather than on the issues that gave rise to the tensions in the first place (IDMC, 2008, p. 6). Another criticism was that mediation sessions were held at a *suco* (suburban) level rather than at the *aldeia* (village) level, thereby not addressing villages that were actually affected by the conflict (this same claim has often been made about donor-led mediation processes). The same source states that, while attempts had been made to mediate the conflict of 2006, no attempt had been made to mediate the tensions of 2007, which involved completely different adversaries and different issues.[86]

While most of the returned IDPs appear to have been accepted, about 3,000 people were still awaiting resettlement and reintegration at the time of writing. Many humanitarian practitioners believe that these IDPs will be the most challenging to resettle elsewhere. Unlike the first wave of IDPs, who mostly returned of their own volition, those who remain may face intractable issues within the communities to which they are returning. A number of villages are, in fact, refusing to accept further returnees. While the IOM generally

encourages the movement of these IDPs, their return to some areas may be accompanied by an escalation in disputes. For example, in Bairro Pite, 30–40 per cent of returnees are involved in low-level conflicts.[87] This is especially true of those who may have been involved in criminal acts as a result of gang tensions in 2007. While many returning IDPs had been driven out of their homes in 2006 due to east–west tensions and property disputes, the 2007 conflict was largely an internecine family and gang-related affair. Focus groups in Bairro Pite indicate that gang violence, rather than east–west tensions, was top of the list for communal tensions.

Notwithstanding the 'successes' of resettlement, most of the 30,000 displaced people still remain in transitional housing. Approximately half of them were homeless before the outbreak of violence in 2006, with nearly 40 per cent afraid to return home, while another 10 per cent say their homes are being occupied by others. People returning home have no legal framework for property restitution and compensation and no effective land and property law to determine ownership.[88] Although the government has promised to build permanent housing for the IDPs, it is not clear when this policy will be implemented (Knezevic, 2005). Whereas the government has promised to allocate land for these IDPs, even its own Department of Land and Property has reportedly resisted these efforts.[89] Many have now used their recovery package to buy consumable (rather than durable or productive) goods, such as food. Only about nine per cent have allocated their cash benefits towards rebuilding their houses, with most preferring to live in damaged or even burnt-out foundations (EWER, 2009, p. 4).

There are serious questions about the long-term sustainability of the return process. The underlying causes of the conflict have not been resolved, and there is a lack of funding for a long-term national recovery strategy. Care of these IDPs is now largely NGO-driven and thus localized within the zones of operation of these NGOs. The capacity of the state to provide basic protection services to the IDPs or general population is extremely limited, and many fear that, once the return process is finished, those living in transitional shelters will be forgotten, with the government already winding down services (IDMC, 2008, p. 10). Such a scenario may provide fertile ground for future conflict.

Unemployment and migration

As noted above, youth unemployment is a major factor shaping the growth of MAGs, gangs, and, ultimately, various forms of urban violence. About one-third of Dili's labour force aged 25–29 is unemployed or 'discouraged' (no longer actively seeking employment). This figure rises to 60 per cent among male teenagers and around 50 per cent in the age group 20–24. Household

survey findings undertaken by the principal research team for this study reported analogous rates in sampled neighbourhoods of Dili. Coupled with unemployment is a high rate of rural–urban migration, predominantly of young men, from the outlying districts to Dili. Indeed, approximately 40 per cent of Dili's population consists of new internal migrants, and most of this inward migration has occurred within the past five years. The 2004 census figures reveal that, in just a few years—between 1999 and 2004—Dili's population grew from 100,715 to 173,541. According to the same figures, 56.4 per cent of this growth was due to inward migration (Lopes and Neupert, 2006, p. 25).

A recent IOM survey found that 64 per cent of village chiefs said that there was some form of migration to their villages between the December 2008 and February 2009 reporting periods. Of these movements, village chiefs reported that more than 683 youths were newly residing within the village as of the previous two months. Most of these immigrants arrived in the west of the city, in the two suburbs with the highest existing rates of conflict and already large migrant populations. These two areas also have the highest number of displaced families from the 2006 and 2007 crises (IOM, 2009, p. 4). According to another recent report, this influx may increase in response to falling agricultural prices across the country, resulting in growing poverty; the report also notes a marked increase in the number of youths leaving the rural districts (EWER, 2009, p. 4). Interestingly, the government's 2008 purchase of 120,000 tons of rice designed to combat high rice prices and decrease the propensity for violence may actually be having the effect of driving youths off the farm and into the city. In September 2009, the Timorese government signed a memorandum of understanding with Vietnam in order import large supplies of rice into Timor-Leste (Intellasia, 2009). While this generated positive short-term effects—particularly during election time—it also put pressure on an already weak domestic agricultural sector.

As observed in other post-conflict states, high rates of unemployment and rural migration to the city breed frustration and social tension. Compounding young men's loss of self-esteem through unemployment is their subordinate social status, as many youths who have come to the city looking for work stay with extended family and are often unwanted guests. Gangs and MAGs offer these youths companionship, status, protection, and, often, a source of income. It is entirely predictable that, as the unemployed youth population swells, so will the ranks of these gangs.

Property disputes

Land and property disputes are widely regarded as key causes of the 2006 and 2007 bouts of violence in both Dili and the districts. To be sure, the new

country inherited a highly complex and contested land title system, a legacy of both Portuguese and Indonesian occupation. Complicating matters, the population flight after the 1999 referendum vote and subsequent militia rampage led to the illegal occupation of an estimated 50 per cent of the remaining houses (Knezevic, 2005, p. 28). Apart from housing vacated by Timorese residents, the Indonesians also vacated extensive housing complexes built for Indonesian civil servants and military, mostly in the west of the city. Much of this property was then squatted illegally by new migrants in 1999, causing intense social jealousy. While most of the capital was affected by violence, much of the 2006 and 2007 violence was focused on these new suburbs. These areas are continuing sources of tension, even now. For example, Ai Mutin, Bairro Pite, Delta, Comoro, Fatuda, and Tasi Tolu, are all areas in which former Indonesian civil servant housing is now occupied by various Timorese in the absence of a transparent land regime. Not coincidentally, these same areas are where violent altercations are also commonplace.

Since the population flight due to the violence of 2006, many people have now come down from the districts and occupied houses belonging to former residents, adding another layer of contested ownership. Squatters are now being asked by the government to make way for the previous owners, often illegal occupants themselves. The lack of legal certainty relating to land ownership in Timor-Leste has undermined attempts to adjudicate land conflicts and placed the primary burden for conflict management on local systems of mediation. The national court system, which had to be built from scratch after 1999, has naturally prioritized its criminal caseload. Very few civil cases involving land have proceeded to judgement, let alone successfully enforced orders, and the courts have yet to resolve a single land dispute case (Fitzpatrick, 2008, p. 183).

Socioeconomic inequalities

An emerging and troubling dynamic developing in Timor-Leste relates to growing social and economic disparity. This is not entirely new, as inequities existed between Timorese and Portuguese and, subsequently, Indonesians as well as the international post-conflict community and international aid community. However, since mid-2008, the wave of public spending is enriching the Timorese in ways that are unique in their history. While the national budget was USD 250 million in 2006, it was USD 820 million in 2008 (the 2009 budget stood at USD 620 million). And whereas government execution of its budget was poor at 35 per cent in 2005, it was in the range of 85 per cent in 2009 (La'o Hamutuk, 2010). In other words, there was more liquidity in Timor-Leste in 2009 than at any other time in its history.

Questions are being raised, however, as to how much of Timor-Leste's new spending is concentrated in Dili as compared to rural areas. There are also clear indications of salary disparities and rampant corruption. Vice Prime Minister Mario Carrascalao has stated unequivocally that 50 per cent of government officials are corrupt, though the claim is unsubstantiated. Serious corruption allegations were also levelled by the media and opposition at the prime minister; the vice prime minister; the ministers of health, education, justice, economy, development, tourism, commerce and industry, and agriculture; the National Police Command; and a host of other public officials. The prime minister has personally dismissed or suspended a number of police officers and civil servants for corrupt activity.[90]

Indeed, corruption is a serious challenge, certainly more so now than in the previous decade. The oligarchy that governs Timor-Leste as a collection of intermarried families spanning political parties—with elements of pro-Indonesian, pro-Independence, and Portuguese-speaking *assimilado* constituencies—is seen by some as abusing its control over the public purse. This small, exclusive clique is becoming wealthy, while the centre of gravity, the rural population, and, increasingly, urban youths, remain poor, unemployed, disenfranchised, and with a propensity for violence. The oligarchy occasionally demonstrates tendencies towards self-preservation, seeking to ensure its longevity through the occasional redistribution of wealth. It is nevertheless predisposed to using heavy-handed and enforcement-based tactics through paramilitary police units and an expansion of defence force roles in internal security.

In a system of patronage politics and where a national government can be held to ransom with threats of political instability and violence, the massive increase in public spending can be construed as 'buying the peace'.[91] Government entitlement and benefit programmes are elaborate and range from pensions for veterans and support payments to persons over 55 years of age (affecting hundreds of thousands of people) to generous housing packages for IDPs, payments to the petitioners (out of the prime minister's office), subsidized rice provision (in the order of USD 120 million), and local vegetable subsidies (USD 7 million). The government of Timor-Leste expanded the public service via short-term contracts by as much as 40 per cent since 2007, and the Ministry of Agriculture, for one, has almost doubled in size. The Ministry of Education is also awarding thousands of scholarships per year to 22–50-year-old Timorese to study abroad, with destinations that include Indonesia, China, Macau, the United States, and the Philippines. Overall, the sense is that Dili is relatively peaceful simply because people are getting paid off. The real question is whether this 'peace' is durable. ✾

VI. Recent urban violence prevention and reduction programmes

As Figure 9 suggests, urban violence prevention and reduction programmes range from coercive state-led interventions to informal voluntary activities. In Dili, as in many cities in which violence is considered a problem, there is a pre-ponderance of muscular enforcement-based programmes. With the exception of a modest number of reconciliation initiatives brokered by senior government figures and a number of conflict prevention and mediation organizations, more voluntary activities are glaringly absent.[92] This final section considers a con-ceptual typology of initiatives pursued by public and non-governmental actors and briefly presents their merits and limitations. A more comprehensive list of examples is included as a separate annexe at the end of the report (see Annexe 1).

Figure 9 Typology of urban violence prevention and reduction efforts

COERCIVE

International Stabilisation Force

Portuguese Republican National Guard   Maubere Security   MAGs and gangs

PNTL and Dili Taskforce

UN Police (UNMIT)   APAC Security

Special Police Units

Gardamor Security

F–FDTL

FORMAL   **COMPLIANCE**   **INFORMAL**

International and state-led youth   BELUN   Action Asia/HAK Association
conferences

UNICEF/National Youth Fund   CARE

State-led mediation efforts   CEPAD   Community mediation: FORKAMTIL

Ita Nia Rai (Our Land)—national   Pay-offs to MAG leaders
property regime

VOLUNTARY

CEPAD = Centre of Studies of Peace and Development
FORKAMTIL = Communication Forum for Timor-Leste's Martial Arts Groups

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Photo ▲ PNTL police officers take part in a military parade to mark the tenth anniversary of independence, 30 August 2009. © Mario Jonny Dos Santos/AFP

The decision to resort to more aggressive forms of deterrence is shaped by historical patterns and the considerable security presence built up by the international community and the Timorese government. Indeed, the streets of Dili are host to a constellation of security services ranging from the PNTL (and its Dili Taskforce) and the F–FDTL to Special Police Units (amalgamated into a Public Order Battalion in late 2009) and the Portuguese Republican National Guard to the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) and UN Police. Also present are a range of private security companies, notably Maubere Security (with approximately 2,500 guards), APAC Security (an estimated 1,800 guards), and Gardamor Security (with approximately 650 guards) (Parker, 2009). The abundance of frequently armed security actors has encouraged the use of heavy-fisted tactics to repress violence entrepreneurs and collect the 'instruments' of violence.

Internationally mandated and Timorese security forces have typically adopted a reactive approach to containing urban violence. For example, formed police units, the UN Police, and the ISF have all conducted rapid response actions against gang violence, in addition to carrying out regular patrols and estab-

lishing static police posts at a number of key 'hot spots'. There have, however, been two key initiatives specifically aimed at combating gang violence and also an example of a successful community policing initiative. In response to escalating gang violence, in January 2007, UNMIT authorized the formation of the Gang Task Force, with members from the UNMIT Human Rights and Political Affairs sections, the PNTL, and the ISF. The Gang Task Force at first attempted to mediate between the warring groups, hosting high-level talks with the major MAG leaders on 24 January at the PNTL Dili headquarters. When this failed, UN Police, formed police units, and the ISF, in coordination with the Gang Task Force, raided the headquarters of the largest MAG, PSHT (Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate, or Lotus Faithful Heart Brotherhood).[93]

The raid generated mixed outcomes. One criticism was that it created a vacuum that actually increased the violence: rival gangs moved into the empty territory and burned down the PSHT headquarters and other houses owned by gang members' families, spurring a further round of revenge violence. While the raid stopped the purely localized violence surrounding the PSHT headquarters, it continued in other areas, and other leaders quickly filled the void. Separately, the PNTL Taskforce was reactivated in 2007 by the secretary of state for security. Equipped with riot control equipment, the Taskforce was intended as a rapid response mobile crowd-control unit. While it appears to have been relatively effective in combating gang and communal violence, this force has been widely criticized for its lack of communication with the ISF and the UN Police and for its reputation for heavy-handed response. It also appears to overlap somewhat with the PNTL Rapid Response Unit, the UIR— recently renamed the Public Order Battalion.

Nevertheless, significant progress has been made in conflict mediation and efforts to resolve Timor-Leste's complex land ownership issues. The government and communities have worked hard at ensuring public acceptance of returning IDPs, and there has been an extended period of calm since the attacks on the two heads of state in February 2008. There are moves towards implementing a national youth policy and ongoing programmes to strengthen the justice system and reform the security sector.[94] While these initiatives are essential to addressing the broader, overarching issues that have sparked past conflict, there is a vital need for coherent, consistent, and sustained programmes and policies that specifically deal with gangs and MAGs.

Addressing MAGs and gangs in Dili

Domestic and international interest in conflict mediation between youth groups ebbs and flows. However, the primary risk factors shaping their formation

and durability remain unaddressed. There is little to show on this front to date, despite a variety of responses, ranging from the enforcement approach of security forces, both local and international, to more conciliatory government and civil society approaches. The results of these efforts have been mixed at best. For example, in mid-2005, with support from the Asia Foundation, the Communication Forum for Timor-Leste's Martial Arts Groups (FORKAMTIL) was reconvened under the Office of the President to help resolve various MAG conflicts.[95] Indeed, FORKAMTIL consisted of 14 MAGs, including the two largest players, PSHT and KORK. This agreement did not last, however, since many MAGs could not control their various factions and local branches, especially in remote rural areas. Although FORKAMTIL still exists, its funding ran out in May 2007 (TLAVA, 2009a, p. 5).

Meanwhile, more legislation to regulate MAGs was promulgated on 23 June 2008. This legislation was initiated by the secretary of state for youth and sport and so represents at least the intent to deal with the issue (TLAVA, 2009a). But with security sector reform and other issues suffering from government inaction or disinterest, there is little reason for optimism about the enforcement of such legislation. A National Youth Fund has also been established to support youth-oriented recreational and training activities, with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). There are worrying signs, however, that the few funds disbursed so far have gone to groups loyal to the current government. The group chosen to facilitate this disbursal of funds, the National Youth Council, is regarded by some as an unrepresentative, moribund resistance-era network that has generated few positive outcomes.

Given that almost half the population consists of youths and given the role of youth in the 2006–07 violence and current conflicts, it is vital that urgent attention be paid to the comprehensive implementation of meaningful youth programmes and policies. For example:

> The most sustained and comprehensive civil society-led process specifically to deal with gang and MAG violence was the Action Asia/Hak Association MAG training project. This initiative, which began in September 2006, resulted from a partnership between two international NGOs, Concern and Oxfam, and two national NGOs, Yayasan Hak and NGO Forum. Action Asia, a regional peace-building network, was engaged to run the project. Two members (one senior, one junior) from each of the nine main active MAG groups were selected to participate in a collective one-year peace-building course. One part of the course involved an exposure visit to the Philippines, where [participants] met with key groups that have played a role in promoting the peace process and non-violence in that country, including imprisoned gang members, solidarity groups, and Philippine army officers (TLAVA, 2009a, p. 6).

Many civil society and international agencies have responded to communal violence using traditional mediation. A number of agencies have tried to utilize traditional ceremonies and traditional authorities, with some degree of success. However, the overlapping nature of communal and gang conflicts can complicate peace agreements, as can the interrelationship of rural and urban communal disputes. Most of these traditional mediation attempts have dealt with conflict at the community level and so do not take into account gang rivalries. MAG members moving from the districts to the capital or within the capital sometimes spark renewed conflicts, as they were not part of the original agreements. In addition, a number of antagonists appear to be migrants from rural districts, where the village chiefs concerned have faltering authority. Likewise, a number of village chiefs have also been compromised by their overt politicization.

Redressing property rights

Notwithstanding the recent return and resettlement of IDPs, the Timorese government, together with the UN, bilateral agencies, and NGOs is belatedly addressing the issue of property rights through a series of initiatives. For example, AusAID's Pacific Land Program recently administered a study of land conflicts and traditional, customary ownership with recommendations for property dispute mediation (Fitzpatrick, 2008). The findings suggest that the current approach to addressing land conflicts in Timor-Leste is primarily through the courts, or temporary 'ceasefire' and 'peace' agreements, until the dispute can be officially mediated.

More recently, in July 2008, the Ministry of Justice launched a new National Property Cadastre. The cadastre is a comprehensive database of claims to land ownership, which could eventually form the basis for a national registry of land rights in the country. This data collection project, named Ita Nia Rai (Our Land), is being undertaken with support from a five-year, USD 10 million initiative of the United States Agency for International Development; Ita Nia Rai aims to collect claims to land ownership across the country for the purpose of land registration and land administration.[96] This initiative will take considerable time to implement. Early consultations with the public on a draft land law are being criticized as cursory. While there have been preliminary steps to extend the project to other areas, the initial data collection was conducted at two pilot sites that do not feature significant contestation over land. 🔴

Conclusions

Although Dili can today be considered a moderately 'safe' city, it is nevertheless affected by sporadic outbreaks of collective violence and routine interpersonal violence. Real and perceived urban violence is linked emotionally and materially to historical experience—including the more recent events of 2006–07, but also those as distant as the late 1950s. Equally important, this study finds that the dynamics of urban violence are interconnected with rural communal tensions. And while 'external' violence on the streets remains comparatively limited, 'internal' forms of neighbourhood and domestic violence are endemic. Moreover, just beyond the main roads plied by the international aid community and on the backstreets of the *bairros* outside of Dili's principal neighbourhoods, physical assault is common and underreported. These and other forms of violence are protracted and remain misunderstood, at least partly explaining the surprise of international and domestic policymakers each time acute urban violence occurs on the streets of Dili.

In Timor-Leste, as in most countries plunged into civil war, memories run long and deep. The underlying grievances shaping the communal and gang violence that erupted in 2006 and 2007 remain. And while the muscular responses of international peacekeepers and public security forces appear to have pushed overt forms of urban violence underground, its symptoms could resurface once more. Indeed, both informal and focus group discussions with members of youth groups and MAGs suggest a readiness to resort to violence again if the corruption, incompetence, and brutality of public authorities and security services reaches unbearable levels. The likelihood of the recurrence of collective urban violence is fundamentally connected to the pervasive dysfunction of the security sector. Criminals and gang members continue to inhabit the PNTL, and F–FDTL remains unperturbed by its role in the events of 2006.

The 2009 peacefulness of Dili was, to a large extent, purchased with petro-dollars. As noted above, conservative estimates project that Timor–Leste's current and projected oil wealth amounts to USD 55,000 for each living Timorese—excluding future generations. While this may sound like a sizeable and potentially inexhaustible resource, it is not. When set against Timor's

developmental challenges and exploding population, there is little doubt that environmental and capital scarcity will be a major challenge over the coming decades. Unless properly managed, these factors may contribute yet again to substantial spikes in violence in Dili and across Timor-Leste.

There are positive examples of efforts to remedy some of the enduring grievances that shape urban violence. Increased attention to land and property regulation, the expansion of opportunities for youth education and employment, and attempts to regulate the activities of MAGs are good examples. These reforms will, however, take time and require both trust and patience on the part of the general public. Any durable or sustainable resolution of these tensions will rely on the willpower of the Timorese government to demonstrate leadership and take the necessary responsibility to reject the divisive behaviour and legacies of the past.

The Timorese government has access to a variety of persuasive and coercive instruments with which to address the causes of violence in its society. These range from financial and material incentives enabled by the increase in public revenues to expanding and further empowering the security sector, including the introduction of the defence force into internal policing roles. Yet these approaches do not address the primary causes of violence as articulated by Timorese citizens: impunity and unemployment. The emergence of serious corruption into the political equation in Timor-Leste since 2008[97] coupled with 1) a government programme based on unsustainable entitlements, 2) ongoing impunity,[98] 3) exploding urban unemployed youth, and 4) ongoing neglect of rural development suggests that, unless policy is radically rethought, Dili's fragile gains could easily be reversed.

Annexe 1. Typology of interventions to prevent and reduce urban violence

Table 1 lists intervention-related information collected by the principal research team in 2009.

TABLE 1 Typology of interventions to prevent and reduce urban violence

Type	Description of interventions in Dili
Government entitlement/ benefit programmes	☐ Pensions for veterans and support payments to persons over 55 years of age (hundreds of thousands of people affected) from the Ministry of Social Solidarity and secretary of state for veterans.
	☐ Housing packages for IDPs (hundreds of thousands of people affected) from the Ministry of Social Solidarity.
	☐ Payments to petitioners (more than 700 persons, USD 8,500 each) from the Office of the Prime Minister.
	☐ USD 120 million of subsidized rice (entire population affected) from the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, and Industry.
	☐ USD 7 million of local vegetable subsidies (for central highlands farmers) from the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, and Industry.
	☐ Salary increases for the entire public service.
Policing	☐ PNTL Dili Taskforce (December 2007) restored order to Dili through the Ministry of Defence and Security.
	☐ Special Police Units amalgamated into a Public Order Battalion in late 2009.
	☐ Operation Halibur (Gather Up) through the F-FDTL and PNTL under Defence Force-led Joint Command (February–April 2008), though the Ministry of Defence and Security.
	☐ United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT): 1,000 UN Police, 4 formed police units (each with 150 personnel), USD 200 million per year.
	☐ International Stabilisation Force (ISF)—approximately 650 Australian and 150 New Zealand Defence Force personnel, an estimated AUD 350 million (USD 315 million) per year in 2009.
	☐ AFP Timor-Leste Police Development Program, and Asia Foundation/US Agency for International Development.

Early warning	- In 2008, the secretary of state for security established a Conflict Prevention and Research Unit. - In 2009, BELUN commenced quarterly early warning reports. - The former domestic intelligence agency—SNSE—has been renamed the SNI.
Employment projects	- Youth employment on road works through the Ministry of Infrastructure, the secretary of state for vocational training, UN International Labour Organization; funded by AusAID. - The World Bank is exploring a massive rural youth employment project, 2010–2015. - The Government of Timor-Leste has expanded the public service via short-term contracts by as much as 40% since 2007. The Ministry of Agriculture has almost doubled in size. - There are strong indications that both the police service and defence force will be significantly expanded
Informal security provision (private security companies)	- Maubere Security (2,500 guards). - APAC Security (1,800 guards). - Gardamor Security (650 guards).
Land reform	Major land reform programme led by the Ministry of Justice and supported by US Agency for International Development/ Association for Rural Development (Ita Nia Rai).
Reconciliation initiatives	- Centre of Studies of Peace and Development (CEPAD)– National Dialogue Forum with emphasis on middle-ranking political leaders in the rural districts. - High-level discussion, for example the Norwegian Special Envoy and Club of Madrid (supported by Norway and the World Bank, respectively). - Timor-Leste/Indonesia Truth and Friendship Commission. - Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation: *Chega!* report. - Hundreds of low-level reconciliation initiatives have been and are being conducted at the community level, concentrating on community and youth leaders.
Weapons collection	2008 Operation Kilat (Gun): first major, nationally organized weapons collection in Timor-Leste, through the Ministry of Defence and Security.

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Endnotes

1   Physically, Timor-Leste is larger than 41 other countries and territories, and it has a larger population than 43 countries and territories (Durand, 2006). This means that almost 25 per cent of the world's nations are smaller than Timor-Leste (NDS, 2004, p. 17).

2   FALINTIL stands for Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste, or Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor.

3   During violent episodes in 2006–07, opposing actors would gauge ethno-linguistic grouping and allegiances through a person's Tetun dialect or accent.

4   Dutch disease is an economic expression intended to explain the relationship between an increase in the exploitation of natural resources and the decline in the manufacturing sector. In theory, an increase in revenues from natural resources (or, say, foreign assistance) can deindustrialize a state's economy by raising the exchange rate. This reduces the competitiveness of the manufacturing sector and can result in the public sector becoming interconnected with business interests.

5   This study was undertaken between June and August 2009; the methodology includes a household survey, several focus groups with a representative sub-section of the urban population, and extensive key informant interviews, together with archival and literature reviews. A full review of the methodology is provided in Section III.

6   This case study was designed to inform a global review of urban violence reduction and prevention initiatives by the World Bank's Conflict, Crime, and Violence Team.

7   See, for example, Hattori (2005) for a review of the ethno-linguistic context of Timor-Leste.

8   See Hattori (2005).

9   The BTN II area of Tasi Tolu had no water supply between June and August 2009 (observation of the principal researchers).

10 The most notable case was the March 2007 conviction of ex-minister of interior Rogerio Lobato to 7.5 years in prison for weapons-related offences. After serving four months, he received permission from his cousin, Lúcia Lobato, the minister of justice, to travel to Malaysia on the government's bill for medical treatment. His sentence was commuted by President José Ramos-Horta in 2008, but he remains abroad (observations of the principal researchers).

11 See Robinson (2001).

12 See TLAVA (2009a).

13 Interestingly, the 50th anniversary of this rebellion in June 2009 generated some hostile debate in Dili. Many of the children and grandchildren of individuals associated with different sides of the Viqueque rebellion find themselves pitted against one another in the modern political and street scene. Observation of Edward Rees, 15 July 2009.

14 These individuals include Mario, João, and Manuel Carrascalāo; Mari Alkatiri; Fransisco Xavier Amaral; Rogério Tiago Lobato; and José Ramos-Horta, to name just a few of the top tier.

15 The day is now recognized as the birth date of FALINTIL.

16 FALINTIL strength reportedly comprised 'a hard professional core' of 2,500 regulars, 7,000 second-line reservists, 10,000 with previous military training, and villagers who had received rudimentary training since October. 'It was a "people's army."' See Dunn (1996, p. 258; 2003, p. 251).

17 The FRETILIN administration was marked by vigilante justice in many areas, especially in rural districts. Abuses included massacres, murder, assault, rape, and forced labour (CAVR 2005, pp. 47–49).

18 These auxiliaries included Paulo de Fatima Martins, former general commander of the National Police of East Timor (2002–06), now a member of parliament in the National Congress for the Reconstruction of East Timor (CNRT), Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao's political party.

19 At the time of writing, José Ramos-Horta was president of Timor-Leste; Mari Alkatiri was secretary-general of FRETILIN; Roque Rodrigues, the disgraced former minister of defence, was security sector reform adviser to the president; and Rogério Tiago Lobato, the disgraced former minister of interior/vice-president of FRETILIN, was in exile in Indonesia.

20 Yet Indonesian special forces and Timorese auxiliaries had been engaged in cross-border incursions for the previous two months.

21 On the evening of 6 December 1975, Roger East, the only remaining foreign journalist in Dili, reported on the coming storm: 'With the deterioration of the security situation, people started quietly to leave for the hills. Tonight Dili is quiet and almost empty, abandoned by its people. A curfew was applied [. . .] and armed soldiers guarded the beach and the streets.' These events are celebrated in the controversial film *BALIBO*, released in July 2009; see Connolly (2009).

22 The forces included 20 warships, 13 planes, 10,000 frontline troops, and assorted special forces (Durand, 2006, p. 73).

23 An estimated 2,000 citizens were killed in Dili during the first days of the invasion (Laakso, 2007, p. 84).

24 Approximately 66 per cent of the population—450,000 civilians—sought shelter with FALINTIL forces in the mountains (Durand, 2006, p. 74).

25 During the retreat from Indonesian forces, certain FALINTIL units elected to execute UDT and APODETI prisoners in their custody.

26 By 1978, Indonesia had more than 48,000 troops in Timor (Durand, 2006).

27 ABRI relied especially on the provision of ground attack aircraft (Broncos) by the United States.

28 See, for example, Nicholson (2001) and Stephan (2006).

29 'The scout movement, martial arts groups, and student bodies in schools and at universities aimed to instill discipline and loyalty to Indonesia into East Timorese youth. Indonesia placed great emphasis on its national ideology (*Pancasila*) and the performance of nationalist rituals through military-style ceremonies and events to celebrate national days. While these activities may have had an insidious militaristic quality, the recruitment of East Timorese youth in the mid-1990s to form paramilitary groups was brutal. These groups, under the protection of the Special Forces Command (Kopassus) conducted organised crime activities by day and disappearances of independence supporters by night. These youth group[s] were forerunners to the militias that were rapidly developed by ABRI/TNI [Indonesian military] in 1998–99. As in 1974–75, the Indonesian military again used East Timorese to give non-Timorese troops "plausible deniability" for their role in the violence. Nevertheless, in 1999 it was clear that the militias were an extension of the TNI' (CAVR, 2005).

30 By August 1998, nearly 7,400 anti-riot police, renowned for their violence, were deployed in East Timor, divided between territorial units (with 214 personnel) and units brought from outside the territory (7,156). See CAVR (2005, ch. 7.4, pp. 14–15). The ratio of BRIMOB troops to civilians in Indonesia is 1:20,000 (Lowry, 1996, p. 94); in East Timor, this ratio stood around 1:700 (based on 1,013 BRIMOB in 1998 and the 1990 census population figure of 747,557) (CAVR, 2005).

31 Subianto was a candidate for vice-president in the 2009 Indonesian presidential elections.

32 Its leader was a former resistance activist named Eurico Guterres, who joined after receiving considerable financial inducements. His loyalty was rewarded in 1999 after the GADAPAKSI morphed into the principal Dili militia, Aitarak, and he was named its commander. See Robinson (2003, pp. 86–87).

33 These findings were confirmed during focus groups with urban residents in Dili between June and July 2009.

34 With the exception of a few minor militias, few have been convicted of crimes in Timor-Leste. Some convicted individuals were pardoned in 2008, including Joni Marques, a Tim Alfa militia leader responsible for murdering nuns in 1999. In addition, in Indonesia, no members of the Indonesian military have been convicted, and the few Timorese who were and served short jail terms are now free. In some cases, these individuals ran for political office in the 2009 Indonesian elections, such as Eurico Guterres, leader of the Aitarak militia (observations of the principal researchers).

35 About one-third of 750,000 respondents in the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims had post-traumatic stress disorder in 2000 (Field, 2004, p. 13).

36 These caused so much alarm that, on 28 November 2002, President Xanana Gusmao called for the dismissal of Minister of Interior Rogério Lobato, who was fomenting much of the dissent. That same day, civilians, mostly youths and veterans, attacked the Baucau police station when a protest turned violent; one person was shot and killed by the PNTL. A week later, on 4 December 2002, a student protest outside the National University across from the new parliament erupted into a major riot involving up to 1,500 people. Several people were shot and killed,

and many were wounded. Dozens of properties were destroyed, ranging from central Dili to Pantai Kelapa 4 km to the west. It was only rain that caused the crowd to disperse, and national and international law enforcement and military units were able to secure the city. To the present day, no one has been convicted for crimes associated with 4 December 2002. It is such a contentious issue that, in 2008, when national investigative journalists exposed documents suggesting that leading politicians had orchestrated the violence, it caused a parliamentary debate. See *Tempo Semanal* (n.d.) and CJITL (n.d.).

37 The factors shaping 'recruitment' into gangs were confirmed by the principal researchers during interviews with gang leaders and during focus groups in June and July 2009.

38 'By fiscal year 2004–5, economic growth was more positive, and macroeconomic stability had been achieved through sound fiscal management. In mid-2006, however, economic activity in Dili came to a virtual standstill. Outlying districts suffered disruptions to supply, the loss of a significant part of the coffee crop, and a failure of the transport system. Almost all Timorese earn their living in the non-oil sectors, where per capita incomes have been stagnant in real terms since 2002. Consumer prices have also increased by about 13 per cent since March 2006. Companies and individuals have struggled to make loan payments, and around one-third of the nation's loan portfolio is now nonperforming. Private investment is minimal, with insecurity compounding one of the most unattractive business climates in the world [. . .]. As a result, job creation has stalled—it is estimated that some 15,000 young people enter the labor market each year, while only 400 formal jobs are being created. According to the 2004 census, unemployment in Dili was estimated at 23 per cent and youth unemployment at 40 per cent, rising to 58 per cent for the 15–19-year-old age bracket. With half the population under 18, urban youth unemployment and the problems associated with it are destined to increase unless vigorous growth in the non-oil sectors can be created. Poverty in Timor-Leste—defined as capacity to buy food and non-food consumption requirements equivalent to earnings of less than US$0.55 per day—afflicted about 39.7 per cent of the population in 2001 and is on the increase' (WBG and ADB, 2007, p. 2).

39 Between 28 April and 23 May 2006, a number of F-FDTL and PNTL led by a Maj. Alfredo Reinado defected to the petitioner cause, and the minister of interior armed several groups of civilian militia in Liquiçá and Ermera. Meanwhile, civilians began to leave the city in large numbers. On 23 May 2006, Maj. Reinado's group clashed with F-FDTL on the eastern edge of Dili at Fatu Ahi. On 24 March, a civilian militia led by former F–FDTL Sgt. Rai Los, along with a number of Liquiçá PNTL and petitioners, attacked the F–FDTL headquarters in Tasi Tolu on the western edge of Dili. On the same day, a group led by PNTL sub-inspectors Abilio Mesquita (a prominent member of the PSHT MAG) and Artur Avelar Borges, along with Leandro Isaac, a sitting member of parliament, attacked the residence of Maj.-Gen. Taur Matan Ruak. F–FDTL distributed weapons to 200 civilians and sympathetic PNTL on the evening of 24 May. On 25 May, a gun battle ensued between PNTL and F–FDTL at the PNTL headquarters in Caicoli, central Dili. After a ceasefire, surrendering PNTL officers were massacred by four F–FDTL as they were being led away by UN officials. Observations of the principal researchers; interviews conducted by Edward Rees, 2008 and 2009.

40 At another level, the violence in Timor-Leste often seems to be more about spectacle and intimidation than actual killing. The public spectacle of such 'controlled mayhem' took place during pre-modern warfare in Timor as it did during the initial phase of the Indonesian-sponsored militia activities in 1998–9, and again in 2006. See also Robinson (2001); Myrttinen (2007); Scambary (2009).

41 Between 2,500 and 4,000 properties were reportedly damaged or destroyed. See OHCHR (2008).

42 Despite several notable communal killings and a dramatic daylight armed attack in September by rogue PNTL officers on the Jardin IDP camp across from Hotel Timor in central Dili (OHCHR, 2008).

43 The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported in September 2009 that impunity continues to remain one of Timor-Leste's most pressing challenges and a root cause of violence in Timorese society (OHCHR, 2008).

44 Becora, Taibessi, and Comoro markets were a focus of violence in 2006.

45 These include daily, weekly, and monthly situation reports.

46 Soares is secretary-general of the modern version of CNRT, the political party led by Xanana Gusmao.

47 A land and property survey funded by the US Agency for International Development in 2004 discovered that the greatest absolute number and proportion of land disputes exist in Dili (Nixon, 2008, p. 286).

48 On one occasion, a supporter of Xanana Gusmao was shot and killed at a rally in Viqueque.

49 Observations of the principal researchers.

50 Observations of the principal researchers.

51 The Petroleum Fund generated USD 5 billion for the first time on 31 July 2009. For more information, see BPA (n.d.).

52 Timor-Leste's current oil and gas wealth is estimated at USD 55 billion. This allows USD 55,000 per person and does not include the one million additional Timorese who will be added to the total population by 2020. Statistically, at least, petrodollars will not be the development panacea many assume. See, for example, La'o Hamutuk (2010).

53 The TLAVA charts out data on armed violence available from specialized security cells in UNMIT as well as from the international aid and donor communities. Much of this information is considered highly sensitive and classified.

54 There are some nascent efforts to generate this capacity within the Ministry of Economic Development and Recreation. Likewise, some non-governmental efforts led by certain groups, such as BELUN and the TLAVA, are investing in data collection and analysis capacities in the public health and development sectors. See TLAVA (2009b).

55 Any households that had participated in previous surveys by AustCare or the Small Arms Survey were not eligible for participation.

56 The findings from this assessment can be found in TLAVA (2009c).

57 See, for example, TLAVA (2009c).

58 See, for example, Small Arms Survey (2007) and World Health Organization publications from the Violence and Injury Prevention (VIP) programme for retrospective analysis of violence rates in cities in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and elsewhere.

59 It is worth noting that there was an especially dramatic reduction of patients in May 2006. This is partly because Dili hospital became an IDP camp and was largely closed to people of certain backgrounds. This remained very much the case until early 2009. In May 2006 most of the violence took off, and the hospital should have been busier. But in fact, it was not, as many people who suffered injuries considered the building too dangerous to visit. See TLAVA (2009c).

60 For a review of consent procedures, consult Collogan et al. (2004); Kirsch (2000); Lekha Sriram et al. (2009); Newman and Kaloupek (2004); Seligson (2008); Tan-Torres Edejer (1999).

61 The three Timorese individuals were recommended by AustCare. Given their extensive experience with the Timorese culture, coupled with their strong English skills, it was considered satisfactory to validate the survey tool using these three local individuals.

62 See, for example, Collogan et al. (2004); Fleischman and Wood (2002); Levine (2004); Newman and Kaloupek (2004); Newman, Risch, and Kassam-Adams (2006); Rosenstein (2004).

63   It is worth noting, however, that a survey administered by the Asia Foundation 2008 found that domestic violence remains the most commonly reported crime in the country. See Asia Foundation (2009).

64 Personal correspondence with the minister of finance and the secretary of state for youth and sport, May 2009 (Dili and Geneva).

65 Interview, 15 June 2009. See also, TLAVA (2009d).

66 All significant findings have a p-value of $p < 0.05$. P-values of marginally significant findings are noted in the text.

67 Interview with Graeme Williams, UNMIT Joint Mission Analysis Centre, July 2009.

68 See, for example, LeBrun and Muggah (2005).

69 Many elites and former military personnel who perpetrated acts of violence in 1999 are considered beyond the law. Even when they are brought within the reach of the law, as in the recent Maternus Bere case, impunity frequently prevails.

70 In addition, according to key informants associated with BELUN, the recent advent of elections for traditional leaders has undermined their efficacy.

71 See Timor-Leste (2004).

72 For instance, among the total sample, only eight of the 615 respondents identified themselves as victims of arson. Furthermore, one response among these eight was not valid.

73 It is noteworthy that many respondents included burglary in their definition of robbery. Often, burglary happened at night while the respondent was sleeping and, thus, unaware of the identity of the perpetrator.

74 For more details, see TLAVA (2009a).

75 The research team also noted that most respondents were afraid to relate their personal experiences and so were recounting these experiences in the third person.

76 It is important to determine what proportion of formal and informal business is conducted by entrepreneurs of Chinese origin to be able to better understand the extent to which they are targeted.

77 Chinese Timorese have traditionally controlled the majority of economic activity in Timor-Leste. Their relations with ethnic Timorese, despite some instances of inter-marriage, are cordial and kept to a minimum.

78 One notorious case in 2007 involved a Dili PNTL deputy commander (also a senior member of a MAG) running an extortion racket in one of the major commercial areas (which he still controls).

79 Interview with UN Police officer, Dili, 29 January 2008.

80 See Parker (2009) for a review of private security companies.

81 Most organized prostitution in Dili appears to be run by mainland Chinese. Interview with senior PNTL officer, Dili, 31 January 2008.

82 With strong links to former militia and corrupt elements of the Indonesian army, Hercules controlled prostitution, gambling, and extortion rings in central Jakarta until the late 1990s. In January 2007, Hercules met Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao in Parliament House in Dili. As a result of this meeting, Hercules was awarded two prime waterfront development sites, ringing warning bells throughout the security, governance, and justice reform sectors and among international donors. Key inform-ant interview with a government official, Dili, 30 January 2008.

83 Vicente 'Rai Los' da Conceição has profited from violence. Rai Los's group led the attack on the F–FDTL headquarters at Tasi Tolu in western Dili on 24 May 2006. A number of people were killed before the attack was repelled. Rai Los was awarded a number of public works contracts by the government in 2008 in his home district Liquiçá. Arrested and imprisoned in 2008, he was sent to Indonesia for medical treatment for two months. When he came back, he did not return to Becora Prison but was informally 'released'. Key informant interview with a government official, 30 January 2008.

84 See, for example, IDMC (n.d.).

85 Interview with Richard Bowd, CARE International, Dili, 17 July 2009.

86 Interview with village chief, Dili, 25 July 2009.

87 Interview with Richard Bowd, CARE International, Dili, 17 July 2009.

88 See, for example, IDMC (n.d.).

89 Interview with Catherine Maria, Catholic Relief Services, Dili, 8 July 2009.

90 See, for example, *Jornal Diario Nacional* (2009).

91 Prime Minister Gusmao, Foreign Minister Zacaria da Costa, and Vice Prime Minister José Luís Guterres are all on record as stating that 'buying the peace' has been government policy. See, for example, Gusmao (2009).

92 Voluntary activities include, for example, international efforts to promote non-violence, such as those undertaken by the Club of Madrid, the Norwegian Special Envoy, and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

93 In what was probably the largest single operation against a gang, the raid resulted in the arrest of 47 PSHT members, including the leader, and the seizure of a variety of weapons, including homemade arrows, incendiary devices, police uniforms, and radios. See also, UNMIT (2007).

94 Communication with Emilia Pires, minister of finance, 16 June 2010.

95 'The Office of the President also set up a dialogue process in late 2006 to resolve the east–west violence. A group comprising the leaders of the former main antago- nist groups organized a series of "peace demonstrations" [. . .]. In parallel, interim Prime Minister Ramos-Horta initiated a separate dialogue process in late November 2006 to mediate the new conflict between PSHT and an alliance of other groups [. . .]. The Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion [. . .] has also been involved in the national dialogue process, having set up the National Forum for the Dialogue between Martial Arts after the April–May 2006 political crisis' (TLAVA, 2009a, pp. 5–6).

96 See, for example, USAID–Timor-Leste (2008).

97 The weekly newspaper *Tempo Semanal* breaks major new corruption stories in Timor-Leste on an almost weekly basis. See *Tempo Semanal* (n.d.).

98 The decision by President Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister Gusmao, and Minister of Justice Lobato to release recently captured pro-Indonesia militia commander Maternus Bere on 30 August 2009 led to a constitutional crisis the following month. The Timorese Court of Appeal and the parliamentary opposition declared the action unconstitutional and against international law.

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