

World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development

Main messages

- Some 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by repeated cycles of political and criminal violence—causing human misery and disrupting development.
- To break these cycles, it is crucial to strengthen legitimate national institutions and governance in order to provide citizen security, justice, and jobs—as well as alleviating the international stresses that increase the risks of violent conflict.

Today's violence

Countries that have experienced violent conflict often face repeated waves of instability and political and criminal violence:

- More than 90 percent of civil wars in the 2000s occurred in countries that already experienced a civil war in the previous 30 years.
- Criminal violence frequently undermines the gains made by successful peace processes.
- Weak and illegitimate institutions that are unable to provide citizen security, justice and jobs can lead to crises in countries that on the surface appear stable

The impact

Countries affected by conflict and extreme criminal violence fall far behind in development:

- No low-income fragile or conflict-affected country has yet achieved a single MDG.
- Poverty rates are, on average, more than 20 percentage points higher in countries where violence is protracted than in other countries.

The effect of violence in one part of the world spreads to other more stable areas through refugee flows, criminal networks, drug trafficking, epidemic diseases, and shocks to the prices of commodities such as oil.

The challenge

Violence is spurred by both local and international stresses: youth unemployment, inequality between social, ethnic, regional, or religious groups, economic shocks, infiltration of trafficking networks and foreign security interference.

Violence happens where states and sub-national governments do not provide security and access to justice, markets do not provide employment opportunities, and communities have lost the social cohesion that contains conflict. No country can afford to ignore areas where violence flourishes and citizens are excluded from social justice and economic progress:

- Countries where government effectiveness, rule of law, and control of corruption are weak have a 30 to 45 percent higher risk of civil war, and significantly higher risk of extreme criminal violence.
- In surveys of areas affected by violence, citizens cite unemployment as the main motivation for recruitment into both gangs and rebel movements—with corruption, injustice and exclusion the main drivers of violence.
- Human rights abuses are associated with higher risks of future conflict.

Breaking repeated cycles of violence at the national-level

There are some fundamental differences between fragile and violent situations and stable developing environments that require a different approach.

In fragile situations, the priority for institutional transformation and good governance is specifically to deliver citizen security, justice, and jobs. Without a basic level of citizen security there can be no enduring social and economic development; and without a sufficiently broad coalition based on confidence in improved justice and shared economic prospects, it is difficult to sustain the momentum for change.

The dynamics of institutional change are also different. Exceptional efforts are needed to restore confidence in national leaders' ability to manage the crisis—through a combination of actions that signal a break with the past and gestures that lock in these actions, thus giving people confidence that they will not be reversed. Confidence-building, however, is not an end in itself. Progress will not be sustained unless underlying problems are addressed to prevent a recurrence of violence.

In fragile transitions or situations of rising risk, successful reforms have:

- Recognized that the state cannot address complex stresses and violent challenges on its own but must build momentum through coalitions that are sufficiently inclusive, at both national and local levels, to generate broad support. Leaders must deliver early tangible results, with 2 to 3 generally sufficient to restore confidence.
- Prioritized early reforms that address insecurity, injustice and lack of employment. Political reform can be crucial to violence prevention but elections are not a substitute for broader democratic institutions, which take time to build.
- Implemented pragmatic, “best-fit” approaches to institutions and governance adapted to the local political context instead of approaches based narrowly on detailed western models or standard technical solutions.
- Passed through a succession of transitions over time, not one “transition moment.”
- Taken time. The task of transforming institutions and governance is slow. Historically, no country has transformed its institutions in less than a generation, with reforms taking from 15 to 30 years.

Context is always crucial, but the report describes 5 practical approaches that have been used in very different country circumstances to link rapid confidence-building measures to longer-term institutional transformation:

- Support for bottom-up state-society relations in insecure areas, such as combined community-based programs for policing, employment and service delivery, and access to local justice and dispute resolution systems.
- Security and justice reform programs that start with the basics and recognize the linkages between policing and civilian justice rather than treating them separately.
- Basic job creation schemes, including large-scale public works, addressing infrastructure bottlenecks, and expanding access to skills, finance, work experience and assets.
- Involving women in the design and implementation of security, justice and economic empowerment programs.
- Focused anti-corruption actions to demonstrate that new initiatives and revenues can be well governed, drawing on external and community monitoring capacity.

Adapting international assistance

The current system of diplomatic, security, and development institutions—designed to address the problems of interstate and civil war—has helped many countries recovering from conflict. But it is not well-adapted to today’s reality of repeated cycles of instability and risks of criminal and political violence. This means: *refocusing* assistance on confidence building, citizen security, justice and jobs; *reforming* the procedures of international agencies to respond more swiftly; *responding* at the regional level; and *renewing* cooperative efforts between lower, middle, and higher income countries.

Track 1: Investing in prevention through confidence-building, citizen security, justice and jobs

- Improving international capacity on policing and justice, with the UN taking the lead in providing a range of assistance, from deployment of international police through advisory and technical support, and establishing clear links between policing and building capacity in the justice system.
- Investing in job creation in insecure areas, including: electricity and transit infrastructure; access to finance and skills; public support for community-based employment; and public-private partnerships for local business development.
- Providing specialized risk reduction assistance in countries seeking to prevent violence as well as in post-conflict environments.
- Moving from “coordination” of international organizations to “combined programs” in risk assessment, security and justice reforms support for mediation efforts, and humanitarian transitions.

Track 2: Reforming internal agency procedures to manage risks and results

- Redesign of current budget, staffing and fiduciary systems. These were developed for more stable environments and need to be adapted to meet the needs of countries struggling to prevent violence before it breaks out as well as those recovering from conflict.
- New risk management tools to support national institutions over the long-term in places where governance is volatile. This requires more reliable aid flows, longer-term mediation support, and flexible peace-keeping arrangements, including ‘over the horizon’ guarantees.
- Short and longer-term indicators of progress to demonstrate returns on investment in violence prevention. This means measuring people’s sense of security and trust in institutions.

Track 3: Acting regionally and globally on external stresses

- Increased support for cross-border development programming, including through combining the capacity of regional and global institutions.
- Strengthened capacity to “follow the money” of illicit trafficking and enable developed and developing countries to conduct joint investigations and prosecutions.
- Agreed standards on land resource purchases and natural resource revenues.

Track 4: Marshalling the combined experience and resources of low, middle and high income countries in tackling violence

- A renewed dialogue on international norms and expectations of responsible leadership, building on historical evidence of governance transformations.
- Alignment with regional processes on violence prevention, where these exist.
- South-South and South-North exchanges on violence prevention.