



Armed violence and rural livelihoods

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The AVPI is made up of four projects:

- 1) A Briefing Papers series on armed violence and poverty reduction measures in the areas of DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration), SSR (Security Sector Reform), Conflict Assessment, and Rural Livelihoods.
- 2) An assessment of the impact of small arms projects on arms availability and poverty.
- 3) A research project which documents and analyses the circumstances in and processes by which armed violence exacerbates poverty and development.
- 4) A research project which documented the impact of arms transfers on poverty and development.

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This initiative, which expanded beyond DFID to involve a number of donor agencies and NGOs, grew out of a concern to understand the problems created by arms availability and their violent use, and of the ways in which measures to reduce armed violence can be integrated into poverty reduction work at both policy and programme level. This briefing paper examines relationships between armed violence affecting rural communities and efforts to maintain, restore and promote already fragile livelihoods. The authors would like to thank Reg Green for comments made on an earlier draft.

1. Introduction

This briefing paper examines relationships between armed violence affecting rural communities and efforts to maintain, restore and promote already fragile livelihoods. It is one of a series of briefings addressing issues surrounding the interaction between armed violence and poverty-reducing development. This paper seeks to provide an introduction for the staff of the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) and other donor agencies to some of the issues raised in trying to make this connection and to stimulate thinking on these questions in analysis and policy. Some of the key questions to be addressed are:

- How can DFID's current sustainable rural livelihoods framework be applied to contexts of armed violence?
- What are the implications of these relationships for planning and programming rural development?
- Conversely, how might development interventions tackle the prevalence and spread of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and other factors fostering violence that affect livelihoods.

Over the past two decades armed violence in a variety of forms, often persistent, repetitive and seemingly endemic, has become a central contextual element in many countries and localities where development agencies are working. This paper argues that both dimensions of this armed violence-development nexus have to be taken into account – both in diagnoses and in prescription.

1. **Diagnosis:** analysis of needs, based for instance on a livelihoods approach, has to be combined with an understanding of the dynamics of arms and their use, and the broader political economy of violent conflict.
2. **Prescription:** overcoming the orthodox view that confines intervention in the teeth of chronic armed violence to short-term humanitarian relief, and instead working out a strategy for longer-term livelihood support, and putting in place institutional arrangements to bridge the divide where issues of arms and armed violence are dealt with in isolation from planning for livelihood support, poverty eradication and broad-based development.

2. Analysing rural livelihoods in a context of armed violence

It has become commonplace in the donor community and even among international NGOs to base programming for rural development on needs assessment, and for this often to be done using the methods and procedures pioneered in DFID's 'Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)'. The SLF approach to diagnosis is now widely accepted internationally as a method that offers a holistic view of the complex context that generates and reproduces poverty. If efforts are now to be made to diagnose livelihood needs in situations of armed violence, it thus seems natural to apply a sustainable livelihoods approach. But how exactly do we combine analysis of poverty with that of armed violence?

2.1 The sustainable livelihoods framework and armed violence

Within the SLF, a person's or a household's livelihood depends on a five-sided basket of assets, categorised as human, natural, social, physical and financial capitals. Their livelihood outcomes are seen as shaped by the context of policies, institutions and processes (PIPs). The aim of generating a livelihood that can be regarded as sustainable is realised when it allows them to cope with and recover from stresses or shocks and to maintain or enhance capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. People whose livelihoods are not sustainable are identified as *vulnerable*.

Today, rural life is increasingly characterised by the steady erosion of the natural resource and social asset base from which households and communities can construct sustainable livelihoods. In this context, more and more people no longer retain the capabilities, activities and resources (material and social) required to secure a minimal means of living, i.e. there are increasing numbers of 'vulnerable'. Such risks of increased vulnerability can be amplified as a result of trends, seasonal variations or *shocks*, such as drought.

Box 1: The indirect impact of armed violence on highland agriculture in Eritrea

During the 20-year war for independence from Ethiopia up to 1991, many highland areas were subject to abuse by an occupying army but were free of other forms of direct armed violence for long periods. However, the many restrictions on the farmers' movement and trade severely constrained their agricultural system, cutting off access to markets to sell surpluses and undermining production for household or village subsistence. But arguably the greatest long-term impact, inhibiting the chances of post-conflict recovery of the poorer majority, was the loss of oxen, crucial to ploughing – by confiscation, drought, enforced sale to cover immediate needs, and by being sealed off from pastoral areas which would ordinarily have had surplus male cattle to sell and whose people were similarly affected by restrictions on movement for this and other livelihood purposes.

Although there were some livelihood support measures even during the war, and certainly immediately after, 'recovery' programmes provided relief food and replaced tools, but they made hardly any provision, even through credit, for the poor to replace the oxen they had lost. Their impoverishment was continuing to force them to sell off any natural increase in their tiny herds. Thus their key assets continued to haemorrhage.

These impacts on livelihoods are likely to be exacerbated even further in rural settings characterised by violence and insecurity (to which our concern will be limited in this paper). Of course, 'armed violence' can cover a wide range of different situations. These include 'low intensity' conflicts, gun crime endemic in rural communities, or situations where rural communities are targeted by or caught up in regional or national civil wars. The violence itself can take many different forms: forced displacement, rape and other gender violence, asset stripping, mutilations, massacres, child soldiers, etc. These different forms of armed violence need to be understood as usually having some intended function in their specific context. And each will, of course, have different impacts on livelihoods. However, to differing extents and in different ways,

affected communities and at least some of the households within them are likely thereby to be further stripped of their natural, human, social, physical and financial capital.

Similar but indirect (and, perhaps, lesser effects) can also be seen in rural communities not directly exposed to violence, as exemplified by the Eritrean experience in Box 1. Markets and trade links may be disrupted over a wider area, and thus sources of non-agricultural livelihood inputs on which rural dwellers substantially and increasingly depend are denied to them: seasonal labour opportunities and the remitting of earnings from family working in more distant places are adversely affected by armed violence. Essential inputs to their production as well as crucial supplies and access to public services may also be lost. They may be caught up in patterns of trade or simply extortion that are bred by conflict and conducted by the barrel of the gun. The young men and women – and even children – may be forcibly recruited into conflicts. All of these experiences will impact directly or indirectly on levels of livelihoods as well as the mode of seeking livelihoods. More people may be forced into vulnerability.

In settings of both direct and indirect involvement in armed violence or its off-shoots, coping strategies are reduced to “survival” strategies, recovery capacities are limited, and ‘stresses and shocks’ are intensified thereby increasing overall levels of vulnerability and poverty. All too often such trends are amplified by the extent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has key effects similar to those of conflict: loss of bread-winners, changing shape of households, diversion of health services to special needs – affecting the most vulnerable households disproportionately.

A livelihoods analysis can thus be utilised to provide a basis for checking what specific impacts of armed violence there have been in any one case. For instance, the impacts can be broken down and assigned to the particular one (or more) of the five asset bases making up the livelihoods basket. But analysis of **causal links** must go beyond simply documenting the ways in which armed violence and insecurity erode community capabilities and assets, and ultimately undermine development and poverty reduction efforts. One possible, additional linkage is that armed violence can emerge from developmental patterns themselves – programmes and policies, or their absence or ineffectiveness may skew access to natural resources, accentuate existing levels of competition and concentrate resource degradation within particular areas (see the Karamoja example in Box 2 below), or some marginal improvement in livelihoods or specific measures such as the sedentarisation of agro-pastoralists might make them readier targets by other communities, as happened in northern Kenya and Uganda. The possibilities of such incipient conflict taking a violent form need to be assessed.

2.2 Armed violence as a livelihoods strategy?

Some SALW analysts suggest that another possible application of the livelihoods approach to situations of armed violence would be to analyse how far the imperatives to take up arms can be seen as a response to a crisis in sustaining livelihoods. Enlisting in a militia group or joining a criminal band may for many individuals represent a livelihood strategy and part of a ‘rational’ adaptation to violent conflict (Collinson, 2003). In turn, families and communities may respond to the resulting insecurity by acquiring weapons as a means of protecting their assets, or to replace or

accumulate them. Indeed in such settings, SALW themselves can be regarded by some as household or community assets. This is the case in Turkana and other districts in northern Kenya where communities seek arms to protect themselves from both cross-border and internal raiding. Unilateral disarmament is not a realistic option in this context as there is a compelling rationale for communities to bear arms so long as the state remains unable to provide credible alternative security mechanisms or economic opportunities in target communities. As a result, the rural setting, particularly in border areas that link to regional conflicts, has become over the last three or four decades an arena for a variety of 'low intensity' conflicts, gun crime and social violence, fuelled by the wide availability of SALW.

Box 2: Impact of armed violence on pastoralist livelihood strategies in Karamoja, Uganda

Karamoja region has long been marginalized and neglected or subject to inappropriate development strategies that have often undermined the pastoral way of life and the capacity to survive in a tough, semi-arid environment. An emphasis on sedentarisation through provision of fixed water supplies and grazing areas has led to considerable environmental and social damage: the reduction in access of pastoralists to rangeland, the sidelining of customary institutions, the undermining of existing patterns of natural resource use and the marginalisation of the region from the rest of the country. Current national policies on poverty eradication do not recognise the specific characteristics of pastoral livelihoods or effectively address key issues: notably service delivery to pastoralist communities and their access to and control over rangeland.

In these crisis conditions, a further factor emerged in the late 1970s to complicate life. There was a marked escalation in the scale and frequency of livestock raiding, highway robbery and other violent conflict within Karamoja, and by Karamajong warriors in neighbouring districts and into Kenya and Sudan. Government and development agencies tend to equate this growth of armed violence in Karamoja with the increased proliferation of SALW. However the roots of conflict in Karamoja are more complex. The trend of pastoral poverty and marginalisation has contributed to the institutionalisation of armed violence and livestock raiding as part of the pastoralist political economy in Karamoja. At the same time, guns and large, wide-spanning unrecorded and illicit international markets in SALW and in livestock have been incorporated into people's survival mechanisms – benefiting warlords who entrepreneur 'retainer armies' at the expense of herders, and young males who they hire, at the expense of women and children and of the authority of traditional elders.

Tackling the demand for SALW is dependent on effective livelihoods strategies that are responsive to pastoral livelihoods systems and resonate with community development aspirations. In the case of Karamoja, disarmament has been attempted in the absence of guarantees of physical and economic security from the state thereby exposing them to neighbours across the Kenya border, who were not disarmed, thus negating any prospects for success. This is a case in which, despite good intentions, misguided rural livelihoods programming coupled with inappropriate disarmament programmes, exacerbated insecurity and further eroded pastoral livelihood systems.

Extracted from Anti-pastoralism and the growth of poverty and insecurity in Karamoja: Disarmament and development dilemmas, a report for DFID East Africa, Robert Walker, March 2002.

The Karamoja region of Uganda (see Box 2 below) offers a vivid illustration of this: the sudden availability of automatic weapons transformed the common practice of cattle raiding with clubs and spears to a qualitatively different enterprise – and changed the lives of the people of the region and their neighbours. Such cases can also generate knock-on effects. The neighbouring settled, agro-pastoral Acholi were among those raided by the Karamojong; less able to defend themselves they lost almost all their cattle, and thus half of their agricultural asset base. The fertile riverine areas in southern Somalia were targeted by militias from pastoral areas, displacing the agriculturalists and undermining the livelihood system in those areas (see Box 3).

2.3 Why armed violence is not a sustainable livelihood

While the demand for SALW in the contexts described above may seem ‘rational’, violence as an ‘alternative’ livelihood strategy is clearly not viable. Notwithstanding the benefits that may accrue to individuals or particular communities, such strategies must ultimately be judged by their net impact on the wider community and on the most vulnerable households within them over time. The impacts are inevitably negative as the continued misuse of SALW quickly evolves into the self-perpetuating cycle of violence within a descending spiral of assets and opportunities for communities at large. In Karamoja for instance:

- ❑ Neighbouring settled, agro-pastoralist peoples like the Achole and Teso have been denuded of livestock and are no long handy targets;
- ❑ Even the warlords are cut off from the best markets and veterinary services because they cannot move their herds beyond the points where they can offer the heavy armed protection required;
- ❑ Asset ownership can only be regarded as temporary given the insecurity of tenure as a result of raiding and violence.

Part of the net impact over time will be that the rise in insecurity and armed violence will lead to the diversion of investment from conflict zones or high gun crime areas, along with a shift in the emphasis from long-term development to short-term relief activities. In some cases development agencies may withdraw altogether as the risks and costs of intervention increase. An increase in the availability and use of SALW may also escalate the levels of violence as the government seeks to exert its authority. All these trends point to the need for livelihood support in programming (see Section 2), for they otherwise slow progress towards poverty reduction, while the insecurity undermines the coping mechanisms of the most vulnerable and diverts their own investment to short-term survival rather than to recouping their dwindling assets. If those among them, who seek to supplement or protect livelihoods by acquisition and use of arms, are to be weaned away from armed violence, there is a further need for them to be provided with alternative livelihoods – another programming issue to be explored below.

3. ‘Vulnerability’ and insecurity

The vulnerability context is intended to illustrate the complex interaction between various factors that are directly or indirectly responsible for many of the hardships faced by the poorest people in the world. This element in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is also being applied to uncover the impact of violent conflict on the poor (particularly conflicts over natural resources).

The vulnerability of rural communities and especially the poorest among them is recognised to be on the rise due to a variety of factors:

- ❑ Increased competition over resources;
- ❑ Reduced access to land, water and other natural resources due to increasing demographic and environmental pressure;
- ❑ Reduced access to credit, markets and extension services;
- ❑ The uneven impact of economic globalisation and barriers to international trade.

Box 3: Agricultural livelihoods at gravest risk in Southern Somalia

Although most Somali derive their main livelihoods from pastoralism, by far the greatest number of directly and indirectly war-related deaths occurred in southern Somalia. The 1991-92 drought and famine affected some 3 million people inhabiting the predominantly agricultural but marginal regions of Bay and Bakool, and the agricultural areas in the Jubba and Shebelle valleys. These latter inter-riverine areas comprise Somalia's most fertile croplands, many of them irrigated. Many people in these areas had already been forcibly dispossessed of their lands and reduced to an agricultural labourer status in a process of 'land-grabbing' that began in the late 1960s but accelerated in the 1980s when those closely associated with the Siad Barre regime forcibly acquired vast areas of irrigable land, which, in the 1980s, was highly prized, but more as a source of collateral for obtaining loans than for its agricultural potential. These areas have borne the brunt of conflict both during and in the aftermath of the civil war, as competing factions have sought to maintain or gain control of these highly contested land. At the same time these sedentary people were least well equipped to defend themselves. Those in the irrigated areas were made especially vulnerable in the early 1990s and were reduced to famine by the destruction of irrigation works and by their being denied access to fuel by the armed violence.

In 1991, prior to the on-set of the drought, civilians in the agricultural area of Bay, predominantly small-scale farmers, were deliberately targeted both by government forces and by Aideed's militia. Alongside the destruction of villages and agricultural implements, crops were destroyed or looted, animals were killed or stolen, forcing hundreds of farmers to flee to Baidoa, the regional capital, which became the epicentre of the famine. In a similar way, the inter-riverine people were trapped at the height of the civil war between Aideed's forces in the north, Barre's in the south-west, and Morgan's – Barre's son-in-law – in the south, in what became known as the 'triangle of death'. Baidoa became also known as the 'city of the walking dead'. Official estimates put the number of deaths during the famine at between 240,000 and 280,000.

Other estimates suggest it may have been as high as 500,000. Many of the deaths resulted from outbreaks of infectious diseases as thousands fled to relief camps in and around major towns. Baidoa town, in particular, suffered tremendously during the famine as a result of the blocking and appropriation of emergency relief supplies by Aideed's forces. Although eventually able to organise armed defence to protect themselves, which has allowed some recovery of productive potential, these areas are still among the most prone to violent conflict. Moreover, their export crop earnings are constrained by 'banana wars', which are still being fought over the lucrative trade through the southern ports.

Source: K. Menkhaus, 2003.

In many cases, these trends are combined with the presence of deeper-seated latent conflicts. These include:

- Structural inequalities inherent in legal definitions of land ownership and resource use;
- Regional economic and political elites supporting commercial interests over-and-above those of local groups;
- Longstanding ethnic and cultural differences.

This situation is compounded by the fact that, in many developing countries, state penetration in the rural economy and context, always relatively weak, has become further impaired by the shrinking role and capacities of failing states.

There is a growing realisation that people in such contexts nowadays require a range of assets to achieve positive livelihood outcomes; no single category of assets on its own is sufficient to yield the level of livelihood that people need. This is particularly true for poor people whose access to any given category of assets tends to be very limited. As a result they have to seek ways of nurturing and combining what assets they do have in innovative ways to ensure survival (as recognised by DFID in its SL Guidance Sheet). Such an analysis also helps us to see why armed violence has a disproportionate impact on women and young children – it often accelerates the increase in women-headed households, which are in turn amongst the most vulnerable households in the rural economy (as recognised by DFID’s country assistance plan in Rwanda). This approach also allows insights into the predicament of other groups that suffer the most direct impacts of AV, especially those displaced (as illustrated in Box 4 on Sri Lanka).

Box 4: Displacement & impoverishment in northern Sri Lanka

Over one third of the estimated half million people of Jaffna District, the peninsula which has seen the worst violence in the country, have been displaced: 120,000 internally into camps, 66,000 as refugees to south India. Some people have been in camps for 10 years. They lost access to their farm land and can no longer produce crops they sold and which fed them. Most of the camps offer no access to alternative land. Those who were fishermen lost their boats and access to this means of livelihood. Job opportunities are limited in the vicinity of the camps: some fuel-wood collection, buying and selling fish, seasonal labouring only.

Although some rations are provided, there are “visible signs of significant malnutrition”; most displaced persons and households almost certainly fall into the ultra-poor category of people who spend 80% of their money on food but only acquire 80% of the required food intake.

Conditions following the ceasefire are beginning to allow them to consider going home, but they anticipate problems in trying to re-establish their former livelihoods: local looting by criminals who are armed, possible land disputes, shortage of assets to resume production.

Sources: Chris Smith, ‘In the shadow of a cease-fire: the impacts of small arms availability and misuse in Sri Lanka’, Small Arms Survey Occasional Paper No. 11, Oct. 2003; Unicef, ‘Funding Description & Funding Appeal 2002-2003, Colombo.

These insights help identify those aspects of the vulnerability context that may generate violence and those that are likely to be the most affected as a result. But then armed violence is incorporated into this model merely as one of the possible ‘shocks’ that can threaten communities. Shocks are seen as external impacts that can destroy assets directly (such as in the case of floods, storms, civil conflict, etc.) Indirectly they can force people to abandon their home areas and dispose of assets (such as land or livestock) prematurely as part of coping strategies. However, it is clear that what is called for is a perspective that views such ‘shocks’ not as some extraneous calamity but as integrally part of that same social, economic, and political context of violence (see section below)

4. Modifying livelihoods analysis to integrate armed violence and rural development

Recent discussions have recognised that the application of a livelihoods approach to situations of armed violence is not as simple as adding acquisition of arms to the list of coping strategies or seeing war as just another ‘shock’. The complexity that characterised Karamoja is general. Some suggest that the livelihoods approach in DFID’s Sustainable Livelihoods Framework has to be amended and other perspectives incorporated. One prescription (Longley & Maxwell, 2003) suggests that:

- Vulnerability needs to be placed more centrally
- Political economy (of the violence itself) needs to be incorporated
- The dynamic from the pre-conflict period has to be understood.

In a similar vein, a US analyst urges that “the SLF needs to be modified in order to better capture the dynamics of the violence ...”, in particular the need to recognise that it is not “an exogenous shock” but integral to the livelihoods system (Lautze, 2003). The Karamoja case (Box 3 above) and other pastoralist communities offer examples of how armed violence can arise from within the very context of policies, institutions and processes that are within the SLF model. This insight in turn suggests a way that armed violence and its forms and dynamics and not just its impacts can be brought inside a livelihoods analysis. Expanded far enough, this perspective on the armed violence/livelihoods nexus can incorporate those useful insights that have emerged from an understanding of the broader ‘political economy of war’ – those changes in patterns of (often illegal) trade, in guns, minerals and other ‘loot’ and on production and livelihoods systems associated with them. In cases cited above, Eritrean farmers were cut off from urban markets and livestock areas, but contraband trade across the front-lines benefited some; in Somalia, looted food aid itself became a traded resource; looted cattle from Karamoja and neighbouring areas of Uganda, Kenya and Sudan have been plugged into an extensive regional trade network in livestock linking East Africa to Arabia. In many countries of Latin America and Asia, promoting alternative livelihoods for growers and curbing the global network of suppliers of drugs (itself dependent on guns) is a central policy concern in reducing violence or preventing its re-emergence.

Another modification of SLF to include armed violence would be to talk about liabilities as well as assets, and to incorporate the realisation that ‘assets’ can themselves be transformed into ‘liabilities’ through violence, and vice-versa. Thus savings or herds may make a livelihood a target rather than provide insurance.

Conversely, by politicising some communities' marginalisation it can be transformed into an 'asset', albeit usually to enrich a few, as in cases such as that of the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone.

Given how widely SLF is used as a basis for policy and programming, it seems worthwhile to have spelled out how its limitations in situations of violence, for which it was not designed, and how it can be modified, rather than put aside, to analyse those situations. One valuable source that can keep practitioners and analysts up to date with these newly emerging insights is the Livelihoods & Chronic Conflict programme of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London, and the working papers it publishes (see references at end). But other elements need to be integrated into a coherent single framework rather than be simply bolted on.

5. Programming for armed violence and sustainable livelihoods

Given what we have outlined above, there is a clear imperative for policies and programmes that promote sustainable rural livelihoods (SRL) also to address armed violence in some manner. In fact, understanding the forms and dynamics of armed violence can, as we have seen, help agencies to recognise and anticipate changing patterns of vulnerability among beneficiary populations and thereby to design more effective programmes for and with the rural poor. However, the idea of violence for profit and/or survival is not something that is typically taken into account in programming. Moreover, SRL or poverty reduction strategies, though well designed technically, may not recognise their potential for exacerbating conflicts of interest that could degenerate into violence. The long history of development interventions in Karamoja pastoralism (Box 2) is a case in point. Rural development policy making seldom actively exploits such opportunities for tailoring programmes to tackle conflict-generated vulnerability or to dampen inherent conflicts over resources and livelihood assets.

Some of the issues that policy making and programming needs to take into account in contexts of armed livelihoods are:

5.1 The need for and feasibility of livelihood support in armed violence situations

Strict adherence to confining humanitarian assistance to life-preserving measures during an 'emergency' until 'development' becomes possible after the armed violence is contained should be transcended in armed violence as well as other crisis and disaster contexts. It is recognised that there is scope for support of livelihood systems in the midst of many violent conflicts. But old assumptions die hard and there is an unevenness in the practice of that approach – prolonged by institutional divisions (see below).

5.2 Livelihood assets and conflicts of interest

The search for assets and the pursuit of livelihood strategies is bound to involve conflicts of interests, within and between communities. These need to be understood if they are to be mediated and managed without violence. At the same time rural

development programmes need to be assessed so as to reduce prospects of fuelling incipient violence in their resource allocation. The presence and use of SALW can be a key indicator, as well as a contributing factor. Their presence and how they are used as a livelihood asset, as well as the potential for conflicts to generate armed violence should be factored into any analyses of the vulnerability context and resulting proposals. Access to SALW may sometimes be regarded as a communal as well as an individual asset. For example, this may be the case in communities in Turkana, northern Kenya, where SALW possession by clans has generally been collectively managed over the years as a response to insecurity in pastoral areas. However, increased availability of automatic weapons is also widely associated with tensions and challenges to customary authority structures. Intervention strategies aimed at promoting livelihoods and security need to take such factors into careful account.

5.3 Integrated rural development programmes to address SALW and armed violence

Connections can and should be made among the factors affecting the sustainability of rural livelihoods, particularly vulnerability and livelihoods assets, and many of the factors that lead to demand for, and misuse of, SALW. Changes in practice and not just analysis are required. Here a modified livelihoods approach, which has the added advantage of drawing directly from poor people's own perspectives, is uniquely positioned to provide strong analytical and strategic input into small arms control programmes. In particular, where analysis shows that there is a specific demand for arms as a livelihood asset, alternative livelihoods are critical to reducing violence. This understanding also suggests priority may have to be given to **targeting** young men caught up in violence and not just the poorest and most vulnerable.

Conversely, efforts to reduce and control small arms may sometimes provide the security that is a crucial prerequisite of programmes to support sustainable livelihoods. Certainly some alternative system of defence and protection is as much a prerequisite for alternative livelihoods, as the latter is for security. Thus the potentially fractious border areas between Tanzania and Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, where security forces are perceived as up to the task, have prevented much large-scale armed violence and stopped it becoming endemic, and civilian display of SALW are not common.

5.4 Bridging the gap between the micro and the macro

A modified livelihoods approach points up the importance of macro level policy and institutions to the livelihood options of communities and individuals. It also stresses the need for higher-level policy development and planning to be informed by lessons learned and insights gained at the local level (as recognised by DFID in its SL Guidance Sheets). Given this, programmes to bolster rural livelihoods are often relatively well positioned to address the structural causes of armed violence such as weak governance, poor access to markets, etc, through assistance frameworks and national planning processes. This means that armed violence and SALW strategies can find their way into more holistic national frameworks through livelihoods analyses.

5.5 Building institutional linkages to relate armed violence reduction and development

Typically among donors, agencies that deal with SALW and respond to 'crises' involving armed violence are organisationally separate from those promoting rural development. In the EC, emergency response and development are the responsibility of different Directorates and Commissioners. In developing countries themselves there is often very little cooperation between the economic planning and rural development ministries, and security-related elements of governments who often pursue and implement separate strategies. Such divisions not only inhibit coordinated planning but, more crucially, perpetuate the tendency to rule out support for livelihoods from the 'emergency' measures responding to violent conflict. In post-conflict situations, the need for an integrated approach to the decommissioning of weapons and demobilisation of combatants and their reintegration is now recognised - although not yet widely applied (but practice in Sierra Leone may represent a pilot case). But if these matters are handled by separate agencies from those dealing with recovery and rehabilitation there may well be a mismatch. Thus in Eritrea in the 1990s the demobilisation agency, which was in fact in the business of promoting livelihoods for ex-fighters, did so along lines quite at odds with the rural livelihood strategy of the government as a whole. These disjunctures were perpetuated in a second round of demobilisation after 2000, even though the World Bank and other donors were involved in the design of demobilisation.

Programmes could surely benefit from closer collaboration between institutions. For example, technical interventions dealing with weapons collection demobilisation or stockpile management could be combined with targeted and intensive economic recovery plans to improve rural livelihoods, and thereby reduce the demand for SALW. In some of the troubled areas of northern Kenya, where raiding for livestock and the scale of armed violence have escalated in the last generation, district level 'peace and development committees' involving government development and security personnel with civil society organisations and 'traditional' mechanisms have begun to see a reverse of these patterns in the last four or five years. The handing in of weapons and effective prevention and resolution of conflicts over such assets have resulted in a peace dividend. Normal trading and livestock movement are slowly resuming. One observer noted that animals are now being trekked, and no longer trucked for their protection.

5.6 Integrating efforts to reduce and control SALW and armed violence into sustainable livelihoods programmes

The linkage of the two kinds of initiatives should be accepted, but it can be done in a variety of ways. For instance in post-conflict situations, arms reduction programmes could, as a normal ingredient, include specific elements to enhance, restore or replace livelihoods. Typically that would mean a focus on specific participants in violence, especially those most likely in the future to resort to armed violence such as young men. This should include not only victims but even perpetrators, for the latter might be the most likely to turn to earning through the barrel of a gun. Tools for weapons programmes seem to have been a beneficial variant of such arms purchase programmes in places such as Mozambique. Ex-RENAMO rebel households were included, although other dimensions of the recovery programme, especially land (re-

)allocation, were just as often destabilising. A range of rural development programmes or poverty reduction measures could, on the other hand, include provision for dampening violence or addressing the needs of the specific groups that have been made most vulnerable. Prioritising ex-combatants had a stabilising effect in Mozambique and in a UNDP arms reduction programme in the Republic of Congo. Both kinds of programmes often require micro-credit facilities. Providing these in conjunction would help to maximise synergies and save on overheads.

5.7 Community awareness and community-building programmes

The benefits of such links may flow both ways. For example, experience indicates that efforts to address excessive availability and misuse of SALW can often provide a useful focus for wider community mobilisation and confidence-building processes.

6. Some conclusions

This briefing has highlighted ways in which possession and misuse of arms, particularly SALW, are closely linked to efforts to maintain and enhance rural livelihoods but may hamper or nullify them. The associated insecurity and armed violence undermine sustainable rural livelihoods, even when they arise from efforts by some sections of the community to protect their livelihoods. At the same time, more complex interactions between livelihood systems and violence also come into play: e.g. the settlement of conflicts of interests over assets vital to livelihoods becomes less subject to mediation and more to a resort to violence. DFID's Sustainable Livelihoods Framework needs to be developed and used in a way that takes full account of these relationships. Development programmes to support rural livelihoods promise to become more effective in areas affected by armed violence where these inter-relationships are carefully taken into account. Moreover, measures to tackle excessive availability and misuse of SALW and to reduce violence have the potential to contribute to the success of rural livelihoods programmes.

7. Recommendations

This briefing has explored how a concern with SALW and armed violence can be combined with a livelihoods approach to rural development in areas experiencing persistent violence. It offers the following recommendations for more appropriate analysis, programming and institutional bases:

- There is a need to absorb very recent approaches that build out from DFID's well-established Sustainable Livelihoods Framework to take into account armed violence contexts, and to further promote what is still a prototype approach.
- One step is to recognise that while the acquisition of SALW might be part of a livelihood strategy for survival for the poor as well as a strategy of accumulation for those on the make, it is also important to understand that armed violence impacts on livelihoods in a variety of other, complex ways.
- Rural development programming needs to apply these new approaches in diagnosis to tailor strategies to the violence context and to avoid inadvertent fuelling of conflict of interest and transforming it into armed violence. SALW programmes should also be designed to take account of livelihood support opportunities.

- Rural development programming should build in elements that more thoroughly and extensively support livelihood systems during armed violence situations.
- Greater cooperation and integration are urgently needed between agencies charged with promoting sustainable rural livelihoods and those charged with SALW and emergency relief.

If you wish to consult further about the relevance of SALW-related programmes to development strategies with which you are concerned, contact the SALW team at CHAD:

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Further reading

National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in Conflict Affected Countries, Overseas Development Institute (for DFID)

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Protection and Poverty: Community Weapons Collection Experiences in northern Kenya, Gilbert M. Khadiaghala, a report commissioned by Oxfam GB (2003)

Lautze, S., and Raven-Roberts, A. (2003) "Embedding Vulnerability in Livelihoods Models: A Work in Progress", paper presented at the FAO International Workshop on Food Insecurity in Complex Emergencies, Tivoli, 23-25 September, (www.fao.org/crisisandhunger/root/pdf/lautze.pdf). To appear in Special Issue of *Disasters*, March 2005.

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Websites: www.odi.org.uk/speeches/livelihoods_chronic_conflict/report.html