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Addressing and Mitigating Violence

Reducing Violence in a Time of Global Uncertainty: Insights from the Institute of Development Studies Addressing and Mitigating Violence Programme

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The IDS programme on Strengthening Evidence-based Policy works across seven key themes. Each theme works with partner institutions to co-construct policy-relevant knowledge and engage in policy-influencing processes. This material has been developed under the Addressing and Mitigating Violence theme.

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REDUCING VIOLENCE IN A TIME OF GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY: INSIGHTS FROM THE INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES ADDRESSING AND MITIGATING VIOLENCE PROGRAMME

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1 Introduction

In recent years, the need to address and mitigate violence has gained currency in mainstream development thinking and practice. One and a half billion people, or more than a quarter of the world's population, live in areas affected by fragility, conflict or large-scale, organised criminal violence (World Bank 2011). Violence is the leading cause of death among children worldwide and one of the leading causes of death among those aged 15–44, especially men, according to the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (Krisch *et al.* 2015; WHO 2014). A considerable proportion of the world's poor live in violence-affected areas and some estimate that by 2030, nearly two thirds of the global poor will be living in states exhibiting varying forms of fragility, including violence. Conflicts are often not one-off events, but rumble on in different forms over a long period of time: 90 per cent of civil wars in the period 2000–10 occurred in countries that had already had a civil war in the last 30 years (World Bank 2011). Unsurprisingly, countries emerging from war face a 44 per cent chance of relapsing within five years (World Bank 2007). In some places, particularly areas affected by long-running civil war and other forms of chronic insecurity, violence has become a valid tool for national and community conversations. Improving physical safety and security rank among the most important ways in which people's lives could be improved in many areas outside of traditional conflict settings. The Global Peace Index estimates that the economic impact of violence on the global economy in 2014 was around 13.4 per cent of world gross domestic product (GDP) and has increased by over 15 per cent against 2008.

Yet, while the need to reduce violence lends a new rationale for aid, and pushes a much needed rethink of the role, pursuit and practice of development in fragile contexts, the global setting for armed violence reduction is highly uncertain. Slowing economic growth in China is having ripple effects across the global economy, darkening development prospects in a number of countries that rely on commodity exports to Beijing, including many that are affected by violence. Although clearly important, the relationship of such changing global economic conditions to violence in different parts of the world is poorly understood; nor do the relationships run just one way. In Syria, internecine warfare drags into a sixth year, with no apparent end to a conflict that has left an estimated 250,000 dead and over 7.5 million displaced (IDMC 2015). Here, declining oil and other commodity receipts have constricted funding flows to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). As the case of Syria shows, many of today's armed conflicts are internationalised. The migrant and refugee crisis engulfing European countries since 2014 is the largest humanitarian crisis of modern times, with over one million refugees and migrants arriving in Europe by sea in 2015 alone (UNHCR 2016).

As public attitudes harden, and anti-immigrant populism spreads, Europe's political leaders struggle to agree on an effective strategy or identify more imaginative responses to the mass movement. In Libya, fragmentation of political authority and a surge in violence has followed in the years since the 2011 multinational North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military operation to topple the former Gaddafi regime. In a fractured security landscape with multiple and overlapping combatants, ISIL has carved out a base in the port city of Sirte, prompting speculation of renewed international military involvement. Worsening violence is not only a problem in new flashpoints of North Africa and Syria. In places like South Sudan, Somalia and Burundi, new violence flares in old conflict systems, showing the persistence of conflict drivers and the significant challenges to establishing a durable peace and lasting reduction in violence in the world's most protracted crises.

Globally, fatalities due to violence – in both conflict and non-conflict settings – fell from an estimated 526,000 people every year in 2004–07 to 508,000 in 2007–12 (Geneva Declaration 2015). Not only is the average rate of lethal violence diminishing, but levels of violence remain low or continue to decline in countries and territories where the incidence of violence has narrowed, as well. Yet, according to the *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015* report, while fatalities due to violence overall continue to decline, conflict deaths surged by 34 per cent between the periods 2004–07 and 2007–12, mostly due to the situations in Libya and Syria. Further, lethal violence continues to rise in some countries not experiencing armed conflict, including Honduras and Venezuela (Geneva Declaration 2015). Thus, while deadly violence has reduced in some places, conflict-related violence has spiked, including in a number of countries that were formerly stable, even while violence persists in other places that are chronically insecure. In addition, violent deaths are only the most visible outcome of violent behaviour, with even more people affected by disease and disability, and a host of other health and social consequences resulting from violence (WHO 2014). Violence is multidimensional and has substantial impacts on the safety and welfare of millions of people which spread well beyond violent deaths.

The argument to focus aid resources on addressing and mitigating violence is that the occurrence and patterns of violent conflict relate to a number of drivers, situations and processes that concern development. For the first time ever, violence features explicitly in a global development framework: reducing violence is the first target of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, recognition of the interrelationship between security and development. A consensus has emerged at high policy levels around the basic elements of an approach to reduce armed violence. These elements of a violence reduction paradigm include the following:

1. The need to create legitimate institutions, often through efforts to craft political settlements;
2. Strengthening access to justice and security systems;
3. Extending economic opportunities and employment, especially for young people;
4. Fostering societal resilience, both through institutions as well as by considering the sustainability of interventions.

This paradigmatic approach to reducing violence is implicit in the SDGs and proposals to foster more inclusive and secure societies. Still, while there is broad agreement on what needs to be done to transform violent, unstable states and societies into conditions that are less violent, these are statements of long-term transformation. A limitation of the best practice paradigm is that its elements imply that violent places need to evolve to more resemble places that are already peaceful and stable. Yet, as argued below, conditions of comparatively greater peace, stability and security follow extended processes of conflict and change; they are not always evident outcomes of more funding, capacity building and international political attention. Leaving aside the fundamental point that violence exists because it is so often an effective way of doing development and making change happen, a significant obstacle facing development funders and planners who seek to reduce violence is the lack of rigorous evidence pointing to what needs to be done to reduce violence over the short and medium term. Violence is often the currency of politics, the bedrock of development writ large in places now in the most intractable situations, like South Sudan, Somalia and Syria. Given the embeddedness of violence in many political systems, and the longer-term transformations needed to move to more peaceful conditions, how can violence be addressed and mitigated in the near term?

This Evidence Report details key insights from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Addressing and Mitigating Violence (AMV) programme, which involved detailed political analysis of dynamics of violence as well as efforts to reduce and prevent violent conflict across a number of countries and areas in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and South

Asia (see Box 1.1). In particular, the evidence highlighted here is from violent settings that do not neatly fit categories of 'war' or 'peace'. The findings of these studies, published as a series of open-access reports, Policy Briefings and blogs, were discussed by conflict and security experts as well as thinkers from aid and advocacy organisations at a consultative session in London in November 2015. This report uses evidence from the programme to critically reflect on policy and programming policy approaches for reducing violence. Specifically, it provides a synthesis of findings around these themes: (1) the nature of violence and how it might be changing; (2) the connectivity of actors across levels and space; and (3) the significance of identities and vulnerabilities for understanding and responding to violence. The report concludes by examining the implications of the research for the violence reduction paradigm.

Box 1.1 The IDS Addressing and Mitigating Violence (AMV) programme

The IDS Addressing and Mitigating Violence (AMV) programme was a four-year programme of work funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Its genesis was the *World Development Report 2011 on Conflict, Security and Development*, as well as a longer pedigree of critical conflict analysis by IDS researchers. The programme sought to understand the causes and consequences of new, emerging forms of violence as well as longstanding conflicts across a number of settings exhibiting a variety of political and social violence, including Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, South Africa, India and Nepal. The case studies were clustered around three key themes: (1) strengthening core state functions and citizen capacities to mitigate and prevent violence; (2) improving access to livelihoods, jobs and basic services in violent contexts; and (3) reducing cross-border crime and conflict spillovers through strengthened bilateral and regional cooperation. All of the programme's publications are free to download at: www.ids.ac.uk/idsresearch/addressing-and-mitigating-violence.

2 Global violence reduction and the search for good practice

2.1 The turn to violence in global development thinking

It has long been recognised that there has been a global shift away from ‘old’ inter-state or civil conflicts that characterised the pre-Cold War era towards ‘new’ types of war and conflict (Kaldor 2005, 2012, 2013). New forms of conflict are diffuse, characterised by episodic and recurring violence, and involve an assortment of state and non-state actors bound by transnational networks and flows (Duffield 2001; Eriksson and Wallensteen 2004). Most deaths due to violence now occur outside of traditional conflict settings (Krause, Gilgen and Muggah 2011). Many studies have shown the connectivity of different, seemingly separate types of violence, in which a chain of violence links violence observed in conflict with other structural and interpersonal violence (Annan and Brier 2010; Caprioli 2005; Luckham 2015).

Reducing armed violence has emerged in its own right as a major area of development policy and programming over the past ten years. The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development was adopted at a Ministerial Summit in Geneva in 2006 and is now endorsed by over 100 states. It effectively lobbied for the inclusion of armed violence prevention and reduction within the UN system. The subsequent *Geneva Platform*, established in 2008 connects peace-building actors, resources and expertise, and publishes papers and briefs on this specific area of work. The UN Secretary General’s report on *Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence* (United Nations General Assembly 2009) detailed the impacts of violence on development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In May 2010, more than 60 states endorsed the *Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence*, which agreed concrete measures to address armed violence (Oslo Commitments 2010). This commitment, and the 2009 UN Secretary General report were closely followed by the 2011 *World Development Report* (WDR), which focused on addressing and mitigating violence (World Bank 2011). The G7+ *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States* (G7+ 2011) was endorsed shortly after the WDR release, in November 2011, arguing for member states to be more context-sensitive and country-led in their approaches to development in fragile states. More recent attention has focused on the relationships between development and radicalisation, including the UN Secretary General’s *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* (United Nations General Assembly 2015), which seeks systematic preventive steps to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to radicalise and join violent extremist groups. Other prominent development actors, such as the UN, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Department for International Development (DFID) have produced a multitude of reports and publications on the topic, ranging from annual OECD *States of Fragility* 2007–present (OECD 2015) reports to the UN *Disarmament Occasional Paper* series 1999–14 (UNODA 2014).

However, even before the recent turn to violence, since the 1990s there has been a groundswell of thinking, funding and advocacy within development on preventing and responding to conflict. Organisations and groups working in insecure environments recognised the need to work on conflict, both from the perspective of needing to engage in a conflict-sensitive manner, but also from the perspective of consciously seeking to support transformations to more peaceful and stable conditions. Although there was healthy debate on the so-called securitisation of aid (Duffield 2001; Howell and Lind 2009), many development actors sought to address insecurities experienced by poor and vulnerable

groups – including conflict – as inseparable from the sorts of change that were needed in conflict-affected environments (Allouche and Lind 2013).

For many years large-scale official development aid circles focused on resolving conflict and supporting peace-building efforts in so-called ‘fragile states’, a concept that has proved controversial for a number of reasons. Defining what makes a state ‘fragile’ is problematic, with no agreed definition among various governments, militaries and non-governmental actors who intervene in such contexts. Inadvertently, the aid focus on so-called ‘fragile states’ led to a reduction of aid in places that are not considered ‘fragile’, but that still experience extreme poverty and are afflicted by various political and social violence, such as India (Fisher 2014; ODI 2006). The emphasis on using aid instruments to transform fragile states into more peaceful and stable conditions characterised fraught experiences in ‘state-building’ in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor. The 2011 WDR, however, showed that violence was a problem not confined to conflict-affected ‘fragile’ states alone; rather, it was a predicament experienced across a spectrum of states and societies, from highly advanced industrialised economies to countries experiencing stagnation and widespread poverty (World Bank 2011). The focus of work within the AMV programme has been in violent settings that often do not easily fit traditional definitions of ‘fragile states’ but that nonetheless are characterised by conflict and violence of varying forms and intensities.

Violence is an issue that defines society in many places considered to be poor. Yet, it is not a straightforward relationship where violence only inhibits development and creates poverty. There are many examples of countries that experienced rapid development and change while also experiencing violence, such as India (Cramer 2006; Justino 2015), the United States (US), Angola and Brazil (Cramer 2006). Indeed, some claim that violence is a fundamental characteristic of state formation processes (Bates 2001; Tilly 1992). Further, development does not necessarily result in peaceful outcomes. For instance, there are high levels of violence in countries that are considered developed; in the US, in 2013, there were 16,121 homicide deaths, 5.1 deaths per 100,000 people (CDC 2013) and 25 per cent of women have experienced domestic violence (CDC 2011). In Northern Ireland, a total of 3,568 people were killed between 1969 and 2010 during the ‘Troubles’ (CAIN 2016). Violence is not just a problem for poorer or transition countries; it affects states and societies across the development continuum.

However, worryingly, countries and areas with a higher prevalence of conflict and violence have lagged on achievement of global development indicators (OECD 2015). In 2011, no low-income fragile or conflict-affected country had achieved a single MDG; people living in these countries are more than twice as likely to be undernourished, three times as likely to be unable to send their children to school, and twice as likely to see their children die before the age of five, than those people living in other developing countries (World Bank 2011: 5).

As recognition has increased of the need to address violence as a distinct area of scholarly and policy analysis, there has been a proliferation of strategies, frameworks, guidance and other recommendations to inform development inputs in violence-affected places (including the New Deal Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals of the OECD (2011), the World Bank WDR 2011, and DFID’s 2010 *Building Peaceful States and Societies*). The SDGs introduce a new emphasis on violence within global development efforts. Goal 16 seeks ‘the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels’ (UN 2015). Unlike the MDGs which were aimed at developing countries, all of the SDGs are relevant and apply in general terms to all countries, including developed countries (Osborn, Cutter and Ullah 2015). By intending to be universal, the SDGs imply that all countries will need to make adjustments in accordance with their political situations, development priorities and ambition, and in respect to their policies and priorities. Being universal in scope, in principle the SDGs are more likely to encourage new thinking and approaches to addressing the influences of

transnational actors and flows on the occurrence and persistence of violence. However, while it is envisioned that countries will need to formulate their own approaches to achieving the SDGs in view of their development levels, national priorities and policies, this complexity is problematic for policymakers and donors (ICSU and ISSC 2015). Access to livelihoods and economic development, listed as essential in preceding violence reduction frameworks is missing from SDG 16, but is, however, included separately in SDG 8. Goal 16 is ambitious, including 12 separate targets (see Box 2.1) covering a wide breadth of issues including reducing violence-related deaths, strengthening access to information, legal identity and reducing terrorism.

While at the moment most policy efforts remain focused on developing indicators to monitor and measure progress in achieving Goal 16, discussion will soon turn to 'best fit' approaches for reducing violence as a fundamental part of building more secure societies. Goal 16 states an ideal end-state, modelled on the experiences and situations existing in countries that perform well in governance and development indices. However, when faced with the most complex situations (for example, in South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan or Yemen), and some middle-income countries (in the Human Development Index (HDI) rankings) that experience both growth as well as persistent violence (Colombia, Venezuela, South Africa, India), the targets appear far removed from reality. What also complicates a clearer idea of how to achieve progress on Goal 16 is that some middle-income countries have achieved growth and greater prosperity without having in place advanced institutions to manage competing interests, or access to justice and inclusive forms of politics that are thought to encourage peace and stability. There are many pathways towards peaceful and secure societies, as well as many setbacks, diversions and even ruptures that are experienced during processes of addressing violence. Some success (and much failure) has been achieved through international and regional peacekeeping efforts. Some success has been seen through political reforms and institutionalisation of rights at the national level, through a combination of a national political settlement and sub-national dialogue and mediation, or through locally negotiated agreements that national governments agree to respect. Thus, while Goal 16 directs attention to paradigmatic best practice (as detailed in the section below), the pathways for addressing and mitigating violence are diverse and defy simple categorisation.

Box 2.1 Sustainable Development Goal 16

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels

- 16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- 16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.4: By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime
- 16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
- 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- 16.8: Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
- 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
- 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- 16.a: Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime
- 16.b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Source: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/.

2.2 The violence reduction paradigm

As referred to earlier, there is consensus at the level of global policy on the broad contours of an approach to reducing violence: what is referred to here as the 'violence reduction paradigm'. This consists of four fundamental elements: (1) the establishment of legitimate institutions backed by political agreement; (2) strengthening access to justice and security; (3) extending economic opportunities and employment; and (4) ensuring the durability of peace through societal resilience. These are briefly discussed in turn below.

Firstly, it is thought that violence can be addressed through the creation of legitimate institutions and political settlements (OECD 2009; DFID 2010; World Bank 2011; United Nations General Assembly 2015). While the concept of political settlements has become widely used, there are many definitions, ranging from 'elite pacts', to 'the outcome of a peace-process' or 'social order',¹ making the term confusing to many. Here, the concept of political settlement is used to refer to *a process of negotiation* that involves formal and informal actors as well as formal and informal spaces. It is generally agreed that creating durable institutions in post-conflict settings can help to establish and maintain peace and manage tensions; equally, durable institutions can plausibly be seen as an outcome not a cause of violence reduction. Current thinking is that this can be achieved through political settlements that are 'legitimate, inclusive and transparent' (DFID 2010). Yet, what might appear 'legitimate' to an urban-based elite involved in negotiations, could look very different to a provincial administrator, or a youth fighter. Further, a political settlement may or may not involve an increase in violence; there are multiple phases in the process of negotiating a settlement, and the use of violence frequently is one of them, even if it is not directly attributable to actors involved in the settlement processes.

¹ For more in-depth analysis see, www.governanceanddevelopment.com/2012/09/what-on-earth-is-political-settlement.html.

Strengthening access to justice and security is a second element of the violence reduction paradigm, done through transforming or strengthening institutions that deliver citizen security and justice. This was a prominent theme of the WDR 2011 on Conflict, Security and Development (World Bank 2011), as well as the WDR 2006 on Equity and Development (World Bank 2006). It is thought that widening access to justice will help to build trust between citizens and governments, as well as empowering groups who may otherwise have sought justice through continued violence. So-called 'legitimate' institutions that provide justice and security services play an important role in distributing power and rights and, thus, their reform is thought to help manage grievances and the risk of conflict. Early priorities include stemming government corruption, and reforming police, and drawing on traditional or community justice mechanisms, in order to be able to punish unlawful activities capably and fairly (World Bank 2011; United Nations General Assembly 2015).

Expanding access to jobs and economic opportunities is a third element, providing employment and economic security to those groups who may otherwise gain more respect and economic reward from engaging in armed violence. The lack of economic options and opportunities for many is seen as a source of instability that, if unaddressed, will increase the threat of violence. Creating jobs in conflict and violence-affected countries can be extremely challenging, particularly when large numbers of people have been displaced, and there are high numbers of ex-combatants (World Bank 2013). Job creation is therefore linked to transforming institutions and access to justice, in order to create legal, secure livelihoods (OECD 2009; DFID 2010; World Bank 2011, 2013; IA 2015).

A fourth element of the violence reduction paradigm concerns sustainability of these interventions, and their resilience against future violence (OECD 2009; DFID 2010; World Bank 2011; Oswald and Ruedin 2012; United Nations General Assembly 2015). Circumstances of 'no peace, no war' characterise many contemporary situations of violent conflict (Richards 2004), implying that violence can persist in the system well after the formal end of conflict and in spite of years of intervention and external support for peace and security. The risk of renewed violence exists in many areas where an agreement or deal may have signalled a formal end to conflict, but where political divisions and insecurity remain rife, such as in Afghanistan or Iraq. In other places, such as in South Sudan and Somalia, external peace, security and counterterrorism support have been an important source of rents for national and local elites, but without having contributed to fundamental reform and institutionalisation of new norms (De Waal 2015). Given the highly uncertain and mixed outcomes of many large-scale peace-building operations in recent years, current thinking emphasises the need for durable responses that can be sustained even when tensions threaten to spill into wider conflict and violence.

These are the fundamental elements of the current violence reduction paradigm. In global policy, it is also widely concurred that armed violence reduction requires an intersectoral, multi-level governance approach that promotes genuine local leadership. However, the very need for such a 'comprehensive approach' itself suggests that reducing violence will necessarily be part of a broader transformation in economy, polity and society – something that is shown by a political settlements analysis. Yet, truncated aid cycles and the pressure to show quick results can result in short-term, projectised interventions that do little to shift the underlying drivers of violence. Reducing violence is a long-term goal, and results are not guaranteed (Lind 2014).

Notwithstanding the widely accepted need for joined-up responses, there is a lack of systematic review and rigorous evidence to support much of the generalised thinking about the violence reduction paradigm (OECD 2011). There is even less practically informed insight of how they can be achieved in the short and medium term. The limits of the best practice paradigm to reducing violence is that it states the obvious: to be less violent,

societies and states should become more like places that are already peaceful and stable. The elements of reducing violence are well known, but arguably they are the outcomes of long processes of change, conflict and adjustment, not logical outcomes of more funding, more capacity building and more political attention. The mantra of improved coordination and partnership does not necessarily address the more fundamental conundrum of how to act effectively as part of a longer-term and dynamic process of moving out of violence.

The rapid emergence of this best practice paradigm is significant on many fronts. It establishes priorities for donors desperately searching for answers to what are often longstanding situations of violent insecurity and conflict. It directs trends in research funding to those areas that are thought to be most likely to uncover 'solutions'. It directs advocacy efforts at international and national levels. It offers an explanation for complex dynamics, trends and continuities to a wider public that understands violence to be altogether normal in places like Darfur, Somalia and Afghanistan. Moreover, it provides regimes in violence-affected places a touchstone for seeking international support and funds.

Best practice will take development actors only so far. Far more attention is needed on how violence operates, its logic and sense in particular settings. This type of analysis is more likely to generate useful insights than measurements of institutional weakness and social fragility – based on contrasts with more peaceful and stable situations. The WDR already cautioned against the temptation of imposing certain institutional arrangements from one state or society onto another, in the hope that it would redress perceived institutional weaknesses driving violence. Understanding the historical and political context within which violence reduction efforts are implemented, as well as turning to recent experiences in violence reduction within the same or similar settings, may provide a better basis for understanding how best to move forward and reduce violence.

3 Understanding violence: themes from the Addressing and Mitigating Violence (AMV) programme

In the following sections we review key insights from the IDS AMV programme, focusing on three key themes that came from our work. All of our work was carried out in violent contexts, but not always in places that are considered to be at war or even ‘fragile’. Each one provides a richly detailed picture of violence and violence reduction efforts in various parts of the world. Based on this body of work, this section uncovers how violence operates in particular settings, and through that, understandings of the various ways in which it can be reduced, as well as the limits of and constraints on such efforts. Many pathways exist to address and mitigate violence, and bespoke approaches are needed, involving negotiations and contestations among a whole array of stakeholders. The sections below detail a number of key themes:

1. Different forms of violence are interlinked and can reinforce each other; violence has a ‘compound’ nature;
2. Violence is often part of a network, linking local to national to transnational;
3. The experience of vulnerability and violence are often linked.

3.1 The ‘compound’ nature of violence

Different motivations for or causes of violence include: (1) ‘social violence’ which is primarily interpersonal and motivated by the will to get or keep social power and control; (2) ‘economic violence’ which is motivated by material gain and can take the form of street crime, drug-related violence and kidnapping; and (3) ‘political violence’ which is inspired by the will to win or hold political power (Moser and McIlwaine 2004: 60; Gupte and Bogati 2014: 10–11); among others. Violence can manifest itself in a multitude of ways, such as riots, armed robberies, terrorism, and sexual and gender-based violence. These are often treated as separate from one another. Yet, different forms of violence (including intimate, criminal, public, political and state-sponsored) are interlinked and can reinforce one another. Violence is a multifaceted, compound phenomenon, with different forms of violence intersecting. It is difficult and problematic, analytically, to treat various forms of violence separately, since they are closely entangled (Lind 2014).

Work in Nigeria (Niger Delta), Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya (Marsabit County) for instance, indicates that it is important to recognise that the violence which exists is not just a manifestation of criminality or a reflection of social problems but is intimately connected to the political processes in these contexts (Schultze-Kraft and Hinkle 2014).

The diagnosis of violence tends to inform the response to it. Responses based on an understanding that violence is driven primarily by a seemingly apparent singular ‘cause’, such as ‘ethnic clashes’ or ‘gang violence’, have not proven successful at addressing the layered factors, and myriad connections among these, that drive violence. Evidence from Nairobi and Mumbai for instance illustrates that different types of urban violence are closely entwined, with neighbourhoods where riots or post-election violence occurred tending to have prevalent crime and gang activities rooted in the lack of opportunity, stark inequalities and political manipulations of these (Tranchant 2013b). Thus, pursuing separate policies for addressing crime and riots is an ineffective approach. Inequality (both horizontal and vertical) correlates strongly with violence. Research in South Asia also indicates that urban

violence comes in the form of social violence, economic violence and political violence, all three of which are deeply interconnected and extenuate, or are extenuated by, conditions in cities (Gupte 2014). Responses to urban violence in India, Pakistan and Nepal have tended to be militaristic rather than addressing marginalisation for instance, with limited success in preventing urban violence. Failure to respond effectively to violence can result in new mutations of violence over time. There is a lack of recognition of the factors behind the intergenerational reproduction of violence (through trauma and childhood abuse, for example) and political and criminal violence, for instance. Responses to violence are less effective if they are crafted in response to an understanding of violence as something driven by a singular cause, rather than as a compound phenomenon with many interrelated threads and drivers. This is why an intersectoral, multi-level governance approach is needed.

However, understanding violence can be complicated as collecting data and evidence on armed violence is challenging. Insecurity makes it more difficult for researchers to meet different stakeholders and ask sensitive questions, while national statistics authorities often do not cover these areas. Homicide figures are often used to represent violence, yet this fails to convey the multiple forms of violence which take place and do not lead to death. Focusing on these may privilege the recognition of certain forms of violence and their response. Data on how violence operates, its logic and how it makes 'sense' in particular places, are often lacking. The lack of them makes it difficult to diagnose and respond to situations of violence, which might appear mystifying and opaque to 'outsiders'.

3.1.1 Nigeria

Evidence from the Niger Delta indicates that political, economic, and criminal violence are interlinked around the struggle over the access to, and distribution of, the country's huge oil wealth, involving changing constellations of actors and interests over time (Schultze-Kraft 2013). For instance, the armed umbrella organisation Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) emerged as a result of harsh government action in response to criminal activity under a 'political cover' by armed gangs. There has been a series of 'rolling, often covert alliances and bargains between state and non-state, and legal and illegal/criminal actors in the Delta, and between them and some federal political elites' (Schultze-Kraft 2013: 17–18). The 2003 and 2007 election violence saw armed gangs mobilised by politicians terrorise citizens and political opponents and stuff or steal ballot boxes. Once the elections were over politicians tended to abandon these groups, and many set up their own guns-for-hire groups, carrying out attacks on oil companies and kidnapping oil workers for profit. In the jockeying for power and control of oil rents 'organised crime increasingly penetrated Nigeria's political system; political ends and criminal means became dangerously entwined' (Schultze-Kraft 2013: 25). Violence had become a 'hard currency' that was used by many actors to press their demands and achieve their own intertwined political and economic goals. Profit-seeking criminals adopted the claims of genuine 'resource agitators' seeking to achieve more control of the oil wealth for the benefit of the Niger Delta populations (Schultze-Kraft 2013). Many leaders of these armed groups were co-opted into the political settlement. Meanwhile, underlying problems were unsolved, including incessant oil spills leading to pollution of farmlands and rivers, large-scale unemployment, lack of social and physical infrastructure including schools, hospitals and roads, corrupt and unaccountable politicians, and a refusal of the federal government to increase the oil revenue allocation accruable to the Delta states beyond the 13 per cent stipulated by the 1999 Constitution.

3.1.2 Kenya

Political, ethnic, religious, and regional violence in Kenya is closely interconnected (Lind, Mutahi and Oosterom 2015; Scott-Villiers *et al.* 2014; Ruteere *et al.* 2013). This is apparent in how actors involved in violence mobilise along multiple identities – political, criminal and sometimes cultural (Ruteere *et al.* 2013). In some instances, in Nairobi's poor neighbourhoods, criminal violence and vigilante responses can mutate into ethnic or political

violence depending on the ethnicity of the victims or perpetrators. In other cases, ethnic or political violence hides behind acts of criminal violence (Ruteere *et al.* 2013). Non-state violent actors such as the Mungiki (a secretive sect and banned criminal organisation) can work both as enforcers and mobilisers for politicians and as criminal gangs (Ruteere *et al.* 2013). The recent attacks by Al-Shabaab and sympathiser groups are also increasingly intertwined with deepening regional and ethnic divisions as a result of uneven development patterns and the treatment of certain groups. In addition, criminal organisations have used similar tactics to Al-Shabaab to exploit the situation of insecurity in pursuit of their political and business agendas (Lind *et al.* 2015).

Responses to violence and crime in Nairobi's poor neighbourhoods have tended to treat it as ordinary crime, the result of a lack of law and order, and focus on more robust policing measures which have actually aggravated the underlying causes of insecurity (Ruteere *et al.* 2013). There is little public trust in the police and without reforms which address this, including an end to impunity for police crimes and a more accessible justice system, more robust policing measures are unlikely to succeed. In addition, focusing on policing does little to address the multiple drivers of violence, which are better served by an approach which addresses more deeply rooted problems of poverty and unemployment, particularly among young people, and the lack of basic services in poor neighbourhoods. Attempts have been made to develop a joined-up multisectoral approach through the Safer Nairobi Initiative; however, it fell victim to political tugs-of-war and lack of confidence in the city council (Ruteere *et al.* 2013).

A response to high levels of political violence in Kenya, rooted in contests over highly centralised powers, was to devolve power to newly established county governments. However, devolution reforms failed to deal with the effect of persistent low-level violence in the political system itself. Struggles over the spoils of devolution, both in relation to power and economic benefit, have played out violently along ethnic lines and shifted the tipping point for violence to the sub-national level, mixing economic, political and social violence (Scott-Villiers *et al.* 2014).

In response to the threat of Al-Shabaab, the state has pursued a range of 'hard' measures, including military intervention in Somalia (Operation Linda Nchi), police raids on predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods of Nairobi and the incarceration of several thousand civilians (Operation Usalama Watch), as well as introducing draconian new amendments to security legislation. The Kenyan security response to the Al-Shabaab attacks was framed around the perception that Al-Shabaab is an 'external' threat to Kenya's peace and security, ignoring the substantial 'internal' factors that have contributed to the rise of violent extremism in Kenya (Lind *et al.* 2015). In fact, Operation Linda Nchi, and the harassment of Kenyan Somalis and Muslims in Operation Usalama Watch, in the name of security, has been counterproductive and feeds into Al-Shabaab's exploitation of the country's deep, structural divisions. Responses should instead pursue interrelated political, governance and security reforms addressing violence in the country's margins and aim to have the greatest impacts for its marginalised populations (Lind *et al.* 2015).

3.1.3 Nepal

Since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was established in 2006, war-related deaths have decreased but urban violence has been on the rise. The authorities have struggled to respond to this growing problem. The nature of the existing urban violence is related to a multitude of factors which cannot be addressed by formal policing alone (Gupte and Bogati 2014). Violence in Nepal's urban areas arises from a complex range of political, institutional, economic, ethnic/identity and social factors. Both politically motivated and economically driven organised crime groups have a significant impact on both public security and local

governance and elections, and political parties have been using criminal groups for political purposes.

Individual initiatives which are not part of a wider strategy have not been successful at addressing this urban violence. Like in Nairobi, the nature of the existing violence, with its complex social and economic problems and involvement of various criminal gangs, makes it difficult for formal policing and security structures to address on their own. Therefore, a combination of different policies to reduce crime and violence, ranging from addressing different youth issues and needs to reduce risk factors, community-based partnerships that seek to develop the ability of individuals and communities to respond to problems of crime and violence, urban planning and design, as well as improving police capacity, resources and training issues, seem more likely to succeed (Gupte and Bogati 2014).

3.1.4 Egypt

In the aftermath of the 2011 revolution in Egypt, levels of political, economic and social (including religious and gender-based) violence all increased dramatically (Tadros 2014). This violence was sometimes interconnected; for example, members of Islamist forces belonging to the Salafis and Gama'at imposed ransoms on Copts in Upper Egypt as 'protection money' (so as not to subject them to assault). It was political violence as it complied with the belief of these Islamists that non-Muslims must show subservience to Muslims as part of the instatement of an Islamist governance system; it was economic violence as the intention was to collect money; and it was social violence as it was intended to instil the notion that Copts are second class citizens. In addition, politically motivated sexual assaults were carried out against women to deter them from political activism. Violence around economic control of informal street vendors became entangled in incidents of political violence (Tadros 2014). Political violence around the revolution also had its roots in economic drivers and a desire for social justice (Mitchell 2015a).

The international community's understanding of the underlying causes of violence is very different from that of Egyptian citizens. The international community expected that the lack of inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood in the political settlement and the security sector's excessive use of force against them would result in citizens condemning the violence against the Muslim Brotherhood and would delegitimise the political order. However, the people were broadly supportive of the state's response to the Muslim Brotherhood and did not believe reconciliation (an inclusive political settlement) would decrease the violence and therefore rejected the international community's involvement (Tadros 2014).

3.1.5 Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's conflict ended in 2002 with an externally imposed peace agreement. The international community has focused its post-war reconstruction efforts on rebuilding governance institutions, particularly the chieftancy, that existed before the war. Less effort was placed on addressing the more complex sociological factors that contributed to the civil war, including the marginalisation of young people, lack of opportunity and skewed distribution of resources. As a result similar conditions exist today, as did prior to the war.

Evidence from Sierra Leone shows how anger and frustration at inequalities are manifesting as violence in the mining areas, on the streets, and in universities and schools. In addition, tensions still exist as a result of incomplete reintegration of ex-combatants and lack of progress in the reconciliation process. This social and economic violence is closely connected to political violence as a result of manipulation by politicians. Violent incidents often spiked around election times, although peace-building and violence mitigation strategies and programmes around the 2012 elections helped prevent violence during the electoral cycle (Allouche 2013a).

3.1.6 Summary

Violence reduction and post-conflict initiatives and policies often focus on just one type of violence, based on assumptions about what that 'type' of violence is – whether political, ethnic, gang, interpersonal or terrorist. Isolated projects are implemented, working with partners who also focus on one type of violence or one group of people, and who are unaccustomed to working on different types of violence. The responsibility for addressing violence is often situated within a specific government department, unit or aid body that is unaccustomed to working across boundaries. For example, domestic violence is usually dealt with by organisations that focus on women. However, in order to address domestic violence it is necessary to work within many sectors, such as justice, enforcement, health and education with men and women alike. Equally important are 'readings' of violence. The views of government officials may be very different to those of grass-roots organisations, or individuals experiencing day-to-day violence. It may be politically expedient for someone to claim that the issue is domestic violence or gang violence, when it is in fact state-sponsored. The ability to correctly identify the risks, causes and impacts of violence is of great importance for policy and programming.

Violence reduction and post-conflict peace-building initiatives need to be interconnected, in order to address the violence issue as a whole, rather than as discrete, unrelated problems. Further, it is not just about reducing day-to-day levels of violence on the ground, it is also about addressing the issues at multiple levels, with multiple actors, and across multiple areas of government. Due to the pervasiveness of violence in many settings, many actors working on development in these settings will also be involved in violence mitigation work, even if they do not label it as such (OECD 2011). It is important to recognise this and include these actors and their work within violence reduction programmes and coordination.

The frameworks and guidelines we outline at the beginning of this report focus on the big drivers of violence reduction: economics, access to justice, institutions and political settlements. Taken as a whole, they might address the 'compound' character of violence. The risk, however, is that they are pursued as separate threads, with little coordination and effort to connect dots across different areas of experience, expertise and specialisation. Given the interconnected nature of the issues around violence, we argue that there is a great need to integrate the issues in order to successfully and sustainably reduce violence.

3.2 Connectivity of actors across levels and space

Often when looking at violence, the focus tends to be on conflict dynamics at the national level, and making cross-country comparisons. Sub-national and micro-level dynamics are often overlooked (Luckham 2015; Justino and Balcells 2014). Moreover, the nature of politics is often fractal, with similar dynamics and relationships reproduced at multiple levels (De Waal 2015). The implication is that violence operating at a particular level, such as at the sub-national level, is often knitted closely with national-level divisions and actors, as well as transnational flows and actors. Violence can become a valid tool for national and local community conversations and settlements. The case studies indicate that the transnational and citizen levels are very important to consider. Thus, a multi-level governance approach is essential to understand how violence operates through the connectivity of actors, negotiations and conflict across levels and space.

Evidence gathered by the AMV programme, especially in relation to political settlements, indicated the importance of relationships between the state and elites with local actors, donors, business networks and transnational corporations (Mitchell 2015a). National elites are often closely connected with global elites, as can be seen in the Niger Delta. Borderlands have become sites of heightened tension and violence. The important role that these transnational actors can play in conflict dynamics is often not fully understood and factored in.

However, it is also clear that individuals are active agents and agency at the local level feeds into violence dynamics operating at wider scales. Research looking at political settlements and violence in Egypt and Marsabit County indicates that ordinary citizens' role in the process is often neglected by policy approaches aiming for peaceful political settlements. Citizens confer legitimacy to higher level political settlements and have the ability to shape and break them, including by taking recourse to violence (Schultze-Kraft and Hinkle 2014).

It must also be recognised that perpetrators and victims are often interchangeable, with victims perpetrating, and perpetrators being victims of violence, not just at a local level but also at a national level. State force can be used to keep citizens secure, as well as to inflict violence upon them. At a local level, young men especially are both the majority of victims and perpetrators of violence. Individuals can demand their rights to security provision and act themselves to mitigate it. Evidence from Cape Town and Mumbai shows that local groups are working to prevent violence, and problems of urban violence are best addressed through cooperation between the state and citizens (Gupte, Shahrokh and Wheeler 2014b). Nurturing these civil spaces to keep alive voices against violence is a vital area to be addressed. Policies addressing violence prevention and mitigation should link between and across local, provincial and national levels (Gupte *et al.* 2014b). However, it is also recognised that actors who 'keep peace' and 'protect communities' often do this through violent means, such as the Mungiki in Nairobi, and gangs in Cape Town and Mumbai. Policies also need to support political processes at both the macro and micro level simultaneously to advance towards the goal of effective violence mitigation. However, citizens are rarely engaged with, despite the importance of building security with those who live in the midst of insecurity.

3.2.1 Niger Delta

The violence in the Niger Delta indicates the important role transnational actors can play in local violence (Schultze-Kraft 2013). During the early 1990s, troops were deployed at the request of transnational oil companies to quell protests; while during the transition to civilian government they were able to negotiate a new deal by 'offering "protection" contracts to organised militant youth groups in return for an informal license to operate in the Delta undisturbed' (Schultze-Kraft 2013: 14). These private security guards helped fan the violence in the Niger Delta, alongside militant and criminal groups, and government forces. The large direct cash payments to community leaders and community assistance/development programmes funded by the major oil companies helped to deepen the violence by raising expectations of rents and stirring inter-ethnic tensions over community development resources (Schultze-Kraft 2013).

In addition, the neglect of the local level through the exclusion of the interests of the Delta communities themselves in the political settlement, undermines the country's long-term stability. The case of Nigeria indicates that an 'inclusive enough' political settlement is inadequate, as co-opting different militia leaders into the settlement has not resulted in any concrete changes to how the country's natural resource wealth is distributed or addressed socioeconomic grievances, poverty, criminality and violence in the Delta and other parts of the country (Schultze-Kraft 2013). It is important that political settlements also include democratic, pro-development and non-violent counter-elites, which would require significant and coordinated governance reforms at the local, regional and federal levels. Strengthening accountability mechanisms at the local and regional levels are perceived to be crucial, as well.

3.2.2 Kenya

Evidence gathered in Kenya indicates that transnational actors and processes have fed into Kenya's system of violence, connecting its 'internal' and 'external' stresses (Lind *et al.* 2015;

Lind and Dowd 2015). As described previously, Al-Shabaab has exploited already existing tensions and the government's security response of counterproductive targeting of Somalis and Muslims more generally, to localise jihad within Kenya (Lind *et al.* 2015).

Evidence from Kenya also indicates that one reason why violence endures in the country is the very nature of its kleptocratic politics. Informal power extends outwards from elites at the centre through a 'rhizomatous' network of administrators, police and security officials, criminal bosses and other business interests at lower levels, with violence continuing to shape governance structures and political relationships at multiple levels in Kenya (Scott-Villiers *et al.* 2014). The local and national levels reinforce one another. Individual community responses to violence often serve to fuel it further, through actions such as revenge attacks and expectations in relation to violent clientelism. Alternatively, in Marsabit, Kenya, the efforts to reduce violence that are most widely regarded are those of unfunded local citizens, often women's organisations. However, they have little traction on the underlying rhizomes of power, and politics continues to undermine citizen-led peace processes (*ibid.*).

Local-level leaders, as well as national political figures, were active in mobilising violence against members of other communities in Kenya. Much of the violence in poor neighbourhoods is carried out by criminal organisations and linked to complex local-level political struggles. Not recognising the instrumental use of violence in local politics has meant that interventions have failed to involve influential local-level figures. Responses to violence need to consider multiple levels of governance and politics, not just that instigated by national political figures, with the role of community-level political entrepreneurs being especially crucial (Ruteere *et al.* 2013). Official responses to violence in Nairobi's poor neighbourhoods have also tended to neglect the lessons learnt at the local level.

Evidence from work in Marsabit County also indicates that it is important for local citizens to participate in violence mitigation policies. Their participation will help mitigate against generalising about ethnic rivalry, primordial raiding and root-and-branch corruption and help with understanding why people participate in violence and the links with the political struggles surrounding devolution (Schultze-Kraft and Hinkle 2014).

3.2.3 West Africa and the transnational cocaine trade

The transnational cocaine trade has been associated with recent episodes of political instability and violence in Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Mali, and is perceived to threaten stability in other West African countries, although it has not reached the levels witnessed in several Latin American drug source and transit countries. Evidence indicates that internal and external stresses are not separate but relate to and reinforce one another as they are interconnected through transnational actors and processes that are part of broader globalising dynamics (Schultze-Kraft 2014).

The high value of the cocaine trade offers great opportunity for corruption and manipulation of political systems with the resultant potential for insecurity, in competition over drug trafficking rents. West African countries have seen their existing modes of governance influenced and transformed as a result of cocaine trafficking. External actors include both those involved in trafficking cocaine and those trying to combat it. Externally designed and funded strategies to curb the flow of illicit drugs through West Africa are not sufficiently taking into account the transnational nature of the cocaine trade and the interplay of internal and external factors (Schultze-Kraft 2014). It is not enough to enhance law enforcement, drug interdiction and judicial capacities but requires broader political, economic and governance reforms to address the root causes of insecurity (Schultze-Kraft 2014; Collodi 2014). In addition, policies to tackle drug trafficking and organised criminality in West Africa

require more concerted efforts to coordinate regional and national-level policies, in tandem with global efforts.

3.2.4 Sierra Leone

There is some argument that international donor involvement in Sierra Leone's political settlement, with its focus on the political elite, has recreated the political and socioeconomic conditions prior to the conflict and has made it vulnerable to relapsing into violent conflict (Allouche 2013a). Donors believed that the centralisation of power was a driver in the conflict and therefore pushed a reintroduction of decentralised institutions such as the chieftaincy, as described above. However, this overlooked the abuse and corruption by traditional chiefs which has been an underlying cause of the conflict. The lack of involvement of local-level non-elite actors in the political settlement, especially youth and rural mining communities, contributes to insecurity and the potential for new violence to flare.

3.2.5 Egypt

Regional insecurity in the Middle East and North Africa resulted in a proliferation of small arms, which has been blamed for contributing to the rising levels of violence in Egypt in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution (Tadros 2014). Control of these weapons depends on the internal policies of neighbouring countries and the foreign relations between Egypt and its neighbours more generally.

The importance of local-level actors is evident, where the violence perpetrated by youth groups in response to the majoritarian approach to governance pursued by the Muslim Brotherhood and the lack of an inclusive political settlement, was condoned by the very limited expressions of public condemnation of it (Tadros 2014). The public also played a key role in rejecting the use of political violence to influence the nature of the political settlement, when the Muslim Brotherhood attempted to use violence against those who had ousted them. Through their acceptance or rejection of the use of political violence, the people gave legitimacy to its use in influencing the shape of the political settlement that they approved of (Tadros 2014). The international community's support for an inclusive settlement involving Morsi and a focus on violence perpetrated against the Muslim Brotherhood has resulted in Egyptians perceiving that the international community are against them and rejecting their attempts to influence the political settlement. Stable political settlements also need ordinary citizens to feel that the process and outcome of the political settlement is legitimate (Tadros 2014). Policies which focus too narrowly on the policymakers involved in the political settlement miss strategic points of influence and engagement arising as a result of these local factors. While it would be risky to determine the terms of engagement of any political settlement on the sentiment of the populace, citizens' experiences, perceptions and expectations should not be neglected while forging elite alliances.

3.2.6 South Africa

Approaches to addressing violence tend not to focus on the role of citizens living in violence-affected areas in acting to stop violence and promote peaceful relations. A pilot study on gender-based violence in Cape Town assessed the role citizenship and agency played in reducing different types of urban violence (Shahrokh and Wheeler 2014). Empathy, interpersonal relationships, and claiming individual and collective rights are factors that enable agency to reduce violence, while ongoing support, attention to emotional wellbeing, and participation in wider networks can sustain it. Discriminatory norms; personal risk; the systemic relationship between violence, poverty and inequality; and lack of institutional accountability and responsiveness inhibit agency to reduce violence.

The study recommends seeing citizens as potential partners who can contribute to building safer communities. Thus it is important that policies addressing violence prevention and mitigation link the citizens with the provincial and national levels, as well as between diverse

stakeholders. The role of local communities is undervalued in the current policy framework in South Africa (Shahrokh and Wheeler 2014).

3.2.7 Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia

The cross-border violence experienced in the border region between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia has interlinked internal and regional dynamics relating to a history of violence, ethnic and land tensions, and political crisis. While both sides sought to address the situation through short-term security responses, ultimately they fail to agree on the basis of the insecurity or the correct response strategy (Allouche and Mohammed 2014). Côte d'Ivoire sees the problem coming from Liberia and has attempted to 'buy off' armed groups with financial incentives. Liberia believes the problem comes from Côte d'Ivoire and has responded by trying to secure its territory through border controls and closures, and attempts to win over the local population in the Liberian border area. Neither strategy is sustainable or resolves underlying grievances. A regional response is the most promising solution to the cross-border violence. It is also important to engage and involve the local communities.

3.2.8 Summary

Actors involved in both violence and peace-building are found at all levels of politics and governance: international, transnational, national, regional and local. In order to address the multitude of actors who are involved in violence and in peace-building, there is a need for a multi-level governance approach. Moreover, reducing violence can only be achieved by involving those who are affected by violence or take part in it. However, micro-level and transnational actors are often ignored by policymakers, as are the links between 'legitimate' and unlawful actors (for example, state actors colluding with criminal groups as part of illicit enterprises). Violence is a tool used as a method of communication, to show dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs, and if relevant actors are not engaged with peace-building processes, they will not see them as legitimate. What is happening locally must be connected with other levels. In practice this is very challenging, and there are difficulties in coordination and communication. There is also a lack of evidence that examines the multiple levels of violent actors, which must be addressed before significant change can be made (Luckham 2015).

3.3 Identity, vulnerability and the experience of violence

Violence is not experienced equally everywhere and by everyone. Horizontal and vertical inequalities are correlated with violence; and age, gender, poverty and wealth, ethnic or religious identity can result in a different experience of violence. In Egypt, for example, women and girls restrict their mobility to avoid being exposed to violence (Oosterom and McGee 2014). Violence can be used against particular groups as a tactic to exclude, with violence against women in Egypt being used to manage women's dissent and their engagement in the public sphere. Aspects of citizens' identities inform the ways in which they cope with or mitigate violence and while social identities overlap, sometimes one identity particularly shapes a response to violence. Urban youth populations, for instance, tend to suffer from vulnerabilities such as high unemployment and are both perpetrators and victims of violence; for some, violence can be a route to identity and voice (Gupte, te Lintelo and Barnett 2014a). Evidence gathered in Nepal indicates that urban poverty, lack of education, and feelings of powerlessness result in some young people engaging in violent and criminal behaviour (Gupte and Bogati 2014). However, young people are also most likely to be victims of violence in Nepal.

Personal and spatial vulnerability and violence are interconnected, especially in relation to multidimensional poverty, lack of services and inequalities. Evidence from Nairobi and Maharashtra indicates that multiple vulnerabilities such as lack of steady income and lack of access to services are deeply connected to urban violence (Tranchant 2013b). Research in

South Asia indicates that the urban poor are disproportionately affected by endemic crime and violence and terrorist attacks (Gupte 2014). Individuals experience insecurity in the city in significantly different ways. For example, women, children or poor people's experience of urban violence and insecurity can vary not only by the individual, but also depending on where they are and when the violence is occurring (Gupte 2014). A similar dynamic is observable in Cape Town, where insecurity is an inherent part of existing conditions of vulnerability in townships, although women and illegal immigrants are particularly vulnerable (Shahrokh and Wheeler 2014). To tackle urban violence, policies must address this vulnerability–violence nexus and explicitly link violence reduction strategies with poverty alleviation strategies (Tranchant 2013b). While top-down joined-up approaches have proven difficult to implement, community-led initiatives have had success (Tranchant 2013b). Reducing people's vulnerability can reduce exposure to violence. Evidence gathered around the provision of services and violence found that inequitable distribution of services can result in resentment, leading to conflict and violence; while providing access to services has been found to reduce violence and insecurity (Mitchell 2015b).

3.3.1 Egypt

Surveys in Egypt looking at responses to violence found that people who are economically deprived were more likely to report reducing the number of times they left their home than those who come from an economically better-off background (Tadros 2014). This indicates a direct correlative relationship between poverty and vulnerability to conflict. Violence also disproportionately restricts women's mobility compared to men. Christians were less likely to go out after dark or leave their neighbourhood than Muslims. Violence negatively affects human development, hitting the most vulnerable the hardest, which in Egypt are those in the lowest income bracket and those living in rural areas (*ibid.*).

3.3.2 India

Evidence gathered in India indicated that there is a link between vulnerability and the experience of violence. The impoverished urban areas in India tend to be sites persistently afflicted by outbreaks of riots and crime (Tranchant 2013a). Urban Maharashtra experiences inadequate housing, poor service provision, lack of access to health and sanitation, overcrowded spaces, and limited employment opportunities. In these areas, there is a strong correlation between vulnerability and exposure to violence, with the most vulnerable areas and households experiencing the most violence. These are the areas most severely affected by lack of services, employment opportunities and social capital (*ibid.*). In addition, the most economically, socially and spatially vulnerable households suffer most from civil violence, with socioeconomic vulnerability positively linked with acute vulnerability to violence.

The linkages between vulnerability and violence are complex, and sometimes the most vulnerable end up participating in violence, as lack of jobs results in them turning to the criminal sector in order to survive (Tranchant 2013a). In addition, extreme inequality can generate frustrations and aggression, while inadequate service provision and the resulting competition for resources is also likely to fuel crime and violence. The potential for communal violence rises considerably when these tensions coincide with ethnicity or religious markers (*ibid.*).

However, the linkages between urban violence and vulnerability are seldom tackled in a systematic manner at the policy level. The interconnection of crime, violence and vulnerability has to be explicitly recognised for both development and security policies to succeed (Tranchant 2013a). A joined-up approach is essential to improve security for the urban poor. Long-term violence reduction requires engagement with political, economic, social and cultural issues. Civil society organisations and ordinary citizens need to engage in a participatory process with the police to reduce violence (*ibid.*). In addition, the participation of slum dwellers is important to tackle both vulnerabilities and violence in an integrated and

efficient way. Community policing has been held up as a way to reduce violence in Maharashtra, such as the Mohalla committees and the Slum Police Panchayats (Tranchant 2013a).

Evidence from India also indicates that in the medium term, government expenditure on social services is associated with significant reductions in riots across India (Justino 2015). This is likely to be as a result of a time-lag in the impact of social expenditure on levels of poverty and inequality on social discontent and rioting.

3.3.3 Kenya

Evidence from Nairobi's poor neighbourhoods indicates that violence and crime enmesh with wider problems of vulnerability (Ruteere *et al.* 2013). The urban poor are more vulnerable to being victimised by non-state violent actors and sections of the state involved in inciting and perpetrating violence and crime as a result of widespread poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities. In addition, poverty and the lack of economic opportunities for young people are often key motivations for their involvement in violence, crime and insecurity (*ibid.*). A similar dynamic can be observed in Sierra Leone, where persistent inequalities and lack of opportunities are leading to frustration among young people, who may engage in violence as a result of organised crime and gang membership offering them a sense of belonging and purpose (Allouche 2013a). As a result there needs to be more focus on youth employment and empowerment, especially for the increasing numbers of urban youth (*ibid.*).

Lack of health, education, social care and policing service provision by the state has allowed criminal organisations and gangs to provide illegal connections to public utilities, mediate access to economic opportunities, and operate protection rackets. Control and enforcement of order is carried out by non-state violent actors, as well as other community mobilisation efforts, leading to new forms of insecurity for residents of these areas (Ruteere *et al.* 2013).

The response has tended to only focus on robust policing and tougher laws which neglects the other underlying issues. However, some initiatives have been put in place to address some of the factors that make the poor vulnerable to violence, including by local community groups. These include income-generating activities, the construction of sanitation facilities, lighting and water kiosks (Ruteere *et al.* 2013). Thus, responses to address and mitigate violence are recommended to be multisectoral and cross-agency, encompassing measures that reduce the urban poor's susceptibility to being victimised and build on existing local efforts to address interlocking vulnerabilities (*ibid.*).

3.3.4 Summary

Vulnerability and violence are intimately connected. Some people experience the negative effects of violence and conflict more than others, and some groups are more susceptible to being drawn into networks of violence than others. There is (at least anecdotal) evidence that provision of services to the most vulnerable and marginalised groups has reduced the likelihood of people becoming the perpetrators of violence, as well as decreasing their vulnerability to violence. It would therefore follow that violence reduction and peace-building efforts should prioritise the most vulnerable and marginalised members of society.

4 Conclusion²

4.1 Defining the challenge of reducing armed violence

Addressing and mitigating violence has become a key focus of development in recent years and the rationale for aid in many settings. Most accept the need to reduce violence as a fundamental requirement for development, a way of measuring and indicating progress in times of dynamic change globally and in places remote from political and economic power. Yet doing so requires understanding much more how violence operates, its logic and ‘sense’ in particular settings.

Violence is not the opposite of peace, and may exist in spite of there being no armed conflict or war. Violence is a reality in many settings, and it is often part of state-building as well as the processes leading to broader political agreements. This has major implications for how it is tackled because, in many places, it has become an integral tool for national and community conversations, as well as political practice and economic enterprise. Violence frequently happens alongside processes of economic growth and transformation, particularly where growth dynamics may be both rapid and exclusionary, leaving many behind. Issues of equity and inclusion matter greatly, but in many places the pace of economic change outpaces institutional innovation to ensure a broader sharing of benefits. In contexts where historical struggles around dispossession have flared on and off they find renewed vigour yet there is the likelihood of both the struggles and discourses being usurped by violent extremist groups, such as what has happened in different parts of the Middle East, North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

Inclusion and the competition around inclusion is a key variable in many situations of violence, underlining the recent turn to political settlements as a way of addressing and mitigating violence. Inclusive outcomes are desired, but much harder to find in practice. What happens when political settlements do not settle anything? Might the political settlement itself be a detriment to inclusive peace when institutions operate badly in an unaccountable, repressive political order? Who in fundamentally abusive systems is going to build institutions, promote reforms and build constituencies for change? Understanding power – where it is mobilised from, distributed, and sustained for whom and with what consequences – is integral. In many places, crucial insights are missing on *elites* – who they are, what their interests are, their relationships with one another and transnational actors, and the subaltern networks through which business is conducted and security negotiated. Too often, the absence of elite accountability has the potential to mask larger insecurity questions that plague particular places. Resources and methods deployed towards fighting insurgent groups are used in the same way to deal with admittedly violent criminals, thereby threatening the justice chain. In order for collective security to be pursued there is need for national consensus on the regime’s approach to addressing armed violence and the willingness of citizens to cede certain freedoms in order for the state to effectively exercise the legitimate use of force. The absence of this consensus between the regime and citizens is often exacerbated by ineffective communication by states globally about who and what is the source of the problem.

² For their excellent thoughts and contributions that have influenced the writing of this section, the authors wish to acknowledge the participants of the final workshop organised for the IDS AMV programme, held at Goodenough College, London, 12 November 2015.

The emphasis on ensuring political stability through negotiations, bargaining and accords can simply further entrench elite power. This can be damaging to security more broadly. For example, Nigeria's political settlement has been remarkably resilient and unchanged in spite of decades of political turmoil and sub-national conflict. The same elites continue to dominate. The so-called 'real politics' explains how exclusionary politics works in practice, and why it is so difficult to challenge (De Waal 2015). Non-democratic and exclusionary settlements can be reinforced by constituencies in the global North intent on securing access to resources, land and markets. The influences of transnationalism and networked global capital can also work against forces seeking a more inclusive political agreement. High levels of illicit financial flows can make elites detached and unresponsive to the needs of a wider citizenry. Moreover, if the implicit purpose of a regime is kleptocratic enrichment, illicit financial flows clearly enable that, making peace-building efforts look hollow. This is beyond the power and capabilities of development actors alone to tackle, let alone individual aid entities or peace-building missions.

Still, there is a risk that an emphasis on national political settlements and political marketplaces overplays the role of elites and underplays the agency of local people and groups, whether to support violence or to resist or contain it. A subtle shift in emphasis, from *inclusive settlements* towards *inclusive outcomes* from political settlements, is useful for gauging the wider security implications of elite political negotiations and bargaining (Mitchell 2015a). Moreover, evidence-based work in Nigeria (Niger Delta), Sierra Leone, Egypt and Kenya (Marsabit County) suggests that 'inclusivity' – unless defined precisely for the political and social contexts in which it is used – is a weak indicator of whether a political settlement will result in less violence (Schultze-Kraft and Hinkle 2014: 4). For example, political devolution in Kenya as a way to address national political violence has resulted in increased levels of sub-national violence and tensions. Every level of political administration has its own exclusionary mechanisms; escaping elite capture is not as simple as devolving greater powers to the local level, even though it might increase the abilities of citizens to practice oversight and hold leaders to account.

It is important to understand whether and how violence is reduced through the expansion of a political settlement to include additional social groups, as well as who is included, and why. Violence associated with specific groups or events (such as electoral competition, organised criminal activities or predatory resource acquisition) will require different approaches and need to include different actors (Schultze-Kraft and Hinkle 2014). The political settlement needs to be an acceptable and sustainable solution both for the elites and for society, with citizen participation essential (Allouche 2013b; Oosterom and McGee 2014). A vital question is how to nurture civil spaces, near the centre or sub-nationally, which keep alive the voices against violence and for political and democratic solutions. What agency do people at the grass roots have, how can they insist on accountability, and how can they be supported? It must also be understood that citizen identities are 'multifaceted' and varied, making it important for aid interventions and violence reduction programmes to engage in a 'multifaceted' way (Oosterom and McGee 2014).

4.2 Intervention and the role of aid

The inclusion of a goal explicitly addressing issues of peace and justice in the SDGs is a significant milestone for efforts to address and mitigate violence. While it does not provide immediate solutions for the most intractable situations of violence that exist today, it does for the first time provide a transformative vision that links together security, peace, justice, and governance. Policy thinking on reducing armed violence already emphasises the need for integrated responses, joining up interventions across sectors at all levels of governance (OECD 2009, 2011, 2015). The complexity of drivers and influences on violence at multiple scales has led many to advocate for responses that are multidisciplinary, multisectoral and implemented at multiple levels, as well as for integrated and whole-of-government

approaches bringing together justice, policing, development and conflict-resolution expertise. This is also explicit in the SDGs, and is supported by evidence from the AMV case studies reviewed in this report. However, AMV research also reveals the difficulty of making this happen in practice. For instance, while gender-based violence is being tackled through an integrated response in South Africa, challenges exist in implementation of the integrated structures, including lack of funding, poor coordination among structure members, poor monitoring and evaluation systems, and the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of some of the structures (Shahrokh and Wheeler 2014). Further, the pressures of aid cycles and funder demands for results, can lead to short-term 'projectised' interventions that do not address the underlying drivers of violence, which require long-term commitment and support (Lind 2014).

A further issue that must be confronted in order for violence to be successfully addressed is that of funding. Aid distribution is uneven to countries experiencing violence and conflict (OECD 2015); for example, in 2013, US\$626 of aid per capita was received in the West Bank and Gaza, and US\$172 of aid per capita was received in Afghanistan, compared to US\$35 of aid per capita in Democratic Republic of Congo (World Bank 2016). There is currently no framework for monitoring, tracking or targeting aid in fragile situations (OECD 2015). Most donors are risk averse. There are rigorous legal and regulatory requirements that funders must conform to, in order to attempt to avoid any funds reaching terrorist or criminal groups, making many funders nervous of situations where fragility is likely (Lind 2014). Further, donors have high value for money expectations, and expect funds to be spent efficiently and with considerable, measurable impact. Yet, the nature of violence reduction work is about political, social and institutional transformation over time. These transformations are complex and difficult by their very nature: change will be halting, and there is a real risk of failure. There needs to be changes to relationships, to the internal workings of structures and institutions, to perceptions and long-held cultural beliefs. The results will be quiet, negotiated, deliberate and will happen over time. The nature of changes that need to happen do not square with truncated aid funding cycles, or box-ticking monitoring and evaluation exercises. Donors must be more flexible and risk tolerant in fragile situations (OECD 2015). While there needs to be continued efforts to improve the tracing of aid funds in situations of violence, there will be many situations in which funds cannot be traced or accounted for.

Unsurprisingly, given the political economies of violence-affected places and the difficulty of using external aid well in such contexts, more money is not always the solution. As seen in Afghanistan and Iraq (Suhrke 2011) as well as Darfur, Somalia and South Sudan (De Waal 2015), large international support can create a type of rentier politics that contributes to institutional weakness and illegitimacy. These experiences show that modalities for delivering aid are equally important to consider, ensuring that assistance is provided in a conflict-sensitive way (Saferworld 2004). Pared-back international intervention, a longer timeframe, and the inclusion of militants and local opinion-makers in dialogue can result in a bigger impact.

4.3 Towards peaceful societies

Every situation of armed conflict and violence is different, and context specific. Contextual specificities of political economies, societies, cultures and histories have important implications for the development of policies to mitigate, reduce and prevent violence. Just because a particular intervention has worked in one setting, does not mean it will work in another. The challenge going forward will be how to support inclusive, endogenous processes that already exist. Although a consensus exists around the broad elements of an approach to armed violence reduction, these define long-term aims but are less instructive on practical approaches that can be taken in the short and medium terms. Further, there is no one-size-fits-all violence reduction method. Addressing violence is not as formulaic as

'add legitimate/effective/accountable institutions and stir'. The optimal design of institutions is never an absolute. Rather, it changes in response to political conditions and trends, and framings of these by different stakeholders in places where violence is a way of life, a currency of politics. Further, what is legitimate is a matter of political and social positioning, and at different levels – what appears to be legitimate in the halls of the UN may look very different from a perch in the Office of the President in Juba, or likewise from the perspective of a community terrorised by the threat of violence in the South Sudan margins. What appears to be legitimate to ministerial planners, and promoted by elders seeking a greater hand in shaping rapid social and economic change, may be utterly discredited in the eyes of young people.

Although there are greater insights into the dynamics of violence (its different forms, and how and why it persists), there is still considerable room to grow knowledge and understanding on the basis of the voices of different populations living with violence. Understandings of peace and security will vary between individuals, communities, regions, countries and organisations. Whose version of security and peace is strived towards will have a profound effect on the strategies and interventions employed to reduce violence. In order for violence reduction to be effective, the basis for intervention must be local understandings of peace and security in places where violence is happening (Luckham 2015; Justino *et al.* 2012). This includes learning from pockets of peace, in places where local models of governance and community mobilisation have effectively prevented the infiltration of armed groups and militaries. Listening to voices in the interstices and at the margins is necessary to develop new ways of thinking and practice that can move beyond the confines of received wisdom and elite control. Getting there requires a new undertaking – along the lines of a *Voices of the Poor*-type analysis bringing together the experiences of women, men and children living with violence – to uncover new ideas of how violence can be reduced and what a more peaceful society might look like.

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