

# Issue Brief

## Go Long: Six Actions to Structurally Address Organized Violence

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Contemporary organized violence has evolved beyond the now rare interstate conflicts that marked the first half of the twentieth century, and even beyond the intrastate conflicts of the 1990s that tended to feature a government and a rebel group. *Organized violence* is a broad notion that refers to the use or threatened use of force by groups to inflict injury, death, or psychosocial harm.<sup>1</sup> In this brief we focus on forms of organized violence that have a significant international impact and are most likely to trigger an international response as a result.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the traditional tools to confront organized violence are short term in nature and aim to stem violence or manage crises (e.g., peacekeeping, law enforcement, mediation, and arguably many forms of development cooperation, given its two-to-four year programming cycles).<sup>3</sup> This brief argues that while these tools are critical and save many lives, in a globalized world they will often do no more than temporary damage control.<sup>4</sup> In the long term, international action must have a more structural and integrated approach to addressing organized violence. We argue that effective interventions need to be integrated in nature, global in scope, and place more focus on reducing the structural conditions that enable the perpetuation of violence.

In what follows, we unpack some of the characteristics of contemporary organized violence and then propose six long-term actions the international community can take to address this violence and its structural drivers. We focus on the role multilateral institutions can play since they have the greatest global legitimacy and arguably the most staying power to address organized violence.

1 We build on the definition articulated by the OECD in "Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development," Paris, 2009. The problem with its definition of organized violence is that it covers both collective and individual manifestations of violence. We leave individual acts of violence out of our account because they neither tend to have cross-border consequences nor tend to be cause for international concern.

2 As such, we exclude limited political crises, riots, and one-sided violence—events that have negative consequences where they turn violent but tend to be shorter, less deadly, and have less international impact. See the Human Security Report Project (HSRP), *Human Security Report 2009/2010: The Causes of Peace and the Shrinking Costs of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). For more information on political crises, riots, and one-sided violence, see, for instance, the Social Conflict in Africa Database available at <http://strausscenter.org/scad.html> and Charles T. Call, "UN Mediation and the Politics of Transition after Constitutional Crises," New York: International Peace Institute, February 2012.

3 There is, for example, scant attention to structural conflict prevention, and institutional mandates largely continue to be stovepiped with a focus on the short term, despite the creation of institutions such as the UN Peacebuilding Commission; stabilization units like those in the UK, Netherlands, Denmark, and Canada; and the UN's Interagency Team for Preventive Action.

4 For an argument on how long-term development interventions can also serve national security interests of developed countries, see Erwin Van Veen, "Developing the Security Agenda: In the Long Run National Security Requires an Enlarged Development Agenda," *Journal of Security Sector Management* 5, No. 2 (2007).

## The Character of Contemporary Organized Violence

In an increasingly globalized world, organized violence is easily precipitated and perpetuated. It features a broad diversity of state and nonstate actors with opportunistic—sometimes fungible—motives and is repetitive in nature.<sup>5</sup> The combination of globalization and the existence of a near-permanent group of fragile and conflicted-affected states has contributed to the accessibility, reach, and attractiveness of organized violence as a perverted business model and a tool of power. In this model, different types of organized violence, actors, and motives cross-fertilize with relative ease.<sup>6</sup> As a result, it has become more difficult to distinguish both the drivers and purposes of organized violence. In this issue brief we argue that organized violence is driven by structural factors that are inadequately addressed by international responses, in part because the most common responses focus on the short term.

First, resources for starting, continuing, and restarting violence remain easily accessible despite their devastating consequences.<sup>7</sup> The phenomenon of globalization has significantly increased access to resources required for violence, such as funds, weapons, and influence by state and nonstate armed groups (including transnational organized criminal networks). It is a well-known fact that military goods and security services are readily

available in the international marketplace for those with the wherewithal to obtain them, legally or illicitly. Controls rely heavily on regulation, and this is especially problematic in fragile states with weak institutions. Existing regulatory regimes also fall short of effectively addressing issues of brokerage, munitions, end-user verification, and border controls in what have become complex global supply chains.<sup>8</sup> Since many nonstate armed groups operate on a transnational basis, they simply utilize the weakest links in adjacent systems of national control to obtain the capacities they need to continue or restart conflict.<sup>9</sup>

Second, violence is often repetitive. It is common knowledge that civil wars recur. Every civil war after 2003 “continued” a previous civil war.<sup>10</sup> In addition, postconflict periods regularly feature high levels of organized violence, such as criminal or political violence that targets specific groups.<sup>11</sup> Worse, with the value of the global drug trade alone estimated at approximately \$106 billion per year, the inequality, profitability, and market forces that drive this trade ensure that repression tends to simply displace the trade while driving small producers without alternatives into poverty.<sup>12</sup> This in turn increases the frequency and levels of violence.<sup>13</sup>

Third, different types of violence fuse easily. For example, the profitability of transnational organized crime ensures its attractiveness as a resource-mobilization strategy for states, criminals, terrorists, and nonstate armed groups alike. Radical religious appeals, now a common driver of

5 On cycles of violence, see World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, DC, 2011).

6 Drug trafficking is illustrative of how globalization has enabled significant growth of an illicit global business that is highly profitable as well as violent. In keeping with the business angle, see “Narconomics, from HR to CSR: Management Lessons from Mexico’s Drug Lords,” *The Economist*, July 28, 2012.

7 Herfried Münkler, *The New Wars* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005); Jorge Heine and Ramesh Thakur, eds., *The Dark Side of Globalization* (United Nations University Press, 2011); Ivan Briscoe and Elisa Dari, “Crime and Error: Why We Urgently Need a New Approach to Illicit Trafficking in Fragile States,” The Hague: Conflict Research Unit Policy Brief No. 23, 2012.

8 Roy Isbister and Tom Donnolly, “International Markets for Security and Military Assistance,” OECD Development Co-operation Working Paper 2/2012, Paris: OECD, October 2012.

9 Sukanya Podder, “From Spoilers to Statebuilders: Constructive Approaches to Engagement with Non-State Armed Groups in Fragile States,” OECD Development Co-operation Working Paper 5/2012, Paris: OECD, October 2012.

10 Barbara F. Walter, “Conflict Relapse and the Sustainability of Post-Conflict Peace,” World Development Report 2011 Background Paper, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2010. Contrary to what one might expect, fragility may lead to a significant number of violent conflicts, but it is not the case that most violent conflict takes place in situations of fragility. A World Development Report background paper shows that while in the 1960s almost 70 percent of wars and conflicts took place in the poorest quartile of countries, little more than 10 percent took place in the next quartile up (lower to middle income countries). In the 2000s, this changed. The share of conflicts in the poorest quartile fell below 40 percent while its share in the lower to middle income group rose to over 40 percent. In particular, conflict has become more frequent in lower to middle income countries. James D. Fearon, “Governance and Civil War Onset,” World Development Report 2011 Background Paper, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2010. Furthermore, of the twenty-nine countries with violent death rates above 20 per 100,000 inhabitants from 2004–2009, only ten featured in the top two categories of the 2011 Failed States Index. See Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2012* (Geneva: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

11 For example, Christina Steenkamp, “In the Shadows of War and Peace: Making Sense of Violence After Peace Accords,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 11, No. 3 (2011): 357–383.

12 The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that the drug trade represents 85 percent of the total value of transnational organized crime markets, which are valued at approximately \$125 billion. See UNODC, *The Globalization of Crime: A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment* (Vienna, 2010).

13 Robert Muggah and Erwin Van Veen, “Stay Alive: Turning Around a Failing War,” *Open Democracy*, October 14, 2011; Briscoe and Dari, “Crime and Error.”

terrorism, spread through increasingly sophisticated strategies and communication platforms, such as Internet-enabled mobile phones.<sup>14</sup> This creates opportunities for states, nonstate armed groups, and religious entrepreneurs in large parts of the world to merge local issues and grievances with an ideological narrative that can be swiftly mobilized for violence.

In addition, low levels of democratic control, oversight, and transparency in many fragile states facilitate the rise of gray networks that connect licit and illicit actors, activities, and purposes with greater ease. It is a matter of concern that parts of state and nonstate networks can become difficult to distinguish. Especially where governing elites are concerned, this can amount to the use of state assets for illicit purposes and confers a competitive advantage to state-fused networks by creating a “legitimacy premium” providing privileged access to resources (e.g., international finance and aid).<sup>15</sup> Examples include Sudan’s network-based strategy to spread a perverted form of radical Islam to neighboring countries and the use of territory, extension of diplomatic passports, and use of (air) fleet registries to facilitate illicit trade.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, violence easily becomes international; in fact, it often has a transborder component from the start. There are at least two reasons for this. First, the process of globalization, discussed below, has facilitated the ease of international travel, communication, banking, and market access for both illicit and licit goods, services, and purposes. Combined with typically dysfunctional regulation in most fragile states, this makes it relatively easy to “import and export” human and financial resources and ideas across national boundaries in support of violence. For example, the borders of Iran-Afghanistan, Kosovo-Albania, Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda-Burundi, Colombia-Panama, and Lebanon-Syria have been or are now

known for their porosity and volume of illicit activities.<sup>17</sup> Second, a legacy element of colonization is that pre-existing identity groups have often been overlaid by modern state borders. However, many states have not been able to reorient the loyalties that come with such identity affiliations because of their fragility. Such shared identities offer a transnational base for mobilization in the service of violence. Surprisingly, however, organized violence and civil wars in particular have often been treated as domestic events, and the international community has responded with tools, such as peacekeeping, organized around the national boundaries of sovereign states. In reality, if organized violence is transnational, it requires a transnational response toolkit.<sup>18</sup>

## Complex Problems Demand Integrated Responses

Organized violence has all the characteristics of what the literature calls a “wicked problem”—that is, a complex problem that features many interdependencies and ambiguities in its definition as well as its possible solutions. It invariably can be considered a symptom of another problem, and its solution is dependent on how that problem is framed. Different stakeholders often hold radically different views on the drivers of organized violence, and it is rarely solved definitively.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that integrated and inclusive policies that distinguish between different types of organized violence are critical to guide effective international responses. By integrated we mean that interventions must combine analysis of drivers (e.g., political, social, economic, security, and environmental), timelines (e.g., short, medium, and long term), tools (e.g., peacekeeping, mediation, and peacebuilding), and funds (e.g., humanitarian, development, and security). All of these elements

14 Abdulkerim Ousman, “The Power of Radical Islamist Ideas and State Fragility in Sub-Saharan Africa,” OECD Development Co-operation Working Paper, Paris: OECD, 2012 (forthcoming).

15 Münkler, *The New Wars*; Ann Fitz-Gerald, Rob Parker, and Erwin van Veen, “Think Global, Act Global: Confronting Global Factors that Influence Fragility and Conflict,” Paris: OECD, September 2012. For a Kenya-specific example, see Peter Gastrow, “Termites at Work: A Report on Transnational Organized Crime and State Erosion in Kenya,” New York: International Peace Institute, 2011.

16 H. Brinton Milward and Jörg Raab, “Dark Networks as Problems,” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 13, No. 4 (2003): 414-439.

17 The range of reports available from the International Crisis Group on these countries is quite revealing with respect to this transnational dimension of conflict (available at [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)), as are the reports of the UN group of experts pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo (available at [www.un.org/sc/committees/1533/egroup.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1533/egroup.shtml)).

18 Kristian S. Gleditsch, Han Dorussen, Nils Metternich, and Andrea Ruggeri, “Transnational Dimensions and the Myth of Civil Wars as National Events,” Center for the Study of Civil War Policy Brief, Oslo: CSCW, 2010.

19 Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, “Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning,” *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973): 155-169; Jeff Conklin, *Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems* (Wiley, 2005), ch. 1.

must be configured as part of a coherent response and supported by adequate global leadership. Actors can coalesce on the basis of these elements. Such integrated policy responses do not currently exist. For instance, the UN Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict does not integrate different timeline perspectives; rather, it addresses only the postconflict dimension. It also does not create much clarity on leadership or resources.<sup>20</sup> The same holds for many other initiatives.

In short, despite some progress, we are not yet able to match the complexity of organized violence with a sufficiently sophisticated response. Fortunately, many separate initiatives currently exist that provide important building blocks for a more integrated approach, including the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, efforts to improve UN peacekeeping, and a renewed focus on UN rule-of-law and mediation work.<sup>21</sup> This leads us to a first structural remedy.

#### **Action 1: Generate an integrated UN policy to address organized violence in all forms.**

The UN Secretary-General's new five-year agenda for action and the post-2015 discussion on the framework for global development present a window of opportunity. The next two to three years will be a critical time to address organized violence as both a key bottleneck for development policy and a major cause of global insecurity.<sup>22</sup> To be successful, such a policy will need to incentivize key groups of international actors to do things differently. In particular, it needs to create the following:

- *Political incentives in developed economies.* Electoral cycles often invite leaders to focus on short-term responses to organized violence. In the long run, however, such responses are likely more costly. For example, an earlier recognition

that stability in Somalia requires working with local realities and regional entities might have saved billions of dollars on costly naval patrols, commodity price increases, and insurance premiums.<sup>23</sup> If the cost of organized violence to emerging economies and rich countries were better quantified, an incentive would be created that could mobilize political interests and resources. Such a "costing" would require a multiyear research effort by a strong consortium of research institutions representative of different parts of the world, focusing on the diverse types of organized violence. Its findings would be debatable given the uncertainties involved, but the consortium could at least provide a baseline that can be improved. This would help demonstrate that security really is a global public good with a value that can be measured.

- *Incentives for leaders "engaged" in organized violence to welcome better international interventions.* Maintaining the status quo of organized violence can be much more appealing than the alternative of external intervention. We offer two ideas to stimulate discussion on how this can be changed. First, an integrated international policy must articulate attractive principles for how international interventions should deal with de facto structures of authority in situations of organized violence.<sup>24</sup> Some of these will be gray or illicit in nature. The reality is that the powerbrokers who use violence will often need to be co-opted (this is already practiced in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia—countries from which valuable lessons can be learned). This requires pragmatic negotiations while long-term strategies are enacted that may reduce their influence over time. Second, an integrated international policy could launch attractive "mini-Marshall" stabilization packages. International mediators and peacekeepers could be

20 UN Secretary-General, *Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, UN Doc. A/63/881-S/2009/304, November 6, 2009; UN Secretary-General, *Progress Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, UN Doc. A/64/866-S/2010/386, July 16, 2010; UN Secretary-General, *Progress Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, UN Doc. A/67/499-S/2012/746, October 8, 2012; UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict*, UN Doc. A/66/311-S/2011/527, August 19, 2011.

21 UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping," New York, July 2009; United Nations, "Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict: Independent Report of the Senior Advisory Group," 2011; UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on Strengthening the Role of Mediation in the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, Conflict Prevention and Resolution*, UN Doc. A/66/811, June 25, 2012.

22 United Nations, "The Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda," January 25, 2012.

23 The Somalia conference of February 23, 2012, belatedly recognized this on paper in its final communiqué.

24 Johanna Mendelson Forman, "Inevitable Conflicts, Avoidable Failures: Preparing for the Third Generation of Conflict, Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations," Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2012.



paired with resource envelopes and over-the-horizon security guarantees. Resources would include debt relief and trade access, and guarantees could be released in an incentivizing manner on the basis of step-by-step improvements in security.

- *Incentives to improve the coherence of UN action.* There is a long-standing commitment on the part of the UN Secretariat, UN agencies, and UN members to improve the level of coherence with which the UN can face organized violence. Yet, it has been difficult to act. While this is an intimidating agenda, three steps could help get the ball rolling. First, donors should strongly support the efforts underway at the UN to coordinate activities more effectively. This must include a critical discussion of how funding is organized. For example, as long as agencies and programs compete for funds at the country-level, coherence will remain difficult. Truly empowering senior, in-country leaders to implement integrated country strategies should be the basis for funding. Designated agencies would have clear accountability for part of such strategies. UN Development Assistance Frameworks, Integrated Strategic Frameworks, and the Integrated Mission Planning Processes provide good starting points for further improvement. Second, a number of successful secondments and a proven track record of effective coordination should become the requisite path to leadership within the UN system. Third, at all staff levels, effective coordination that is guided by priorities agreed in integrated thematic or country strategies must be a key criterion for performance assessment and reward. This will help generate a culture of coordination and understanding across different parts of the UN that can complement efforts to reorganize the institution—a much more challenging enterprise.

## A Globalizing World Requires Global Approaches

Increasing international access, openness, and liberalization measures (especially in the economic realm) have resulted in a dense web of global connections that link individuals, institutions, markets, and states as never before.<sup>25</sup> As a consequence, many local issues have global dimensions. The reverse also holds, as much organized violence at the local level is at least partially driven by external factors. The most powerful example of this is the huge Western demand for drugs that fuels the global drug trade with important effects on conflict-affected and fragile states down the supply chain. Another relates to the technological and communicative capacity of terrorist movements such as al-Qaida to mobilize support for their cause by playing off the diplomatic and military actions of the West in such places as the occupied Palestinian territories, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. The upshot is that international interventions in response to organized violence will be ineffective as long as they continue to focus primarily on local manifestations and do not take such external factors into account. By failing to do so, the risks of intervention are put squarely on the shoulders of the countries that already bear the burden of conflict. The idea that interventions can go wrong, have unintended consequences, or fail completely has been amply demonstrated over the past two decades.

Instead, the global chain of supply, transit, and demand for ideas, goods, services, or resources must be addressed in a comprehensive manner to ensure that international interventions address organized violence effectively. Fortunately, initiatives exist that have recognized the critical importance of global enablers of violence. Examples include the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, the OECD's due diligence standards related to minerals in areas of conflict, and the current negotiations on a UN Arms Trade

<sup>25</sup> Globalization can be defined as the acceleration of processes of political, social, and economic change due to increases in international interdependencies and international access to goods, services, markets, people, and ideas. See Martin Wolf, *Why Globalization Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). It has been argued that the period of ca. 1875–1914 constituted the first attempt at economic globalization. See Christopher Alan Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004). However, the way in which modern technology has further reduced the barriers to interaction of time and distance is unparalleled.

Treaty. However, global interconnectedness suggests that we need a much stronger sense of global responsibility than is the case today. Yet this will cost money and political capital, which have proven to be critical barriers. Two more structural actions can be taken, however, that do not have to cost as much in financial terms and that will increase the effectiveness of international intervention in response to organized violence.

**Action 2: Develop an approach to the illegal drug trade that is based on public health, development, decriminalization, and law enforcement.**

The “global war on drugs” currently focuses almost exclusively on law enforcement and on the forcible reduction of supply in producer countries (mostly developing countries), while most demand emanates from the West.<sup>26</sup> The transit lines connecting supply and demand turn fragile and conflict-affected countries into conspicuous victims. In such countries, the low likelihood of interdiction, ease of entry, and affordable cooptation of security officials creates a very permissive environment for traffickers. As a result, the drug market has become an incredibly profitable global business featuring high levels of violence.<sup>27</sup> But the supply-side focus of the current international response has driven millions of farmers into deeper poverty in areas where poverty, inequality, and a lack of good governance are prevalent (mainly in Latin America, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia).<sup>28</sup> A global approach that takes joint responsibility requires combining law enforcement with a much stronger emphasis on the development of attractive alternative livelihoods, better governance, decriminalization of use, and a public health approach to addicts in consumer societies. This will reduce the global cost of the drug trade tremendously as the evidence clearly shows where these approaches have been tried.

**Action 3: Create a binding international regulatory framework for the security-services industry.**

The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have accelerated a longer-term trend, namely the proliferation of private companies that offer security services on a commercial basis, ranging from combat support to risk assessment. Most of these companies are Western. It is no exaggeration to speak of a global market for security services that is barely regulated.<sup>29</sup> The killing of seventeen civilians by Blackwater operatives at Iraq’s Nisour Square in 2007 is the most extreme example of the impunity with which private security contractors can operate. While the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are drawing down, many private security companies have already diversified and professionalized their client base and services catalogue.<sup>30</sup> Much of the demand for such services logically comes from areas that feature high levels of insecurity—often fragile and conflict-affected states. It is of concern, however, that the commercial supply of security services can influence organized violence in two insidious ways. First, such services will mostly be purchased by those who can afford them, usually elites, private companies (e.g., mining companies), and foreign actors. The resulting unequal protection may well exacerbate existing tensions—for instance, serious disputes can exist between local communities and national authorities over mining concessions. It can also reinforce a sense of inequality and exclusion. Second, such services may lead to subtle securitization. For example, security-sector reform (SSR) efforts easily become supply-driven, target-based, train-and-equip exercises that reinforce capacity rather than accountability.<sup>31</sup> In short, it is important to establish clear principles, criteria, and risk assessment methodologies to minimize the negative effects of commercially purchased security services. A binding regulatory framework is likely to provide the most clarity, reliability, and compliance.<sup>32</sup>

26 Global Commission on Drug Policy, “War on Drugs,” 2011.

27 See, for example, Briscoe and Dari, “Crime and Error.”

28 Priya Mannava, Sasha Zegenhagen, and Nick Crofts, “Dependent on Development: The Interrelationships Between Illicit Drugs and Socioeconomic Development,” Vietnam: The Drugs and Development Project, December 2010; “The Other Drug Wars,” *World Politics Review*, October 25, 2011.

29 Isbister and Donnolly, “International Markets.”

30 Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, and Victoria DiDomenico, “The Use of Private Security Providers and Services in Humanitarian Operations,” *Humanitarian Policy Group Report No. 27*, London: Overseas Development Institute, October 2008.

31 For example, this seems to have been the case with the US/Dyncorps support to security-sector reform in Liberia. Adedeji Ebo, “Liberia Case Study: Outsourcing SSR to Foreign Companies,” in *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of SSR* edited by Laurie Nathan (Birmingham University, 2007).

32 Isbister and Donnolly, “International Markets.” For a study of possible models for a regulatory framework for the security-services industry, see James Cockayne et al., *Beyond Market Forces: Regulating the Global Security Industry* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2009).

## Structural Approaches to Organized Violence Provide Long-Term Solutions

In part, violence begets violence because it generates structural conditions for its own continuation and because it reduces social capital. Violent conflict, for instance, ensures the presence of combatants with fighting skills, creates a culture of violence (including in the security forces), proliferates weapons, possibly destroys peaceful conflict-resolution mechanisms, and creates new (financial) incentives through wartime revenue-raising strategies like transnational crime.<sup>33</sup> Such structural conditions are conducive to the continued use of violence as a rational strategy, especially if legal alternatives are absent. Violent conflict also erodes social “bridging” capital, the glue that keeps various groups of a society together. This reduces the trust that enables collective action. Since trust takes a long time to re-accumulate, violence casts a long and costly shadow over the future.<sup>34</sup> The self-perpetuating nature of organized violence helps explain its cyclical nature and often makes it difficult to distinguish conflict prevention from efforts to break such structures down. These characteristics lead us to propose three final long-term actions.

### **Action 4: Strengthen incentives and support for regional and local efforts to prevent organized violence.**

Externally promoted prevention efforts have not enjoyed great success.<sup>35</sup> However, the incentives for prevention are strongest at regional and local levels as neighbors logically have vested interests in preventing organized violence from occurring or escalating. Early-warning and response mechanisms function best at the local level, and this is where the international community should focus.<sup>36</sup> For example, emerging global-regional-local mediation partnerships between the UN, regional

organizations, and nongovernmental organizations offer a network model that can combine global resources and experiences with regional legitimacy and local expertise.<sup>37</sup> They deserve to be strengthened from a conflict-prevention perspective, and the UN General Assembly debate on conflict prevention and mediation that continued in September 2012 offers a forum to work out the ways and the means. Re-allocating funds for conflict prevention to regional organizations and civil society networks can further increase their ability to act. The international community could, for example, stimulate the “supply” of regional conflict prevention by linking financial incentives around aid, trade access, or debt forgiveness to a “contribution to peace” index that scores neighbors and regional organizations on their conflict-prevention efforts. Such an index could be maintained by an independent high-level panel that is globally representative. It would require a small secretariat and a broad variety of inputs to establish an evidence base, including popular surveys, national consultations, and social media analysis. It could offer its findings on a regular basis to the UN General Assembly for endorsement. Positive scores or contributions could trigger the release of pre-defined financial packages in the form of grants or loans by international financial institutions, for example. The process would no doubt be highly political, but it could create a strong positive incentive focused on *preventing* violence. A five-year pilot with default termination would be one way to start.

### **Action 5: Provide more support to build infrastructures for peace that help transform cultures of violence.**

Infrastructures for peace are “soft” institutions that link existing structures (e.g., government institutions, civil society organizations, traditional institutions, and political parties) on the basis of a political mandate to resolve conflict peacefully. They strengthen social networks, civic engagement,

<sup>33</sup> Steenkamp, “In the Shadows.”

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Bruce Jones and Molly Elgin-Cossart, “Development in the Shadow of Violence: A Knowledge Agenda for Policy,” Ottawa: IDRC, November 2011. Robert Putnam’s *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1993) remains a classic on social capital in relation to governance (albeit in a developed, nonviolent context).

<sup>35</sup> OECD, “Preventing Violence, War and State Collapse: The Future of Conflict Early Warning and Response,” Paris, 2009.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> UN Secretary-General, *Strengthening the Role of Mediation*; OECD, “Improving International Support to Peace Processes: The Missing Piece,” Paris, 2012.

and trust. Such infrastructures feature four key elements that seek to transform conflict.<sup>38</sup> First, they legitimize the use of dialogue and consensus-seeking approaches to violence at all levels of society. Second, they allocate responsibility for violence prevention to a specific collection of actors at various levels and locations. Third, they create linkages between relevant stakeholders and resources at these levels. Finally, they make experts available to facilitate dialogue.<sup>39</sup> Infrastructures for peace are attractive because they are inexpensive and can be very effective. For example, in Ghana such an infrastructure managed to resolve a conflict over succession in the Northern Region in 2004 and avoided the escalation of tensions during presidential and parliamentary elections in 2008.

#### Action 6: Stimulate leadership for peace.

Leadership is a crucial, but often insufficiently acknowledged, element in effective responses to organized violence.<sup>40</sup> It is estimated that almost 70 percent of major active conflicts in the early 2000s were triggered by poor leadership.<sup>41</sup> However, leaders have never been able to achieve much on their own. Their capacity to mobilize inclusive and wider coalitions of other leaders and organizations is what ensures that their vision is pursued and achieved.<sup>42</sup> This suggests that more attention is needed for developing or gathering a critical mass of effective and able leaders from a variety of fields who see and reach beyond their immediate interests. Leadership programs, experience sharing, and leadership education can be effective ways to do so. There are examples of promising leadership development programs such as the Burundi Leadership Program and the Leadership and Communication Capacity for National Renewal program in Timor-Leste. And why not launch a Mo Ibrahim-type prize for leaders who generate signif-

icant reductions in violence via peaceful means—including their own exit, if need be? It is both ironic and telling that the world features many academies that train future military leaders but few that train future leaders in building peace.

## Conclusion

We have argued that organized violence is driven by structural factors that are often not adequately addressed by the international response toolkit, in part because the most common response mechanisms tend to focus on the short term. We have also argued that these structural factors are influenced and often aggravated by globalization, which creates both risks and opportunities. Governments, depending on their relative institutional strengths, have very different capacities to mitigate the former and seize the latter. Fragile and conflict-affected states face most of the risks and have fewer opportunities by definition.

In view of this, it comes as no surprise that armed conflict all too often repeats itself and organized violence is a booming business. To address the complexity of current forms of organized violence we need to take a longer-term perspective and develop more globally focused, integrated approaches that concentrate on understanding and breaking down the structural conditions of violence.

In review, we recommend six actions to structurally address organized violence:

1. Generate an integrated UN policy to address organized violence of all types.
2. Develop an approach to the illegal drug trade that is based on public health, development, decriminalization, and law enforcement.

38 Conflict transformation refers to the process of positively altering the structural, behavioural, and attitudinal aspects of conflict. See Alexander Austin, Martina Fischer, and Norbert Ropers, eds., *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict: The Berghof Handbook* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2004). Infrastructures for peace provide the platform that enables the iterative approaches required to deal with the complexity, different time frames, and relational challenges of conflict. See John Paul Lederach and Michelle Maiese, "Conflict Transformation," in *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, by John Paul Lederach (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003).

39 International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, "The Role of Political Dialogue in Peacebuilding and Statebuilding: An Interpretation of Current Experience," Report of the Working Group on Political Dialogue, Paris, 2011.

40 Hugh Miall, *Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task* (Berlin: Berghof Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2004).

41 Brown cited in Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham, and Tom Woodhouse, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005). See also the rich set of findings of the Developmental Leadership Programme, available at [www.dlprog.org](http://www.dlprog.org). For a good overview of different understandings of leadership in the context of peacebuilding, see Koenraad Van Brabant, "Leadership for Peace: An Introduction to 'Leadership' and 'Followership,'" Geneva: Interpeace, 2012. Key elements of our understanding of leadership here are its normative orientation toward preventing conflict and reducing fragility, and its ability to mobilize the positive set of relations it implies for these purposes.

42 Adrian Leftwich, "Bringing Agency Back In: Politics and Human Agency in Building Institutions and States. Synthesis and Overview Report," Development Leadership Program (DLP) Research Paper 6, 2009; Adrian Leftwich and Steve Hogg, "The Case for Leadership and the Primacy of Politics in Building Effective States, Institutions and Governance for Sustainable Growth and Social Development," Background Paper 1, DLP, 2007.



3. Create a binding international regulatory framework for the security-services industry.
4. Strengthen incentive structures and international support for regional and local efforts to prevent organized violence.
5. Support “infrastructures for peace” that can transform cultures of violence.
6. Stimulate leadership for peace.

The moment is propitious for action with the near-simultaneous creation of the g7+, conclusion of the “New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States,” and nomination of the UN Secretary-General’s panel to advise on a bold yet feasible post-2015 global development framework. Ongoing rethinking of UN peacekeeping and gradual operationalization of the results of the UN civilian capacity review further make a globally integrated approach possible.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The g7+ is a group of seventeen fragile states that seeks to draw international attention to the unique development challenges faced by fragile states and the implications of these challenges for international engagement. The “New Deal” is an international political agreement that lays out a novel framework to improve the quality of engagement in fragile states between donors, international organizations, and fragile states themselves (available at [www.oecd.org/international%20dialogue/keyresourceslinks.htm](http://www.oecd.org/international%20dialogue/keyresourceslinks.htm)). The UN’s civilian capacity review is a project to broaden and deepen the pool of civilian experts available to support the immediate capacity development needs of countries emerging from conflict (available at [www.civcapreview.org](http://www.civcapreview.org)).

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