

*'Armed violence undermines development and constitutes an impediment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.'*

Report of the UN Secretary-General on 'Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence' (A/64/228)



## Armed Violence and Development

Although the incidence of armed conflict has declined in recent years, the number of people killed by armed violence has not. More than 740,000 men, women, and children die each year as a result of armed violence. The majority of these deaths—490,000—occur in countries that are not affected by armed conflict.

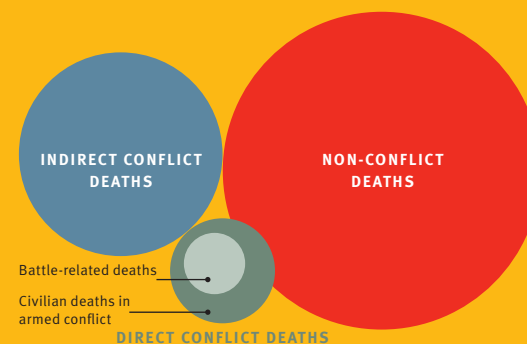
The economic impact of armed violence is vast and far-reaching. The cost of lost productivity due to non-conflict armed violence alone is roughly USD 95 billion and could reach up to USD 163 billion annually worldwide. Violence due to armed conflict can decrease the annual growth of a typical economy by approximately two per cent.

The negative effects of armed violence extend well beyond these human and economic costs. Armed violence can trigger forced displacement, erode social capital, and destroy infrastructure. It can impede investment in reconstruction and reconciliation. Armed violence can undermine public institutions, facilitate corruption, and be conducive to a climate of impunity.

Armed violence contributes to and is sustained by transnational crime, including the trafficking of persons, drugs, and arms. When associated with interpersonal and gender-based violence, it unravels the fabric of families and communities and leaves lasting psychological and physical scars on survivors.

The UN Secretary-General and the UN General Assembly have acknowledged the destructive impacts of armed violence on development. The problem of armed violence is today recognized as a serious obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development highlights how underdevelopment and armed violence are linked.



*'The international community has acknowledged that armed violence and conflict impede realization of the Millennium Development Goals.'*

Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

*'We will strive to achieve, by 2015, measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and tangible improvements in human security worldwide.'*

Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development



### GENEVA DECLARATION SECRETARIAT

c/o Small Arms Survey  
47 Avenue Blanc  
1202 Geneva  
Switzerland

T +41 22 908 5777

F +41 22 732 2738

E [info@genevadeclaration.org](mailto:info@genevadeclaration.org)

W [www.genevadeclaration.org](http://www.genevadeclaration.org)



**GENEVA  
DECLARATION**

ON ARMED VIOLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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**GENEVA  
DECLARATION**

ON ARMED VIOLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT





# What is the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development?

In June 2006, Switzerland and UNDP invited several countries, international agencies, and civil society organizations to participate in a Ministerial Summit in Geneva. The goal was to identify concrete measures to prevent and reduce the global scourge of armed violence and to enhance the prospects for sustainable development.

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development recognizes that armed violence is both a cause and consequence of underdevelopment and constitutes a major obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Declaration calls on states to achieve measurable reductions of armed violence and improvements in human security by 2015.

The Geneva Declaration has been endorsed by more than 100 states.

A Core Group of 14 signatories and affiliated organizations guides the implementation of the Geneva Declaration. To advance armed violence prevention and reduction programmes that are sensitive to national and local realities and needs, the Core Group developed a Framework for Implementation that calls for action around three pillars:

- 1. ADVOCACY, DISSEMINATION, AND COORDINATION** to raise global awareness about the negative impact of armed violence on development.
- 2. MEASURABILITY AND MONITORING** to improve the understanding of the scope, scale, and distribution of armed violence and its negative impact on development.
- 3. PROGRAMMING** to promote development by preventing and reducing armed violence in affected countries.

## CORE GROUP STATES

Brazil, Colombia, Finland, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Spain, Switzerland (Chair), Thailand, United Kingdom

## AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

UN Development Programme (UNDP)  
Small Arms Survey  
Quaker UN Office (QUNO)



*'The [Global Burden of Armed Violence] report is an important step towards a better understanding of—and more effective responses to—the negative impact of armed violence.'*

Micheline Calmy-Rey, Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Foreword to the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* report

## 1. Advocacy, Dissemination, and Coordination

Many national governments and development donors are insufficiently aware of how armed violence undermines development and aid effectiveness. Reaching out to states, international organizations, and civil society is therefore critical to raise awareness of the negative interrelation between armed violence and development.

International and regional conferences are a central feature of awareness raising at the highest levels. Several regional meetings—including in Guatemala (April 2007) for Latin America, in Nairobi (October 2007) for Africa, in Bangkok (May 2008) for Asia–Pacific, and in Sarajevo (November 2008) for South-eastern Europe and the Caucasus—led to the adoption of Regional Declarations that capture regional perspectives. A Geneva Declaration Review Summit was held on 12 September 2008 and attended by 85 signatory states and several dozen international agencies and NGOs.

In November 2008, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/63/23), introduced by Core Group members and other partners, requesting the UN Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the interrelation between armed violence and development. Pursuant to this resolution, the UN Secretary-General submitted a report on 'Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence' (A/64/228) to the UN General Assembly in November 2009.

## 2. Measurability and Monitoring

It is critical to establish an evidence base that enables the international community to measure the impacts of armed violence on development and productivity, and to develop effective armed violence

prevention and reduction initiatives. Information on how to address risks, enhance protective factors, and mitigate the effects of armed violence is important for policy-makers and practitioners alike.

The Small Arms Survey—a Geneva-based research institute—was mandated by the Geneva Declaration Core Group to coordinate national and international efforts to enhance our knowledge about the scope, distribution, and effects of armed violence. Since 2006 it has worked with research partners from around the world to generate policy papers and empirical studies on the global, regional, and local aspects of armed violence. These include country mappings (in Burundi, Guatemala, and Timor–Leste) and a flagship publication, the *Global Burden of Armed Violence*.

The first *Global Burden of Armed Violence* report, released in 2008, provides comprehensive, reliable, and up-to-date data on international trends and patterns of armed violence. It highlights a range of specific indicators of armed violence, including direct and indirect conflict deaths, the incidence of homicidal violence, the economic impacts and costs of armed violence as well as a special focus on gender, post-conflict violence, and other forms of violence, such as displacement, extrajudicial killings, and kidnapping.

*'Reducing armed violence is complex and it requires a broad and comprehensive approach. It also requires partnerships that cut across traditional lines and bring together a diverse set of actors united by a vision of a safer, more secure world.'*

Kathleen Cravero, UNDP, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), speech made during the Geneva Declaration Review Summit, 12 September 2008

## 3. Programming

In order to achieve measurable reductions in armed violence by 2015, it is crucial to enhance the capacities of affected governments and civil society to advance coordinated, coherent, and complementary armed violence prevention and reduction programmes.

The Geneva Declaration process is concentrating on a selection of focus countries and best practice areas in which national and local governments develop and pilot specific armed violence prevention and reduction programmes with the support of UNDP and the international donor community.

The Geneva Declaration Secretariat collaborates closely with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which is actively involved in establishing guidelines on how to prevent and reduce armed violence.

Civil society forms an integral part of the Geneva Declaration process and its programming efforts. The Quaker UN Office (QUNO) is working to facilitate civil society coordination and information exchange on effective armed violence prevention and reduction.