



A Charter on Peace and Security

- Recalling that the Millennium Declaration, adopted by 189 Members of the United Nations on 8 September 2000, identified peace and security as key conditions for successful development;
- Recalling that the 2005 World Summit universally recognized that “development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing”, and that the Summit called for action across the board to reduce armed violence, including eliminating violence against women;
- Recognizing the efforts of governments worldwide to-date to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the enhanced political will among governments today recommitting to accelerate development strategies and policies aimed at achieving the MDGs by 2015;
- **Responding to an international agenda shared by many states, civil society organizations, and UN agencies, we urge the MDG Summit to include measurable reduction in armed violence in strategies and programs agreed to strengthen MDG progress between 2010 and 2015.**

The problem

At conservative estimates, armed violence has killed more than 740,000 people per annum in recent years. The number of people seriously injured runs into millions, leaving individuals and communities disadvantaged for life

Armed violence should be seen alongside poverty as a high-level barrier to our common development goals. Including interpersonal, criminal and political violence as well as conflict, armed violence threatens the realization of human rights and poverty reduction, the effective provision of humanitarian and development assistance, and the achievement of international development targets including the MDGs. Armed violence and development are linked in a vicious circle. On one side, fear and insecurity caused by armed violence undermine human, social and economic development. On the other, lack of development opportunities and persistent inequality are powerful drivers of armed violence.

In non-conflict countries alone, armed violence has been estimated to cost over \$163 billion – more than the total global aid budget

By reducing economic productivity and growth potential, and by diverting scarce economic resources from productive social investments such as primary health and education, armed violence drains the local and national resources, capacity and cohesion needed for development to make headway.

Armed violence displaces families, erodes food security, weakens systems for health and education, and undermines poverty reduction

The problem of armed violence as an important cross-cutting factor impeding achievement of the MDGs has already been recognized internationally. The MDG outcome document that will be adopted during the Summit

in New York this week should reflect the growing global commitment to address this challenge.

A call for action

The MDG Summit represents a critical opportunity to recognize the importance of peace and security – and of reducing and preventing armed violence as the primary requirement for better peace and security.

Action on the major risk factors for armed violence can help to prevent and reduce its incidence and enhance the prospects for development.

1. Understand the impact of armed violence on the MDGs

States should support the inclusion of language in the outcome document reflecting the distinct problem of armed violence. By doing so, States will promote a more effective focus on measurable armed violence reduction in strategies and programs to strengthen progress towards MDG achievement.

2. Face the facts of armed violence

States should ensure proper monitoring and reporting of armed violence, develop quantifiable goals for its reduction, and employ transparent, verifiable indicators for measuring the success of their efforts.

3. Assist the victims of armed violence

States should acknowledge their obligation to assist victims of armed violence in meeting their needs and enjoying their rights – including those injured or traumatized and affected families and communities.

4. Recognize armed violence reduction as a development imperative

Working with civil society, states should include armed violence reduction as a priority in their national development plans, supported where relevant by adequate aid. They should ensure full compliance with existing and emerging international norms and agreements to reduce and prevent armed violence, seek to address the illicit and irresponsible flow of arms that exacerbate incidences of armed violence, and seeking peaceful solutions to conflicts, enhancing peace-building efforts, and strengthening civilian protection.

Civil Society Organizations subscribing to this Charter:

Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), co-author, United Kingdom
Caribbean Institute for the Rule of Law (ICED), Dominican Republic
Danish Demining Group (DDG), Denmark
Forum for Women and Development (FOKUS), Norway
Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)
Human Security in Latin America and the Caribbean (SEHLAC), Latin America
IKV-Pax Christi, The Netherlands
Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Norway
Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development (ForUM), Norway
OXFAM International, United Kingdom
Project Ploughshares, Canada
Quaker United Nations Office (QUONO), USA – Switzerland
Save the Children, United Kingdom
Sustainable Peace and Development Organization (SPADO), Pakistan
Training centre for development of ex-combatant (CEDAC), Burundi
Women's Right to Education Programme (WREP), Nigeria