HUMAN (IN)SECURITY AND CITIES.
Summary of a Rapid Research Project.

Interpeace (formerly WSP International)
28 June 2006

1. INTRODUCTION: AN EMERGING POLICY TOPIC?

a. Global Trends.

Surely the 21st century is going to be the 'urban century'. If around 1800 some 3% of the world population lived in cities, it is estimated that by 2030 this will have radically increased to some 60%. Yet today already 1 in 6 people live in slums, a figure that may increase to a quarter of the world population by 2030. We also see that mayors and city councils of large cities (e.g. Mexico City) have responsibility for and authority over populations larger than several states, with budgets larger than those of several national governments. Today, as in the past, during wartime cities can be besieged and are turned into battlefields. Yet cities, in countries that have enjoyed a sustained peace, can also be the stage for major criminal violence, with homicide rates that can exceed that of certain officially recognized 'war' zones. In short, cities are a growing factor of influence in human life, and represent a new landscape or 'stage' for human security and insecurity.

b. Canada and its Human Security Policy.

The concept of 'human security' was introduced into the general international policy discourse by the UN Human Development Report of 1994. For several years now it has been a guiding concept of Canadian foreign policy. For practical purposes Canada has s tructured the overarching concept into five clusters: protection of civilians, conflict prevention, peace operations, public safety and governance and accountability. Each of these can contribute to 'freedom from fear'. Evidently in practice several of these can be overlapping and/or complementary. Taking note of the abovementioned global trends, the Human Security Policy Division of the Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade has felt the need to explore this nexus in more detail. Does it require adaptation of the existing policies or policy innovation; does it require a refocusing of Canada's limited resources towards cities? To that end the Human Security Policy Division coordinated two interactive 'expert-consultations' (October 2005 & March 2006) using teleconferencing as major methodological tool. The 'experts' were northern-based with backgrounds ranging from international relations to urban studies, although a few have more hand-on experience of urban governance. Over time, the reflections started coalescing around four major topical domains:

- "Fearscapes": the failure of public security in urban spaces;
- "Kids, guns and gangs" / slum insecurity
- Conflict resilient cities: cities that resist to be drawn into a spiral of violence and/or lead the way out of violence
- Urban governance and democratization.

c. This Research Project.

This report synthesizes insights into the nexus 'human (in)security and urban spaces' that emerged from six rapid 'case studies'. The towns and cities concerned are Bissau (Guinea Bissau), Bujumbura (Burundi), Burao (Somaliland), Galcayo (divided between Puntland the south-central Somalia), Guatemala City (Guatemala) and Mogadisho (south-central Somalia).

This research was a rapid exercise against tight deadlines. The case studies are not in-depth and undoubtedly for each of them a wider range of perspectives exists. Four of them concern capital cities, two others provincial towns. The respective populations vary between an estimated 150.000 (Galcayo) to approximately 2.5 million people (Metropolitan Guatemala). They represent 6 regions, five of which are in Africa. All regions in which these cities have been located have or continue to experience forms of 'civil war': not surprisingly then we are here mostly in the realm of 'fearscapes'. Two of them can be considered to now express contexts that can be called 'fragile democracies' (Guatemala City and Burao town in Somaliland). This is clearly not enough to be a 'sample' nor is it 'representative'. The choice of the locations was purely based on practical reasons, i.e. because of existing partners or known local organizations, several of whom were focusing on certain urban centres in the context of their ongoing programmes. This report therefore is only one, exploratory, contribution to a wider reflection on an emerging topic.

<u>An adaptation of the Fast Talk Methodology.</u>

'Fast Talk' is an instrument for rapidly informing a policy debate. It can bring together officials seeking policy development input with subject matter experts through a three stage electronic consultations process:

- A small number of experts in an email exchange provide a short (3-5 pages) written response to a set of questions developed by the officials;
- The responses are reviewed, deepened and debated in a 2-3 hour teleconference call.
- A draft report is written by the policy advise coordinator and shared with the experts for amendments and approval.

For this exercise, an adaptation to this Fast Talk instrument was used. This was necessary for various reasons:

- the exercise did not seek to consult with thematic experts but to elicit the knowledge of activists and practitioners;
- the various interlocutors were not comfortable in the same European language. Exchanges therefore took place in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish;
- the use of different languages and the time zone differences made a conference call not practical;
- additionally it was not felt that a conference call would be very effective with interlocutors embedded in very different contexts.

In light of these considerations a different sequence was followed:

- the initial email exchanges took place (in different languages);
- the research coordinators (and case study writers) did some rapid background reading on each situation (country and city) and obtained maps of the respective urban centres, so as to avoid having to waste time on the local interlocutor having to explain the basics;
- the initial response to the emailed questions was then deepened through 1 or 2 telephone conversations;
- draft case studies were then circulated to the individual interlocutors for amendment. Minor amendments would usually be written in the text, larger ones could be communicated over the phone;
- a synthesis report focusing on the case studies was written by the project coordinator and consultant (in French)
- this more analytical summary report is circulated to the different interlocutors.

A summary of emerging insights was presented at a dense knowledge-exchange seminar in Vancouver on 8-9 June. Several of the tentative insights and attention points drawn from this rapid exercise, reappeared in other contributions.

2. WAR ON AND IN CITIES.

a. Cities under Siege, Cities as Battlefields.

Each of the six cities at one time or another has been hit by the violence of war. The three Somali towns and Bissau all were major battlefields, with Mogadisho being a battlefield repeatedly, including for an international peacekeeping force. The one relative exception is Guatemala City which was the stage for some targeted attacks but where no urban guerrilla took hold. The province surrounding Bujumbura, so-called Bujumbura Rural, has and continues to be an area of great insecurity and threat, and until recently there were regular exchanges of fire that touched the outskirts of the city and the surrounding hills. In larger cities, like Mogadisho and Bujumbura, major fighting can be limited to certain neighbourhoods. Smaller towns, like Burao and Galcayo, tend to get engulfed completely. Notwithstanding the rules of war, major fighting also in cities tends to lead to quite indiscriminate shelling, with civilian casualties and serious destruction of property and infrastructure.

Why cities come under siege and become battlefields has not been explored in depth, but it appears there can be various, and perhaps changing, reasons. Capital cities are the seat of government and therefore a symbol of power. Often (though not always) they are also economically the most dynamic and wealthy. Fighting can also take place in order to control a town as part of 'our' territory, as we see in Galcayo. When the violence has (temporarily) subsided, towns and cities can come back alive but remain 'divided' (Mogadisho, Galcayo, Bujumbura during the war).

Heavy fighting causes large scale displacement, either of the population in part of the larger city that is affected by the violence, or of the town population as a whole. The physical destruction caused by the battle, can be further aggravated by looting. Still, displaced urban populations tend to return quite quickly (more quickly than displaced rural populations?) often with only a cease-fire in place and not a real peace agreement. One phenomenon that tends to receive little attention is the occasional 'arming' of part of an urban population by the party that controls the city. That happened in Bissau where the besieged government released prisoners and provided them with arms, and in certain neighbourhoods of Bujumbura (the Angolan government at one point also distributed arms in the capital Luanda).

Physical insecurity however does not come only from 'warring parties', in the sense of armies, rebel groups or militia. Prolonged war and insecurity provide also fertile environment for the appearance of paramilitary groups, dead squads, criminal gangs and business people that are prepared to use violence as part of 'business competition'. In the general climate of law and order, assassins are for hire, all sorts of people get kidnapped for ransom or to oblige them to honour a debt, petty crime and the threat of sexual violence increase.

b. Economic Insecurity.

The impacts of war on household economies are well known: loss of assets, loss of livelihoods, the death of a breadwinner or a carer in the family, are all likely to lead to temporary or more permanent impoverishment. (There is a persistent problem with providing support, at least in

camps, to long-term displaced people with urban rather than rural backgrounds and skills – but this has not been explored in the case studies.) The case studies however draw attention to forms of intra-city displacement (Mogadisho, Bujumbura). In Bujumbura there is even a special term for it: "dispersés" instead of "déplacés". This can be the result of an intentional destruction of certain neighbourhoods (Bujumbura) or simply because people flee the cross-fire (Mogadisho).

At the same time it is important to recognize that, notwithstanding the apparent 'fearscape' character of an urban centre, more people are moving to the towns and cities than fleeing from them. This raises interesting questions about their assessments of various forms of (relative) 'human security', and how they weigh perceived threats and perceived (or imagined?) opportunities against each other.

Although there are and remain quite significant numbers of displaced people in towns like Galcayo and Mogadisho, this apparently does not create major economic tensions. Reportedly, a sort of division of labour ensues, with the displaced largely doing casual, dirty and dangerous work and providing small services (washing, cleaning, gardening…) to the resident population. This may not be always the case. The case study of Galcayo, a small town in a largely pastoral area, signals that displaced people can sometimes bring new skills to an urban centre. Presumably this is more likely to happen in a smaller provincial town than in a larger city. There are however also indications of significant exploitation of displaced people by armed groups (militia in Mogadisho).

The destruction of residential properties, and the influx of people displaced from elsewhere tend to lead to increases in rent. Together with likely increases in the price of certain essentials (food items, cooking oil, kerosene etc.) and sometimes the privatization of basic services (water, health, education), it appears that the cost of living in embattled cities goes up. The influx of a large number of international agencies with or without a regional or international peacekeeping force tends to further increase prices. The case studies do not explore this phenomenon, but it probably merits more research than has so far been devoted to it.

Noticeably absent from the case studies are references to the importance of international aid as a source of certain security (food security or other). Whether this is because the topic was not high in the mind of the interlocutors, or because it is in reality only a minor, or at least unreliable, source of 'security' to conflict-affected people, cannot be ascertained. Remittances from family members abroad however, appear much more prominently as sources of economic security at least for the residents of the three Somali towns and in Guatemala City, though not for the people in Bujumbura and in Bissau.

c. The Political Elite and Urban-Based Conflict Entrepreneurs.

The case studies also draw attention to the fact that conflict entrepreneurs may often have an urban background – and sometimes (though not always) operate from an urban basis, either the city they (partially) control, or from another urban centre. Elements in the various case studies highlight the role of a politico-military elite in initiating and maintaining large scale violence: coup d'états by the military, military control of the government institutions, warlords with former careers in the military etc. If cities are centres of economic and political capital, then those with high ambitions for power will locate themselves in cities and seek to control cities. The relationship between elites and certain urban centres may therefore be an undercurrent in negotiated 'peace agreements' which imply power-sharing arrangements (see e.g. the shift of the

South Sudan regional authorities from Rumbek to Juba, or the whole issue of whether the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia can actually install itself in Mogadisho).

d. In Search of Physical Security.

There is a tendency in the international community to over-emphasise 'identity' and 'ethnicity' in contemporary conflict dynamics. People typically have multiple identities and it will depend on the context which one will be highlighted. Reducing this to one dominant identity and then using it to mobile resentment and antagonism is a not uncommon strategy of conflict-entrepreneurs. 'Ethnic identity' has not been a major factor in the civil wars in Guinea Bissau (elite struggle for power) and Guatemala (socio-economic root causes). Ethnicity does play a role in Burundi, but there has and continues to be also intra-ethnic rivalry and violence, both at individual and at political level.

The case studies show how belonging to a strong 'identity group' is both a source of security and of insecurity. This is the case with the more 'traditional' form of identity grouping in the Somali segmentary lineage system and with the more 'modern' form of belonging to a 'mara' or violent youth gang, in Guatemala city. Partaking in this collective identity means that one can count on the protection and assistance of the other group members, in a system of mutual obligations. But it also renders one vulnerable, through the mechanism of collective responsibility, to threats from other identity groups with whom there is persistent rivalry and sometimes confrontation. But people can also identify with each other on a socio-economic ('class') basis. In Bujumbura for example, as in Guatemala City, those with the economic means co-exist well together ('class identity') within the safer areas of a city, irrespective of their other 'identities'.

Under-employed or unemployed youth may be drawn into the violence by conflict entrepreneurs, through forced recruitment or because guns offer power, prestige and income. Identity- or political loyalties of militia, including city-based militia, may erode and evolve into more mercenary attitudes where the readiness to fight is dependent on payment being made (Mogadisho). Pre-existing urban youth groups may be armed and politically manipulated by one or the other party to the conflict (Bujumbura).

The forces of law and order, notably city and town administrations, the police and the courts, do not figure very prominently as a source of security in any of the case studies. The case studies give the impression that, when the city gets engulfed in war, the city authorities become irrelevant or melt away. Various dynamics appear possible: they are seen as associated with the central government and may therefore become a target; they loose the resources and the support of a central government that is concentrating its efforts on a war; the municipal services personnel flees the violence so there is nobody to implement; they are forced to take sides once the conflict has been mobilized along 'ethnic' or 'identity' lines, a military administration takes over control from the civilian one etc. The issue has not been looked at, but it would be interesting to look at the role, powers and actions of the city administrations of e.g. Bujumbura and Guatemala City during the years of civil war.

The police in Bissau are seen as ineffective, under-equipped and riddled with petty corruption. The police in Guatemala City are seen as ineffective, under-equipped and vulnerable to higher level corruption. The police force in Bujumbura has actually grown in size after the peace agreements, given the wish to create an ethnically 'balanced' institution. But it tends to have a certain disregard for the rights of the citizen and for basic procedures. The case studies point at several issues here: the demilitarization of the police (Bujumbura), the renewed assignment of the

military to carry out police tasks (Guatemala City), adequate equipment, decent salaries paid on time and corruption within the police force.

Where law and order have broken down, or where the law and order forces are either ineffective or themselves a threat, there is a clear trend to privatization of security. People may start hiring individual guards (e.g. Mogadisho), or draw on the services of a commercial security company (e.g. Guatemala City, Bujumbura). Shared insecurity can also lead to co-residents organizing a neighbourhood scheme (e.g. some districts of Mogadisho, Guatemala City), although these set-ups are typically only able to handle smaller criminal threats. In more extreme situations, when the police but also the courts are perceived as dysfunctional, people including urban residents may also start 'privatising' justice and resort to 'lynching', the summary and usually public execution of known or alleged criminals (Guatemala City – a phenomenon that has also been reported from e.g. South Africa and Cameroon). 'Lynching' is not restricted to larger cities, it can also occur in smaller towns. The phenomenon of 'gated enclaves' only appears in the Guatemala City case study – but could of course be a future trend in e.g. Bujumbura.

International peacekeeping forces are not mentioned as a major source of physical security in the case studies. Presumably they did play such a role at least for Bujumbura, during the time when they were heavily concentrated in the capital city. Peacekeeping forces also inject 'money' into the local economy, although this also encourages negative developments such as prostitution, drug dealing etc. MINUGUA in Guatemala essentially had a monitoring mandate. UNOSOM I in Somalia focused on humanitarian tasks (food security) with no mandate to deal with the weapons and the violence that aggravated the humanitarian crisis. When the mandate was expanded under UNOSOM II, the peace keeping force allowed itself to get entangled into the Mogadisho warlord dynamics, and ended up itself in heavy combat in the city, killing civilians and destroying infrastructure, and abusing human rights. Rightly or wrongly, few Somalis have seen UNOSOM II as a source of 'security'.

e. Urban Geography and War.

War has impacts on city geography other than just the physical destruction. War and of course a form of prolonged siege of a city may prevent the physical expansion of that city, even if its population continues to increase. Bujumbura has been an example of that, with the surrounding hills too dangerous for new building or even slum expansion. Larger displaced and returnee camps may spring up on the outskirts of a city, but smaller ones may appear also closer to the centre. This may lead to a reduction in the number and size of available public spaces (e.g. parks, sports grounds, local market areas…) as they are taken up by squatters. Displaced people with rural backgrounds may also bring 'rural' elements into the city, such as livestock (Bujumbura), garden plots etc. Another consequence of overcrowding, not highlighted in the case studies, may be the dividing up of houses and apartments, either to take in displaced relatives, or tenants who will help meet the rising cost of living. In large cities public transport may break down (and be replaced by private transport or not) which may have an impact on the mobility of residents within the city. Other likely casualties of the disappearance or ineffectiveness of the city administration are road and infrastructure maintenance and repairs and sanitation (garbage collection…).

3. POST-VIOLENCE.

A number of possible urban situations and developments in the aftermath of intense violence can be drawn from the case studies:

- Property disputes over real estate, especially when there has been much movement of people in and out of the city and within the city, possibly under the control of successive 'authorities' with limited legitimacy, which leads to competing claims in the absence of paperwork or with competing documents;
- Where there is a weak new national government and eventually new but also weak city administration, it may even prove difficult to recover public buildings that remain occupied by armed men and who demand payment to vacate the premises. In extreme situations, where the state has collapsed, the authorities may even have difficulty reclaiming major economic infrastructure such as ports and airports (Mogadisho);
- Even where there is a relatively effective DDR programme, there seldom is even an attempt to collect weapons from the general population. Many city residents therefore retain small arms;
- The restoration of national government and national line ministries tends to take precedence over the restoration of city administration. New local authorities remain under-resourced and lack experience. Roads in the city may take longer to get repaired than key national roads. The same applies to other basic public infrastructure. A marked contrast can arise between the dilapidated and neglected 'public space', and better kept 'private spaces'. This may also be a symbolic indication of the (still) low concern for 'common goods';
- Many displaced people who sought refuge in the city during the violence, do not return. Certain displaced camps may turn into slums, but others – if they are not too large and the city economy picks up – may gradually be urbanized (Burao);
- People with money, both members of the diaspora and others that largely stayed during the violence, may grasp the economic opportunities that present themselves, and invest in residential and commercial property and in smaller and larger businesses. The absence of an effective regulatory framework may mean that some take advantage of the situation.
- There is a growing gap between rich and poor that is also visible in the city-scape.
- Town planning, or the ability to enforce a town plan, may take years to reappear. This may be partially because the city administrations are weak and under-resourced, but also because they get drawn into speculative schemes that serve private rather than public interests.
- If the post-war national economy does not pick up, the cities may face a new influx of now economic migrants from the countryside (Bissau, Burao). The rural-urban divide gets accentuated. The creation of large-scale slums may often be more an consequence of (post-conflict) economic factors than war-situations (Luanda, where many Angolans fled to during the long years of war for a measure of security, would contradict this suggestion.)
- Street children or larger numbers of them, may have started appearing in the cities during the war and grow even more in numbers post-violence, if peace does not bring opportunities for all. The (heightened?) inequalities in the post-violence period may breed stronger resentment among youth and a greater willingness to become engage in criminal acts and become more violent. Weak public institutions, lack of opportunities, lack of self-respect, the easy availability of small arms, a legacy of violence and breakdown of social norms, and social disarticulation (broken and/dispersed families, loss of role models...) all contribute to this. The criminal element may become so strong in parts of the city that the authorities and the police loose control in those areas (Guatemala City).

- The argument can be made that peacebuilding (and democratization) are strengthened through a policy of decentralization. Decentralisation efforts are underway in Somaliland and Puntland, and still stalling in Guatemala, Guinea Bissau and Burundi. Some key questions arise in this regard: is there something to decentralize (organizational capacities, management competencies, resources…)? Would it make strategically / contextually more sense to rebuild, after war, in a different way than is habitually done i.e. not first a central government that then over time can 'decentralise' a bit, but directly rebuild stronger local institutions (not only city and town administrations but also district or provincial administrations), and only a lean central government with very specific roles and competencies (along the lines of the Swiss model)? Indeed, it is conceivable that the return of a 'strong' state may undermine the positive civic and community initiative that arose in times of hardship, and in due course become a (new) threat to civil liberties and human rights. The issue of course here is not one of institutional structures, but of the quality of governance, and that ultimately depends on the quality of the people in positions of influence and decision-making.

'Maras' in Guatemala City.

Violent youth gangs (maras / pandillas of 18-25 year olds) have become the primary security problem in Guatemala City. The phenomenon exists also in several other cities of Central and South America (and South Africa), and in cities of the USA and Canada (whose youth gangs, particularly in Los Angeles, were the 'model' for those in Central America).

There are some 90 maras in Guatemala City with a total membership estimated at 10.000. At least half of all the neighourhoods of the city have a strong 'mara' presence. Membership in a 'mara' provides a sense of identity, belonging, prestige and security to young people. Maras are the main source of the high threat of armed robbery in public spaces and in homes. Mara rivalry however also contributes to the very high homicide rate.

A mara that is still connected to its (often poorer) local community of origin can be a source of protection for it. On the other hand the wealthy can afford to pay for extensive private security and to go and live in gated enclaves. It are then the middle classes that are most vulnerable. As a result of mara activity, people have abandoned many public places for social encounters and have shifted to (privately guarded) shopping centers. Insecurity around schools caused by maras has a negative effect on school attendance.

Whereas originally the maras were neighbourhood based, they increasingly have been expanding into wider territory and some now have transnational links. Some maras have become connected to organized crime, and thereby get involved in bank robbery, extortion and protection rackets, kidnapping for ransom, drug trafficking etc.

Youth groups are not a new phenomenon in Guatemala City. There is a strong tradition of youth movements and mobilization of both working class and more educated youth that goes back to at least to the 1930s. The general climate of repression during the civil war also affected the youth groups. The contemporary 'mara' phenomenon is not a direct result of the 36 years of civil war. Most of them are too young to have had any direct experience of the war. But the legacy of violence and the easy availability of small arms are of course contributing factors.

Given that the national police is not able to control and combat the maras, there is popular demand for more forceful action from the authorities and the deployment of the army. Mixed army-police patrols are already on the street. There is also a tendency to start arresting and imprisoning youth because they look like mara members (tattoos) rather than because of what they have done, as proven through a due process. Several civil society actors see in such generalized repressive reflex a risk of return to the authoritarianism of earlier decades. They are trying to influence public policy on this matter through concrete proposals.

The case studies point at various potential 'actors' that can help bring stability and security to town or city:

- The power brokers: Obviously, if the powerbrokers themselves can come to an 'agreement' that goes beyond a (temporary) cease-fire, the situation is likely to improve – at least for a while. Often this may require third party intervention (Burundi, Guinea Bissau), but sometimes the absence of outside intervention becomes more of an enabling factor (the Somali regions).
- "Traditional elders": Traditional mechanisms of conflict management are not really geared to dealing with national power struggles and with urban violence. In Burundi the 'Bashingantahe' reportedly at the moment have no role conflict resolution. By contrast, the 'traditional elders' have remained an important actor in the various Somali regions, but the case studies also show the limits of this mechanism: often their voices are not listened to until a stalemate has arrived between the warring parties; sometimes elders have been killed – a grave violation of the customary codes of conduct; on other occasions elders have been manipulated by powerbrokers. When it comes to larger scale power struggles and urban settings, we see them acting best in conjunction with other mediating mechanisms, be they civil society organizations (Mogadisho), local administrations (Burao) or regional authorities (Puntland).
- Civil society: A state weakened (or collapsed) through violence and/or a small revenue basis, leaves space for civil society to develop. Urban environments seem to offer most fertile ground for this to happen, with often a concentration of civil society organizations in the larger cities (Mogadisho, Bujumbura, Bissau, Guatemala City). Branch offices and network alliances that include smaller towns still tend to have their main organizational node in the capital city. Civil society organizations can focus on various aspects of human security: service delivery, human rights protection, conflict mediation, peacebuilding, democratization and policy development. While there is a tendency to identify 'civil society' with 'NGOs', perhaps more active attention and engagement is warranted with professional associations many of whom again are often urban-based and urban-centered.
- Community & neighbourhood organizations: Neighbourhood protection schemes in e.g. Guatemala City and Mogadisho have already been mentioned. Such self-help mechanisms are not necessarily limited to physical protection, but may extend to basic services e.g. garbage collection (Bissau), community-run schools etc. An important question would be why certain communities retain control of their own 'protection force', while elsewhere groups that first emerged on a community basis turn 'independent' and may become a threat to the rest of the community? Where public law and order institutions exist, the question arises what operational relationship such community-based schemes can and do develop with them.
- Local radio stations: The case studies from Mogadisho, Galcayo and Bujumbura point at the potential of local radio stations to play an important positive role in the urban dynamics. They can be a force for good, allowing messages to be passed across geographical and 'group' divides, enabling the voice of ordinary people to be heard amidst the propaganda of conflict entrepreneurs, countering disconcerting rumours with timely factual information, and broadening the public debate about the problems of a city, its governance and possible solutions. That obviously requires 'independence'.
- Religious courts: Islamic courts have provided a measure of local control, stability and justice in parts of Mogadisho for several years, and since their

alliance has recently taken control over the whole of Mogadisho, they have an opportunity to extend that role. While secularists may have misgivings about 'religious courts', it is to be remembered that the residents of a city may perceive the years of violence and insecurity as a result of the failings of a secular modern governance system.

- The diaspora is too heterogeneous to be seen as either a 'force for good' or a 'force for bad'. Members of a society that live abroad can reflect all the divisions that tear that society apart, while they can also generate mediation and peacebuilding initiatives.
- The private sector: Business people can equally take a variety of positions and play a variety of roles during and after violent conflict. They can contribute to or at least seek to profit from the war economy, just as they have a vital role to play in the transformation to a peace economy. They can be a force that demands 'public order' and 'regulation' as an enabling climate for business, or want to maintain chaos and weak institutions for the same reasons. The private sector is possibly one of the actor-groups that the international community tends to rather neglect, and that could be engaged more actively. But it may also be necessary to differentiate much more clearly between e.g. small and local shopkeepers, manufacturers and others with locally fixed assets, and others with more mobility (transport companies, financiers…). While all are and want to be 'in business', they may not perceive and experience insecurity in the same way, and may be able to contribute to improved human security in different ways.

In situations of large scale and sustained violence, no one of these is likely to have the necessary and sufficient influence to bring stability and improved security. Their best chances of success come from working together.

Once again, both local administrations and international actors do not appear – at least in these six rapid case studies- as major forces for stability, peace and security.

5. POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND ATTENTION.

A rapid and exploratory research project such as this cannot generate confident policy advice. But it does inspire some reflections and draws attention to certain issues.

a. Focusing on cities?

- The case studies suggest that the city as focus may not always be appropriate. What happens in these towns and cities reflects often a mix of local dynamics (e.g. Galcayo), national dynamics (e.g. Galcayo, Burao, Bissau, Bujumbura), regional dynamics (e.g. Mogadisho, Bissau) and global dynamics (e.g. the war on drugs for Guatemala City and the war on terror for Mogadisho). This has implications for how one actually engages with human security challenges in a given city. Cities do not exist in isolation.
- The notion of 'failed cities' seems to have only limited value: did Bissau or Bujumbura 'fail' at the city level? Or were these cities and their residents drawn into a negative spiral of violence at the national-political level? Failed cities today may have been successful cities yesterday. Obviously in relatively stable circumstances, we see that some cities can do better than others (e.g. the transformations of Bilbao or Glasgow from industrial decline into newly vibrant cities with a different economic basis). Much of this depends on the 'city

governance', but note that the local authorities have to work within constraints set by the national authorities, and by international, national and sub-national economic trends. Failed cities also do not mean failed city residents. In short, it is possible and possibly necessary to look at cities with two lenses: dynamics within a city or even within a part of the city itself, and the city within a larger political and economic environment.

- Do we focus on mega-cities and/or capital cities? Clearly these usually carry most demographic, political, economic and symbolic weight. But an argument can certainly be made for attention to economically important cities (e.g. the port towns of Berbera in Somaliland, Bossasso in Puntland or Buchanan in Liberia) and/or cities that are very important centres for a particular sub-region of a country e.g. Batticaloa in east Sri Lanka or Quetta in Pakistani Baluchistan.)
- The question whether (certain) cities 'recover' more quickly post-conflict is an interesting one. The case of Bissau however shows that this is not automatically 'guaranteed'. Key factors are the state of the overall economy, including the rural economy (stagnation and decline there will only send hordes of economic migrants to the city), and the overall budgetary resources of the national authorities – and how these are allocated.

b. Policy and ethnography?

- Case studies provide much ethnographic details, much of which does not seem directly relevant to broader and more general policy development. This may be true at the most general level of policy making. But when it comes to policy implementation, in a particular context, the ethnographic detail will reassert itself.
- In this context, further policy reflection would benefit from more specific examples of city-level initiatives to improve human security, that seem to have worked – and others that seem to have failed. What worked and why – under what conditions was it possible to succeed? An inventory of innovative and sometimes successful approaches to improve human security in towns and cities would be a useful creative resource. City-to-city exchanges would seem particularly relevant also from this perspective.
- Cities also have a history: to understand the current situation in a city it is often helpful to introduce a more historical analysis and to see how a city may have declined and lost much in terms of human security. While this may not immediately offer guidance on how to reverse a negative trend, it will provide insights (and can provide visions) that are relevant.
- An ethnographic perspective will also provide a necessary caution against too quick focus on 'slums' and violent youth gangs – as if these are a or the major issue in most large cities and as if they would have very similar dynamics.

c. "Kids, guns and gangs".

- The Guatemala City case is only illustrative of a problem that exists in many other big cities especially on the American continent (and that may be spreading to smaller cities) – and of the points made earlier.
- The Bujumbura and Somali town case studies suggest that such a situation might develop also there – certain contributing factors are definitely present. The policy question here would be how to prevent such development from occurring: what can Somalis and Burundians do?
- Some of the case studies draw attention to youth movements and youth associations for positive purposes. Highlighting these next to violent youth

groups, will avoid creating an image of 'youth as a threat', and generate ideas for positive alternatives and transformation.

- While the association of young people with guns is indeed concerning, many adults and even elderly people may also (legally or not) possess small arms. The 'guns' issue should not be limited to 'youth' and disconnected from the wider 'gun-control' question.

d. 'Urban' and 'ethnic' identities.

- Caution is also required with regard to too easy recourse to 'identity' theories. While 'identity-politics' has become a prominent strategy in many places, taking it at face value would only help to further reduce and reify 'identities'. Nor should it be assumed that everyone living in a city has or develops an 'urban' identity, with certain characteristics ascribed to this (more tolerant, democratic etc. because of the inevitable encounter and co-existence with greater diversity in urban settings etc.). The observation that many conflict-entrepreneurs seem to have thoroughly urban backgrounds and urban bases indicates that urban centres are also scenes for intense power struggles within which exclusionary and repressive tactics may well be used.

e. 'Absent' actors?

- Noticeable for their relative or total absence from the case studies, certainly as actors that can contribute to increased human security, are political parties, local administrations and international peace support operations. Partially this may be due to an omission in the analysis – but it still remains significant that these entities do not immediately come to mind for local / national actors. It certainly raises a cautionary note about too high or too early expectations about what such entities can practically do to support human security improvements.

f. Additional attention points.

Finally the case studies draw attention to some specific issues, the relevance of which will vary from situation to situation:

- Conflict and high criminality lead not only the privatization but also the militarization of security – the authoritarian reflex regarding public security provision is equally problematic as its privatization;
- If the poor find a form of 'security' in gang-formation, and the wealthy from moving into 'gated enclaves', it are the less wealthy middle classes that may remain most vulnerable.
- DDR programmes focus on recognized ex-combatants. Although there is awareness of the possibility that weapons are withheld and that demobilised combatants may turn to crime, the challenge of recovering weapons from the population at large may be in need of more policy attention.
- Cities that have experienced much forced displacement, both in and out of the city, are likely to face serious property disputes when the situation stabilizes. This needs to be anticipated and managed pro-actively.
- The role(s) of the diaspora, economically and/or politically but perhaps also as 'role models', in the dynamics of cities and of countries deserves attention. The absence of a significant diaspora influence may also be a disadvantage (e.g. little to no remittances for the people in Bissau and Bujumbura).
- Independent and responsible local radio stations can play a very positive and influential role.

- The potential of the local and national private sector to contribute to greater human security may be relatively neglected by the international community – but the private sector should not be taken as a homogeneous group.

Koenraad Van Brabant is the author of this summary report. Mathias Deshusses as a consultant to Interpeace contributed significantly to the research exercise. Credit for the insights in some of the dynamics of each urban center has to go to the respective interlocutors: the Centre d'Alerte et de Prévention de Conflits (CENAP) in Bujumbura, the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa (INEP) in Bissau, the Puntland Development Research Centre or PDRC (Galcayo), the Centre for Research and Dialogue (CRD) in Mogadisho, the Academy for Peace and Development or APD (Burao). The Guatemala City case study was coordinated by Interpeace Guatemala but also drew on insights of several Guatemalan civil society organizations.

Interpeace gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Canadian Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the active interest and support of its Human Security Policy Division.

Networks on Human Security and Human Security and Cities.

Canadian Consortium on Human Security (www.humansecurity.info), which also brings out a bulletin (www.humansecuritybulletin.info). The August 2006 issue will be devoted to Human Security and Cities. Its website also hosts a searchable on-line database (www.humansecuritygateway.info).

The Canadian Consortium on Human Security (CCHS) is a bilingual academic-based network promoting policy-relevant research on human security. Its core missions are to facilitate the exchange of information and analysis on human security issues, and to help build a human security community in Canada and internationally. CCHS is funded by the Human Security Program of Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC).

Key activities of CCHS:

- Publishes the **Human Security Bulletin**—a bilingual online publication highlighting policy-relevant human security research and activities;
- Directs and administers an annual **Human Security Fellowship Programme**;
- Provides **funding** for human security-related conferences, seminars, and workshops based in Canada;
- Co-organizes the **Annual Human Security and Peacebuilding Consultations**;
- Co-organizes the **Canada-Norway Peace Prize Symposium** in collaboration with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ottawa;
- Maintains the **Human Security Gateway** in collaboration with the **Human Security Centre**. The Gateway is a fully-searchable research and information database devoted to human security issues, including a bibliographic database, teaching resources, and a directory of human security-oriented institutions.

A new website (French and English) has recently been created dedicated to the issue of human security and cities (www.humansecurity-cities.org).

City-to-City Diplomacy.

United Cities and Local Governments (www.cities-localgovernments.org), is a new world organization headquartered in Barcelona, that has some 1000 cities as direct members and well as more than 100 'local government associations. It seeks to develop and promote the interests of democratic local government. (website in English, French, Spanish) The UCLG has a number of working groups, among them 'local finance', 'social inclusion and participatory democracy' and 'city diplomacy'. The secretary of the latter committee is the Dutchman Peter Knip (peter.knip@vng.nl) based in The Hague.

United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA) had its founding congress in 2004, and is connected to United Cities and Local Governments.

Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten / Association of Netherlands Municipalities, notably its international programme VNG-International (www.vng-international.nl/docs.bpwebsite.asp), actively involved in supporting local government e.g. in Israeli and the Palestinian territories, Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, Colombia and Iraq

Federation of Canadian Municipalities (www.fcm.ca) which also operates international city-to-city partnerships through its International Centre for Municipal Development (www.icmd-cidm.ca). Its on-line resource centre has the publication by K. Bush on "Building Capacity for Peace and Unity: the role of local government in peacebuilding" as well as a manual for Local Government Participatory Practices.

The 'Municipal Alliance for Peace', an Israeli-Palestinian initiative, started in 2004 to promote peace through activities at the local level.

The 'Belfast-Jerusalem Civil Society Partnership' is hosted by the University of Ulster and involves INCORE: it is a project of exchange between people working in 'divided cities'.

Local governance and democracy.

UNITAR's Decentralised Cooperation Programme (www.dcp.unitar.org) does not just look at cities and municipalities but also at districts, provinces, departments etc. UNITAR has set up some regional training centres.

The World Bank has set up its Knowledge Networks Agency for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in Marseille. One of its focus areas is 'urban management'.

UN Habitat (HQ in Nairobi) evidently works a lot with local administrations and with an urban lens (our Somali partners have done work with and for them in the Somali regions).

International IDEA has developed its 'Democracy at the Local Level: Handbook on participation, representation, conflict management and governance' and can support local authorities in conducting their own 'local democracy assessment'. The experiences in 4 cities in Africa were documented in "Democracy at the Local Level in East and Southern Africa: profiles in governance. A policy summary." (one of the case studies was Nairobi). The methodology is described in the 'local democracy assessment guide' (see www.idea.int/dll/index.cfm where all 3 publications can be downloaded).