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Global Hotspots of Violence: Intervention and Prevention in the Top 20 most Violent Countries

Global Violence Reduction Conference 2014

For the first time, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Cambridge University brought together 150 world-leading scientists to set out a roadmap for reducing violence across the world. They are optimistic that violence can be halved within the next 30 years, if governments, international organizations, researchers and non-governmental organizations do the right things. International support is growing. The UN's proposed post-2015 development agenda in its draft form includes the goals of halving violent death rates and ending abuse, exploitation, and violence against children everywhere. Experts are optimistic, but agree that a major focus needs to be on learning lessons from the hot spots of violence across the globe: from the favelas of Brazil to the townships of South Africa, and the conflict zones in Asia, Latin America and Africa. .

Professor Susanne Karstedt took up this challenge and presented her research on the global hot spots of violence, based on a unique data set, which combines types of organised and non-organised violence for 134 countries since 1976.

In global hot spots of violence, a multitude of actors engage in violence: state actors, non-state actors like militias, rebel groups, or terrorist groups, and finally cartels, gangs, and organized crime groups.

Victims include the victims of torture and repression, civilian and military casualties of civil and other wars, of war crimes and genocide, of imposed policies of famine as well as of other crimes against humanity, and victims of organized and collective sexual violence in armed conflicts, as well as the victims of these crimes in refugee camps and under conditions of displacement.

These are exactly the “complex emergencies” that the WHO has identified in its 2002 “World Report on Violence and Health” within the context of collective violence.

Professor Karstedt's research shows that global hot spots are mobile: they migrated from Asia in the 1950s and 1960s to Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, to Africa in the 1990s and 2000s. However, a large proportion of countries that were among the 20 most violent countries remained in this group across three decades. Over the past decades these countries have been most at risk of mass atrocities.

Table 1: Violent Societies Index: Top 20 Countries (2007-2012)

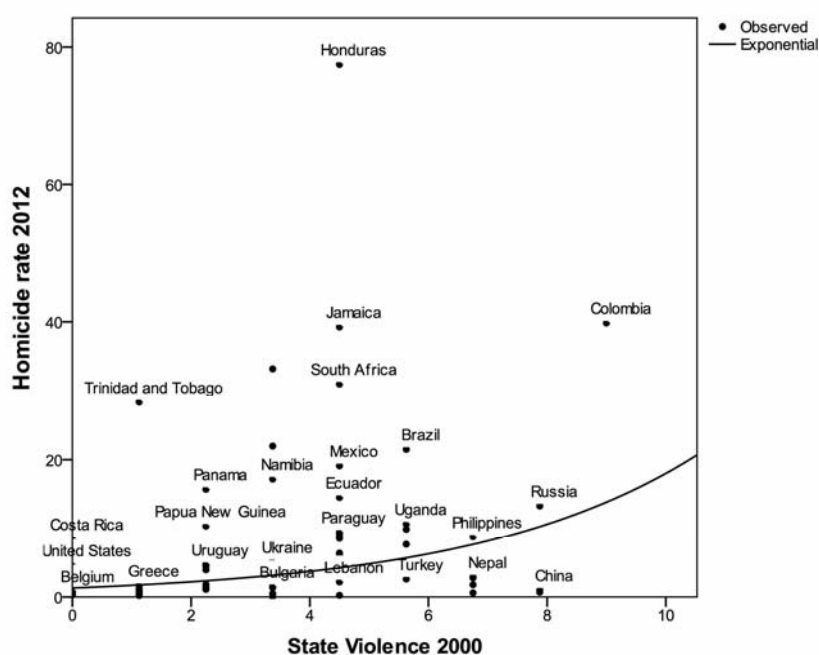
Rank	Country	VSI	Rank	Country	VSI
1	Pakistan*	16.1	11	Syria*	9.6
2	Colombia	14.8	12	Brazil	9.6
3	Honduras	13.3	13	South Africa*	9.5
4	Jamaica	12.6	14	Thailand	9.5
5	India*	12.3	15	Guatemala*	9.1
6	El Salvador*	11.4	16	Yemen*	9.1
7	Russia*	11.1	17	Mexico	8.7
8	Philippines*	10.3	18	Dominican Republic	8.6
9	Venezuela	10.3	19	Uganda*	8.1
10	Israel*	10.2	20	China*	7.6

Note: * previous mass atrocities

She demonstrates that the top 20 global hot spots account for 77% of all homicides, and 98% of all one-sided state violence worldwide. Interpersonal violence – homicides - and collective violence as e.g. state and conflict violence are closely linked in most global regions. Across the globe violence by the state – forced disappearances, torture, extralegal killings – impacts on violence generally, and increases the number of homicides considerably, even long-term across a decade.

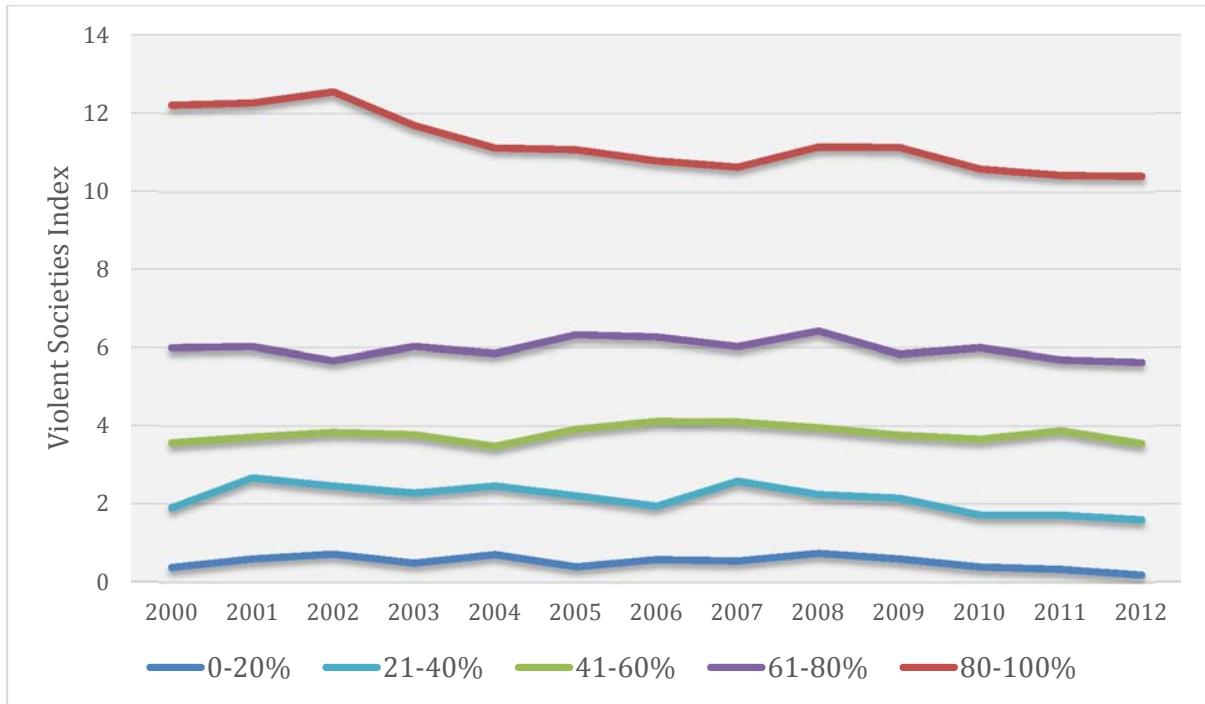
Violence by the state thus emerges as the most lethal force as it generates and spreads violence across societies.

Figure 1: Organized and interpersonal violence: State violence (2000) and homicide (2012) in 101 countries



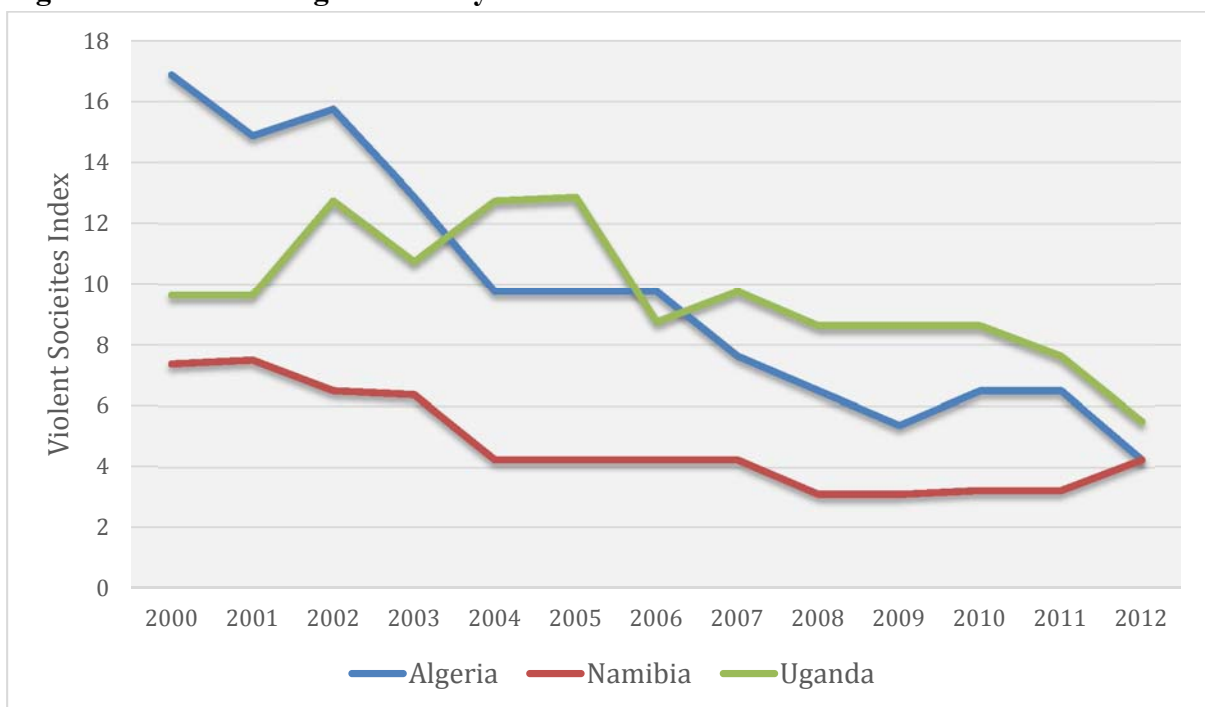
The good news: Between 2000 and 2012, violence was reduced most visibly in the group of the top 20 most violent countries.

Figure 2: Trend in Violence 2000 – 2012: From top 20 to bottom 20



A number of countries including Colombia and Ecuador, Algeria and Uganda, or Nepal and Indonesia reduced their violence levels by half within this time span.

Figure 3: Reducing violence by 50%: Africa



“There is a clear need to tackle violence in hot spots, but my research shows, that it is possible to reduce violence by half even in extremely violent societies”, says Professor Susanne Karstedt. Her main advice for hot spots is to target violent acts and violent actors directly rather than addressing root causes. Her principles for violence reduction in hot spots include:

- migrate successful programmes between different levels and contexts as between gangs in neighbourhoods and factions in civil war; e.g. peace building and firearm reduction programmes;
- target potential perpetrators as part of networks and other organizations, or gangs;
- identify protective factors and develop programmes for victims ;
- monitor state organized actors, and contribute to existing programmes of oversight, monitoring and auditing the use of force by organized state and government actors.

Global Hotspots of Violence: How to Focus Intervention and Prevention

Susanne Karstedt,
Global Violence Reduction Conference 2014
Cambridge, 17 – 19 September 2014
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Identifying global hot spots of violence

- Battle deaths resulting from state-based and intra-state conflicts where government forces are one party
- Illegal violence by police forces and other security forces like killings, disappearances, torture, political imprisonment
- One-sided violence (deaths) against civilians by state and non-state actors, which includes genocide, mass atrocities, but also terrorism
- Targeted and organised violence by non-state actors if they reach a certain threshold (25 deaths within a year)

Global hot spots of violence ...

- ... are mobile: they migrated from Asia in the 1950s and 1960 to Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, to Africa in the 1990s and 2000s.
- ... are nonetheless remarkably stable and state-dependent: A large proportion of countries that were among the 20 most violent countries remained in this group across three decades from 1980 to 2010.
- ... provide the conditions for mass atrocity crimes, mainly committed by organized actors. A large proportion of countries in this group experienced mass atrocity crimes.

The Violent Societies Index

- Interpersonal violence: homicide rate
- State violence: Political Terror Scale incorporates state-sanctioned killings, forced disappearances, torture, political imprisonment.
- Terrorist attacks (incidents): one-sided violence by non-state actors.
- Battle deaths in state-based internal armed conflicts measures violence by armed groups. This count is solely based on military action

Constructing the VSI

- From available data bases 1976 – 2012
- contextualised within overall levels of violence
- standardised to the highest and lowest country values in each year
- converted into scales ranging from 0 – 9

VSI 2000 – 2012

- 101 countries
- Global regions
 - Africa: 11
 - Americas 25
 - Asia/ Oceania 32
 - Europe 33
- World population:
 - 85%

VSI: Top 20 Countries (2000-2006)

(* previous mass atrocity)

Rank	Country	VSI	Rank	Country	VSI
1	Colombia	23.3	11	Uganda*	11.0
2	Russia*	15.1	12	Brazil	10.7
3	India*	13.6	13	Honduras	10.5
4	Israel*	13.0	14	Indonesia*	9.6
5	Nepal*	12.8	15	Pakistan*	9.3
6	Algeria*	12.8	16	Venezuela	9.0
7	El Salvador*	11.7	17	Guatemala*	8.8
8	Jamaica	11.3	18	Haiti	8.3
9	South Africa*	11.2	19	China*	7.9
10	Philippines*	11.1	20	Thailand	7.8

VSI: Top 20 Countries (2007-2012)

(* previous mass atrocity)

Rank	Country	VSI	Rank	Country	VSI
1	Pakistan*	16.1	11	Syria*	9.6
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9	Venezuela	10.3	19	Uganda*	8.1
10	Israel*	10.2	20	China*	7.6

VSI: Top 20 Countries (2007-2012) Failed State Index (highest 20%)

Rank	Country	VSI	Rank	Country	VSI
1	Pakistan*	16.1	11	Syria*	9.6
2	Colombia	14.8	12	Brazil	9.6
3	Honduras	13.3	13	South Africa*	9.5
4	Jamaica	12.6	14	Thailand	9.5
5	India*	12.3	15	Guatemala*	9.1
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9	Venezuela	10.3	19	Uganda*	8.1
10	Israel*	10.2	20	China*	7.6

VSI Top 20 countries (2000-2006) Concentration of Victims and Violence

Battle-related death		Homicide		One-sided violence	
Sum	BD/Pop	Sum	Hom/Pop	Sum	OSV/Pop
50221		1652014.63		3680	
93.1%	143.2%	77.1%	118.6%	98.1%	150.9%

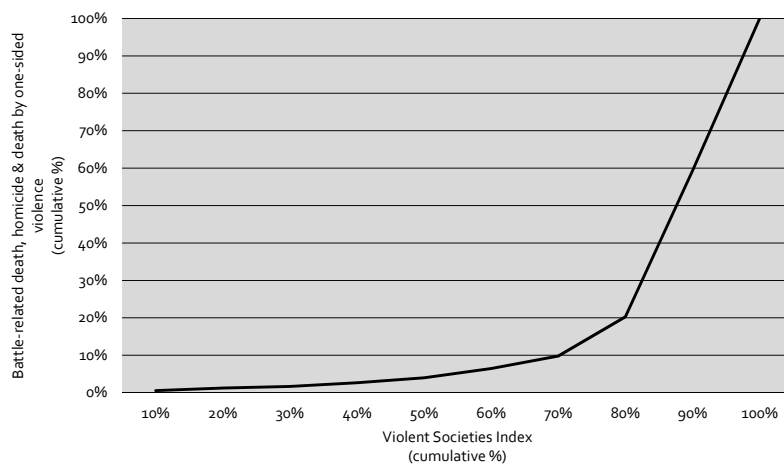
Terrorist attacks		Population	VSI
Sum	TA/Pop	Sum	Sum
5250		3466143905	228.7
79.7%	122.7%	65.0%	47.3%

VSI Top 20 countries (2007-2012) Concentration of Victims and Violence

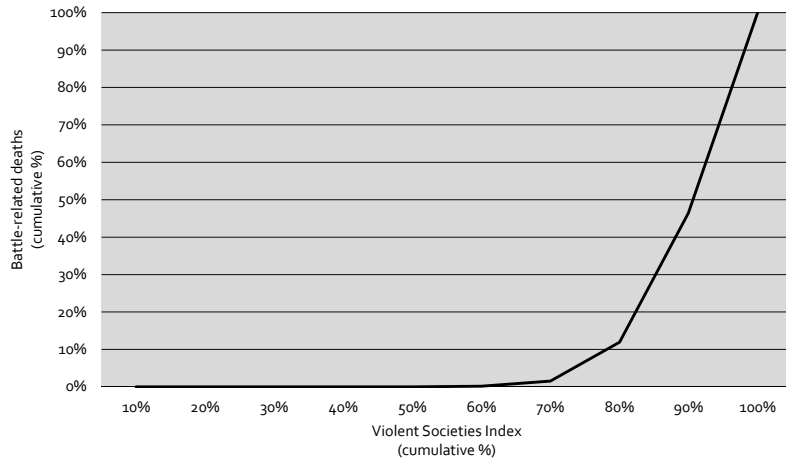
Battle-related death		Homicide		One-sided violence	
Sum	BD/Pop	Sum	Hom/Pop	Sum	OSV/Pop
52886		1341392.0		3454	
88.1%	140.5%	79.4%	126.7%	92.3%	147.3%

Terrorist attacks		Population	VSI
Sum	TA/Pop	Sum	Sum
11392		3567636122	211.6
84.8%	135.4%	62.7%	46.1%

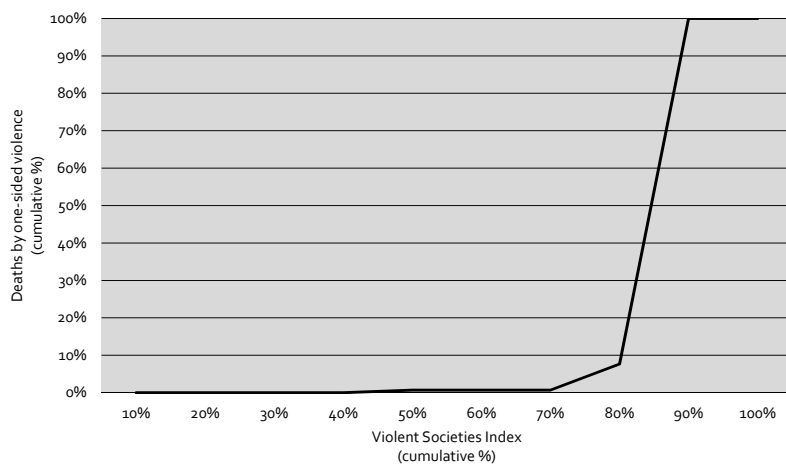
Violent Societies Index(2007-2012) Distribution of victims of conflict, homicide, one-sided violence



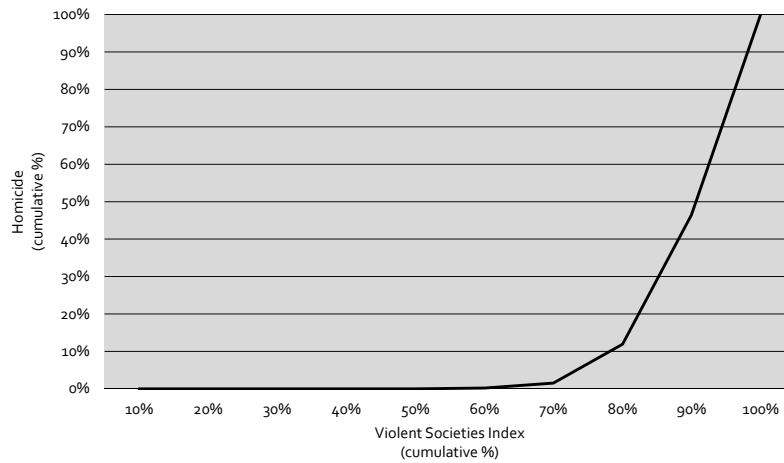
Violent Societies Index(2007-2012) Distribution of victims of conflict



Violent Societies Index(2007-2012) Distribution of victims of one-sided violence



Violent Societies Index(2007-2012) Distribution of victims of homicide



Violent Societies Index 2000 and 2010: Contexts of violence (101 countries)

Correlation 2000

	Battle-related death rate	Homicide Rate
Homicide rate	0.26**	
State violence	0.54***	0.41***

Correlation 2010

	Battle-related death rate	Homicide rate
Homicide rate	0.03 ^{ns}	
State violence	0.37***	0.32**

Level of significance: * < 0.05, ** < 0.01, *** < 0.001, ns = not significant

Violent Societies Index 2000 and 2010: Contexts of violence (Africa)

Correlation 2000

	Battle-related death rate	Homicide rate
Homicide rate	-0.18 ^{ns}	
State violence	0.83 ^{**}	-0.03 ^{ns}

Correlation 2010

	Battle-related death rate	Homicide rate
Homicide rate	-0.18 ^{ns}	
State violence	0.16 ^{ns}	-0.16 ^{ns}

Level of significance: * < 0.05, ** < 0.01, *** < 0.001, ns = not significant

Violent Societies Index 2000 and 2010: Contexts of violence (Americas)

Correlation 2000

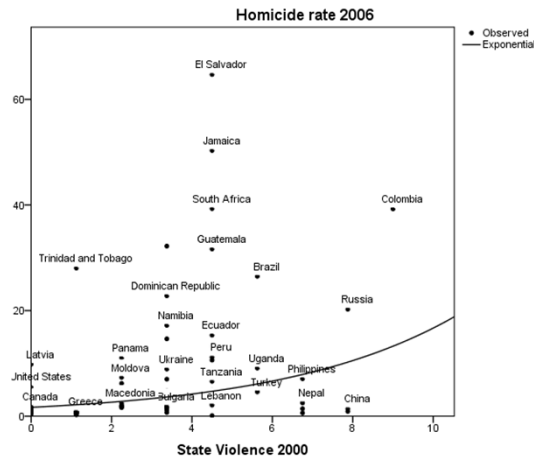
	Battle-related death rate	Homicide rate
Homicide rate	0.61 ^{**}	
State violence	0.57 ^{***}	0.67 ^{***}

Correlation 2010

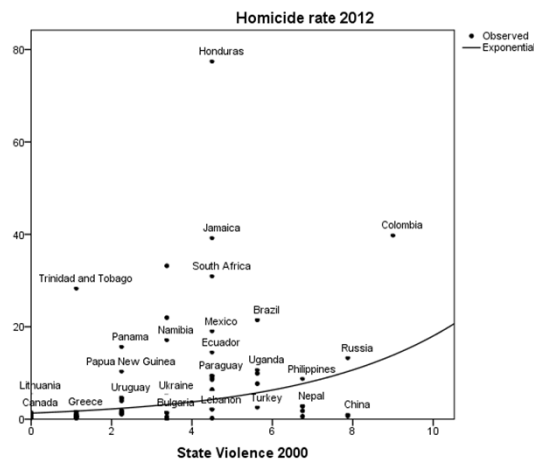
	Battle-related death rate	Homicide rate
Homicide rate	0.16 ^{ns}	
State violence	0.42 [*]	0.48 [*]

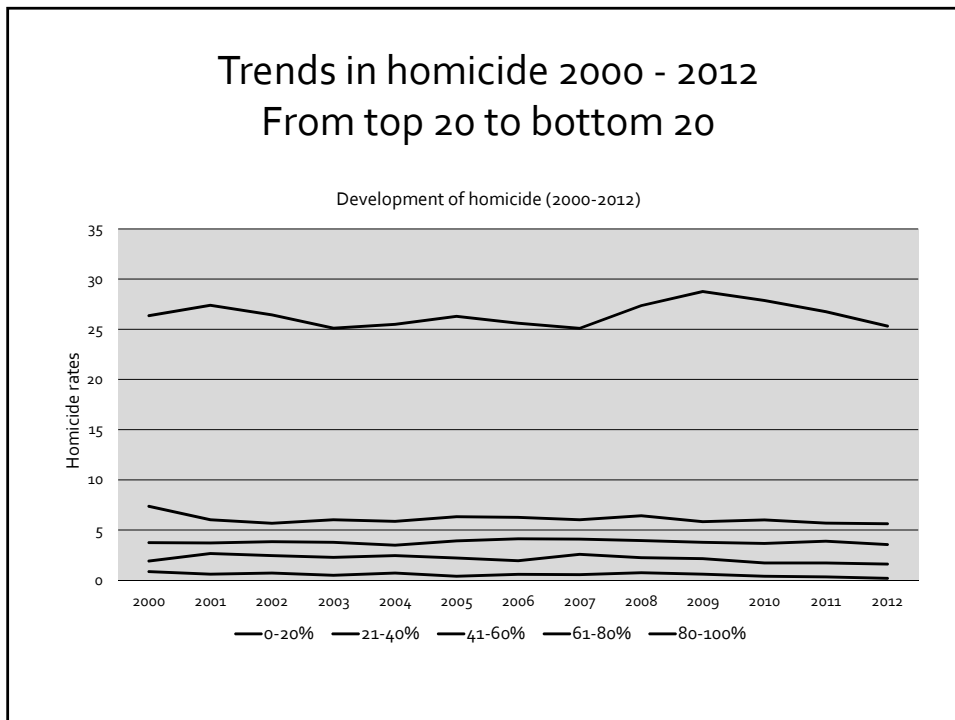
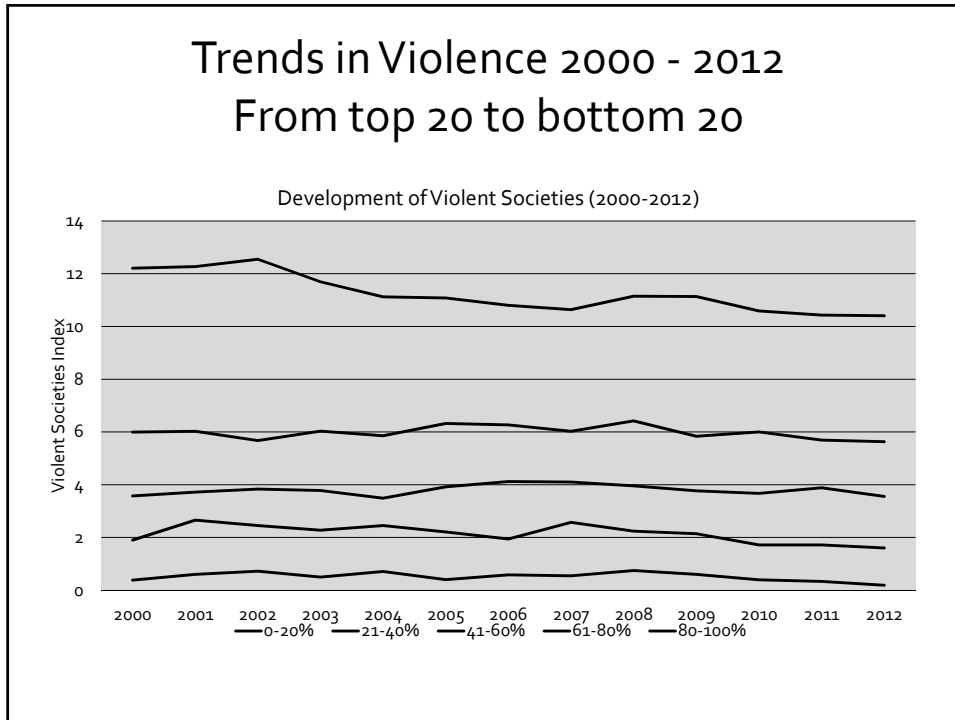
Level of significance: * < 0.05, ** < 0.01, *** < 0.001, ns = not significant

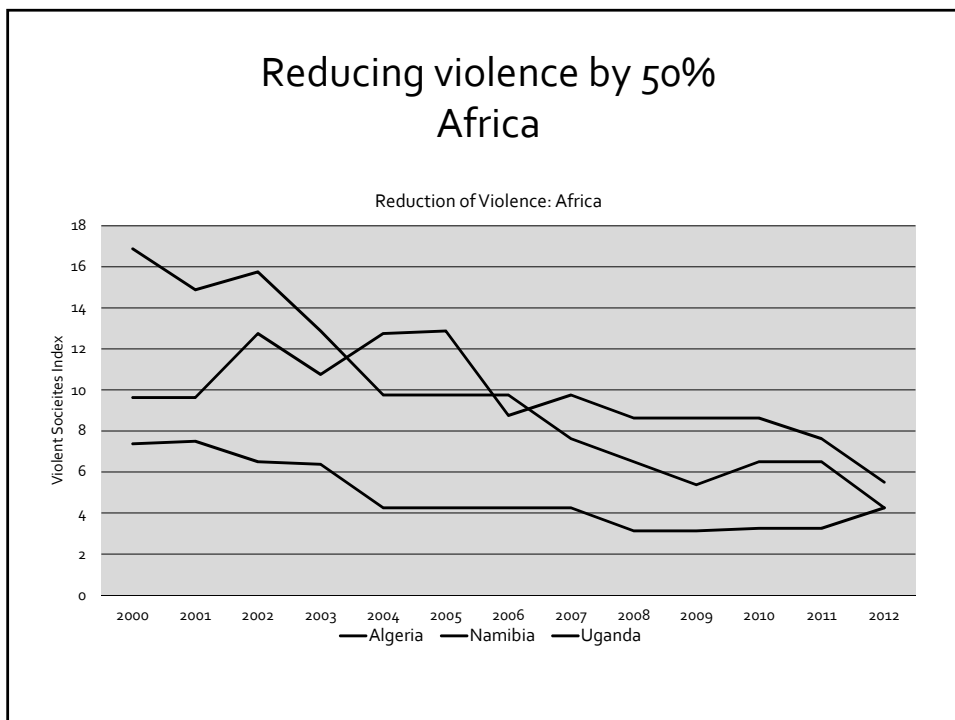
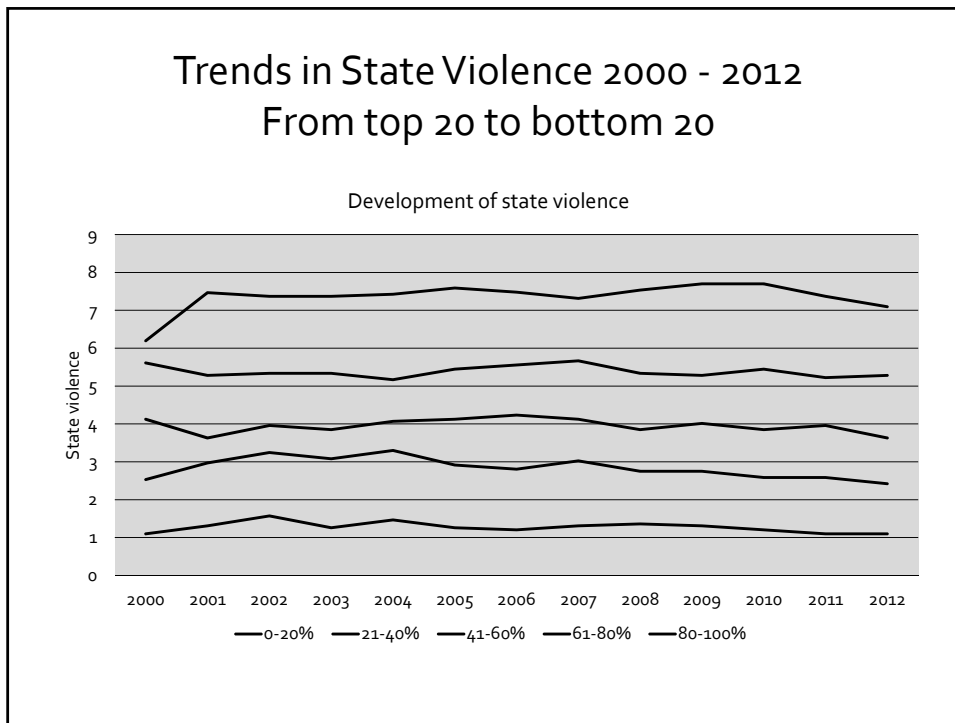
Organized and interpersonal violence State violence (2000) and homicide (2006) 101 countries

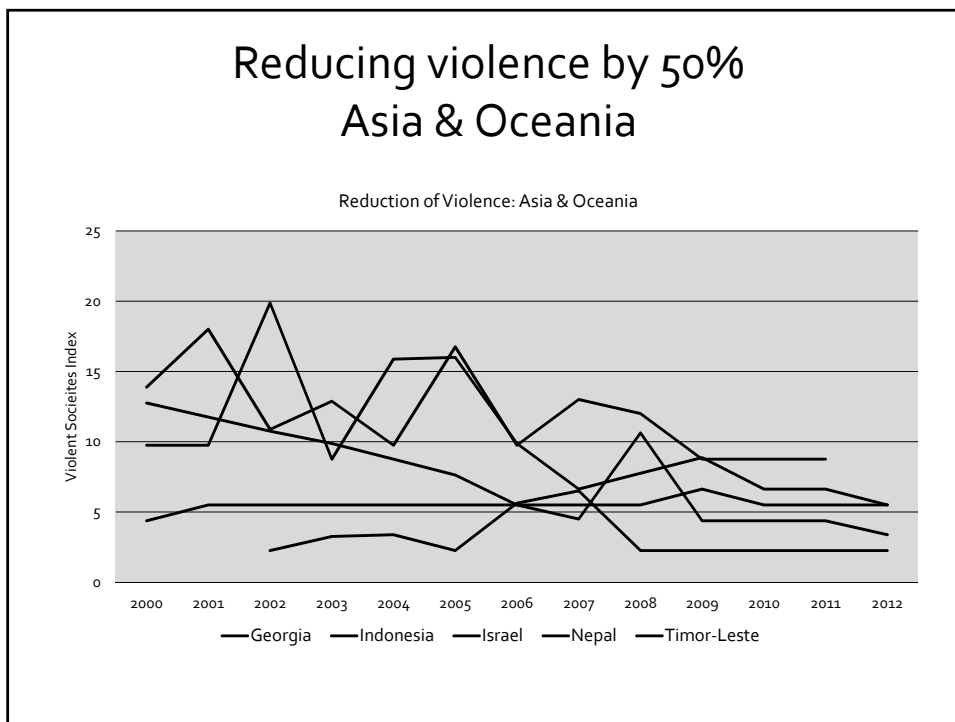
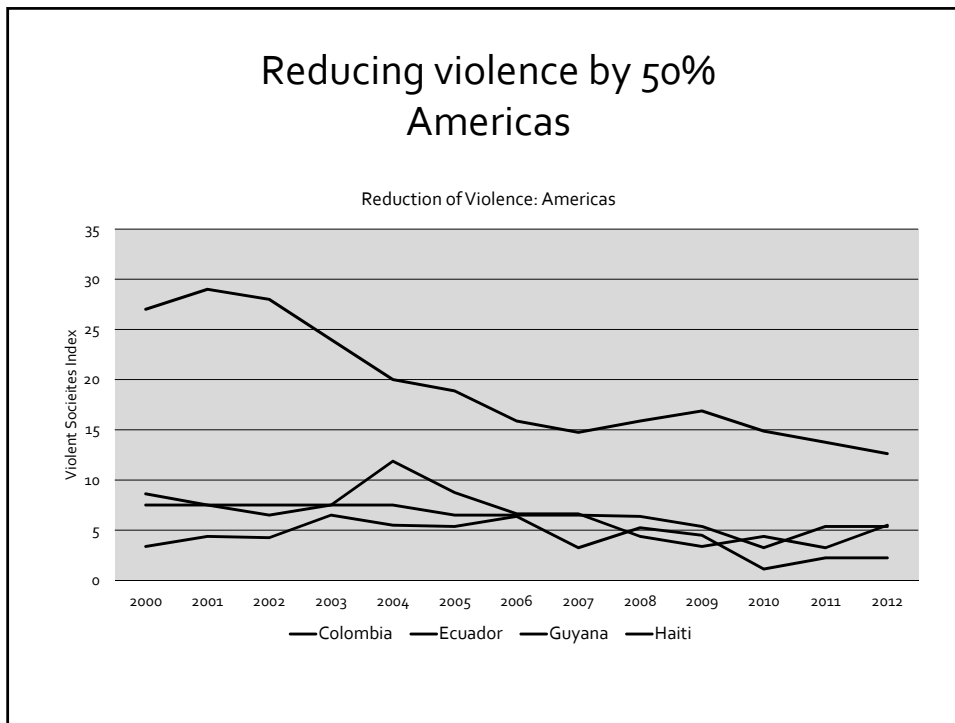


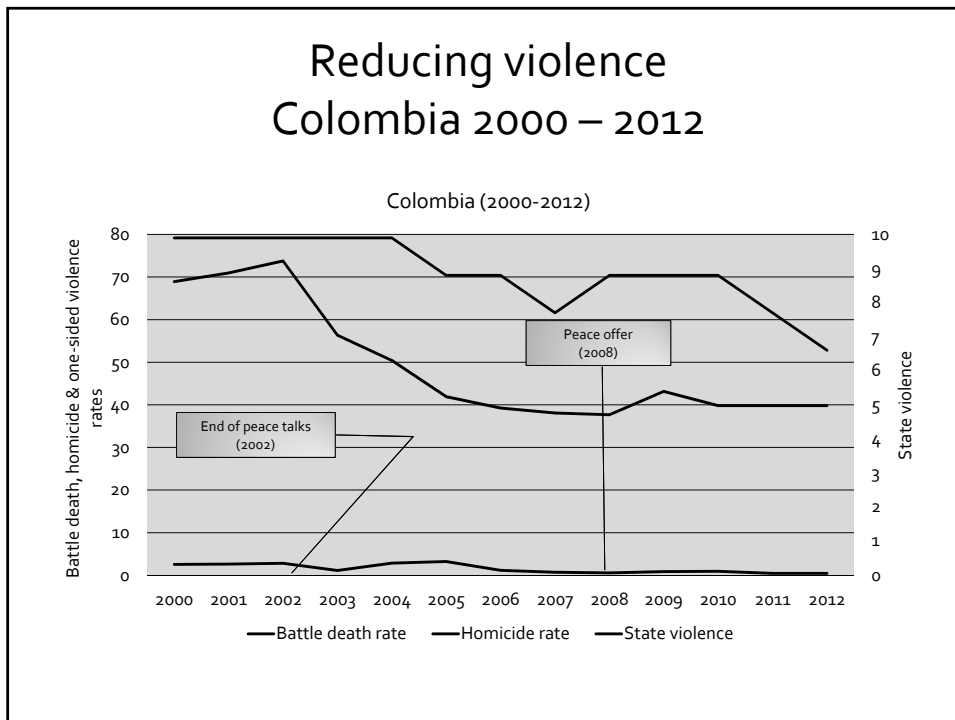
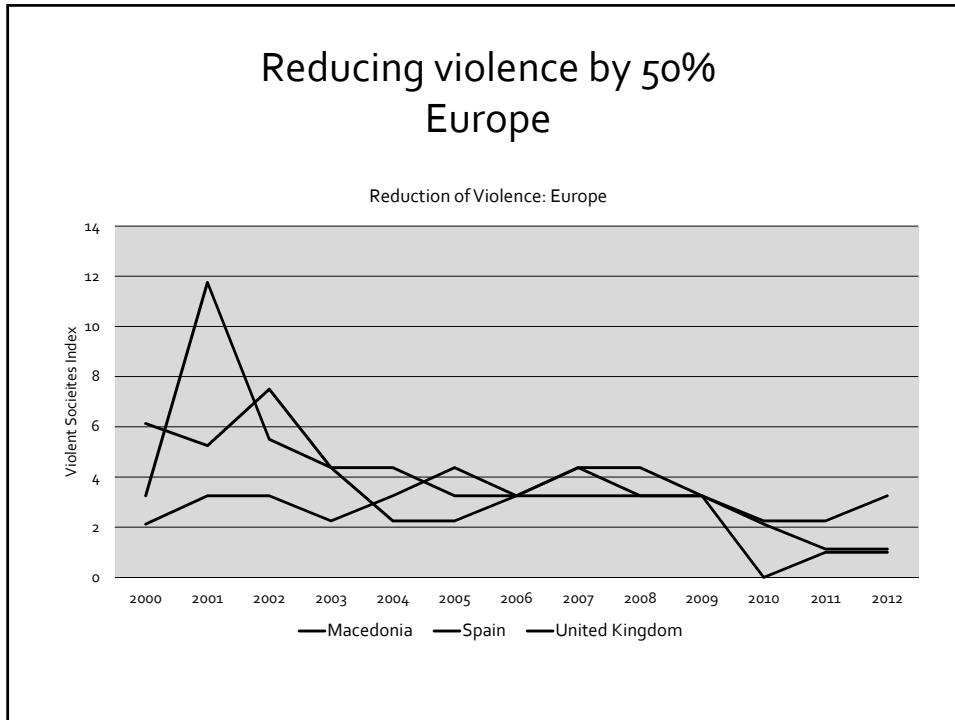
Organized and interpersonal violence State violence (2000) and homicide (2012) 101 countries







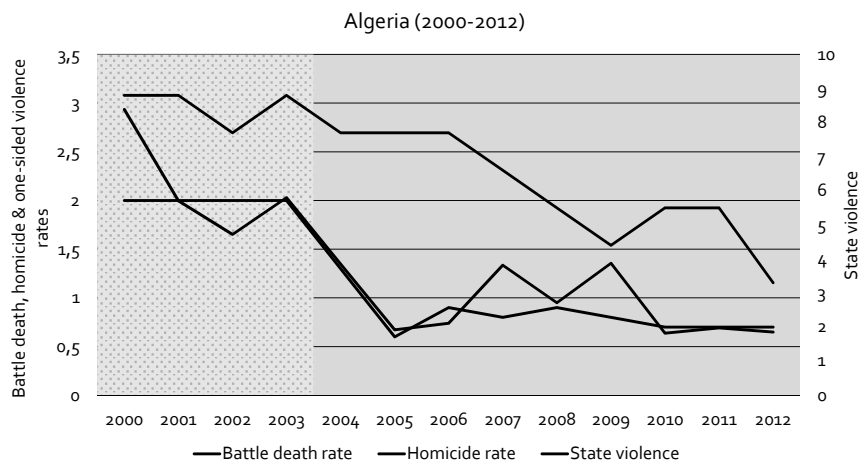




Institutional change 2000 – 2012 Colombia

	Polity	Failed State Index	Security apparatus	Rule of Law
2000	7			19.1
2005	7	95	5.4	31.6
2010	7	88.2	7.7	44.6
	Control of Corruption	Trust in police (%)	Trust in justice (%)	
2000	41	41.9	38.5	
2005	52	49.8	36.9	
2010	43	48	36.5	

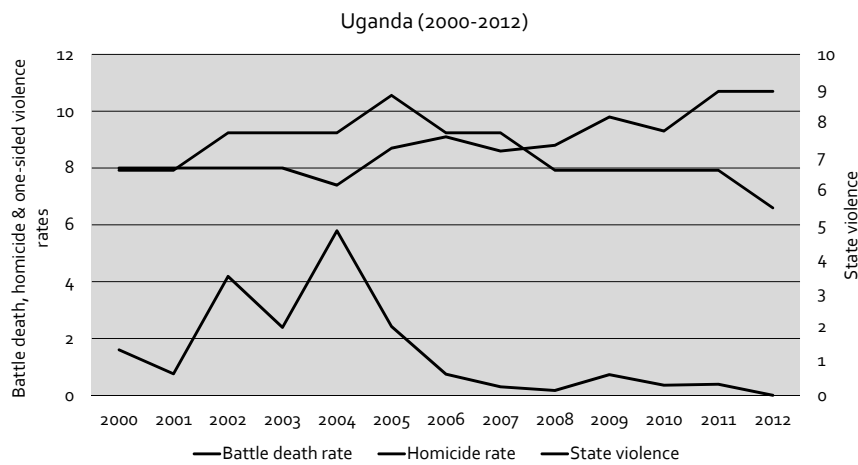
Reducing violence Algeria 2000 – 2012



Institutional change 2000 – 2012 Algeria

	Polity	Failed State Index	Security apparatus	Rule of Law
2000	-3			12.4
2005	2	81.2	8	30.6
2010	2	81.3	7.5	27
	Control of Corruption	Trust in police (%)	Trust in justice (%)	
2000	14	66.6		
2005	41	51.4	40	
2010	37	48.2	43.8	

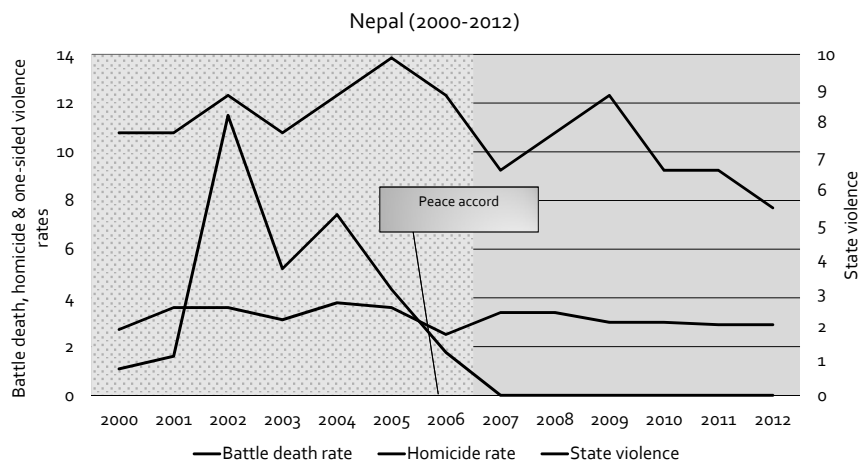
Reducing violence Uganda 2000 – 2012



Institutional change 2000 – 2012 Uganda

	Polity	Failed State Index	Security apparatus	Rule of Law
2000	-4			27
2005	-1	91.7	8	35
2010	-1	97.5	8.7	43
	Control of Corruption	Trust in police (%)	Trust in justice (%)	
2000	21	54.4	68.1	
2005	21	63.5	75.3	
2010	19	39	52.3	

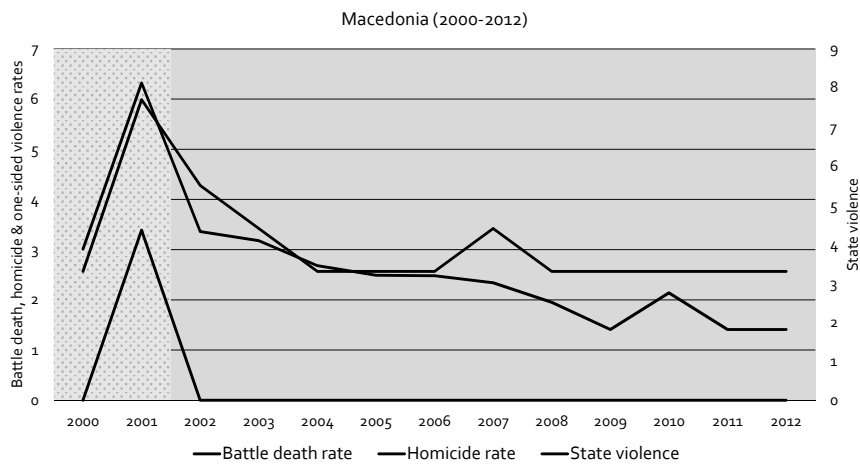
Reducing violence Nepal 2000 – 2012



Institutional change 2000 – 2012 Nepal

	Polity	Failed State Index	Security apparatus	Rule of Law
2000	6			42.1
2005	-6	89	7.6	23.9
2010	6	95.4	7.7	16.1
	Control of Corruption	Trust in police (%)	Trust in justice (%)	
2000	33			
2005	33			
2010	31			

Reducing violence Macedonia 2000 – 2012



Institutional change 2000 – 2012 Macedonia

	Polity	Failed State Index	Security apparatus	Rule of Law
2000	6			31.6
2005	9			41.6
2010	9	72.7	5.6	46.9
	Control of Corruption	Trust in police (%)	Trust in justice (%)	
2000	30	51	24.4	
2005	40			
2010	57	58.8	37.7	

Reducing violence in global hot spots of violence Three strategies

Strategie 1:

Direct intervention into violence (and conflict)

- “migrating” successful programmes between different levels and contexts as between gangs in neighbourhoods and factions in civil war; or peace building programmes and firearm reduction programmes;
- targeting potential perpetrators as part of networks and other collectivities, as e.g. organizations;
- programmes targeting violent actors can be combined with successful interventions to protect potential victims from violence

Reducing violence in global hot spots of violence Three strategies

Strategie 2:

State violence as a main driver/ correlate of other types of violence needs to be addressed and targeted

- developing programmes of monitoring state organized actors, and contributing to existing programmes of oversight, monitoring and auditing the use of force by organized state and government actors (e.g. Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, Istanbul Protocol)

Reducing violence in global hot spots of violence Three strategies

Strategie 3:

Harm Reduction and victim protection is equally important

- move from single-focus programmes of violence **reduction for perpetrators** towards multi-focus programmes that enhance **protective factors** among victims e.g. among displaced populations, in refugee camps.

I am grateful to Michael Koch, University of Bielefeld for data collection, analyses and graphics.

Countries

Africa		
Algeria	Mauritius	South Africa
Egypt	Morocco	Tanzania
Kenya	Mozambique	Uganda
Malawi	Namibia	
Americas		
Argentina	Cuba	Haiti
Brazil	Dominican Republic	Honduras
Canada	Ecuador	Jamaica
Chile	El Salvador	Mexico
Colombia	Guatemala	Nicaragua
Costa Rica	Guyana	Panama

Countries

Americas		
Paraguay	Trinidad and Tobago	Venezuela
Peru	United States	
Suriname	Uruguay	
Asia & Oceania		
Armenia	Cyprus	Korea, South
Australia	Georgia	Kuwait
Azerbaijan	India	Kyrgyzstan
Bahrain	Indonesia	Lebanon
Bangladesh	Israel	Nepal
Bhutan	Japan	New Zealand
China	Kazakhstan	Pakistan

Countries

Asia & Oceania		
Papua New Guinea	Syria	Timor-Leste
Philippines	Taiwan	Turkey
Qatar	Tajikistan	Yemen
Singapore	Thailand	
Europe		
Albania	Czech Republic	Greece
Austria	Denmark	Hungary
Belarus	Estonia	Ireland
Belgium	Finland	Italy
Bulgaria	France	Latvia
Croatia	Germany	Lithuania

Countries

Europe		
Macedonia	Portugal	Spain
Moldova	Romania	Sweden
Netherlands	Russia	Switzerland
Norway	Slovakia	Ukraine
Poland	Slovenia	United Kingdom