BEYOND THE BATTLEFIELDS:

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO HALVING GLOBAL VIOLENCE IN OUR HOMES, STREETS, AND COMMUNITIES

FLAGSHIP REPORT OF THE HALVING GLOBAL VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

PATHFINDERS FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Center on International Cooperation

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FOREWORD

The United Nations (UN) 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda recognizes that peace and development are intrinsically linked. It further acknowledges that attaining peace requires we significantly "reduce all forms of violence." This means addressing not only the violence that appears in the headlines but the often-overlooked violence found in the home and on the streets.

Violence has existed throughout human history but is not inevitable. It can indeed be reduced, but the path to do so is not always clear. The costs of violence, both human and economic, are staggering but often poorly understood. This report is committed to shedding light on these fundamental challenges. It results from a collective effort spanning several years by officials, experts, and activists committed to reducing violence in all its insidious manifestations.

Through the Halving Global Violence Task Force, we have worked together to show that significant violence reductions can be achieved with sufficient political will and investment in evidence-based approaches. This report represents the efforts of those committed to reducing violence by better understanding **how** and **where** it manifests, its **costs**, and the **most effective ways** to reduce and prevent violence.

We call on all countries and champions from across all sectors to join us in creating a more peaceful world by addressing violence in all its forms. Together, we can show that halving global violence is not simply a talking point but an achievable goal to make a reality.

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THE HALVING GLOBAL VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

The Halving Global Violence (HGV) Task Force is an initiative of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies—a multistakeholder partnership that brings together United Nations (UN) member states, international organizations, and civil society to accelerate delivery of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets for peace, justice, and inclusion.

H.E. Patricia Danzi
Director-General, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

H.E. Irène Esambo Diata
Minister for People with Disabilities and other Vulnerable People, Democratic Republic of Congo

H.E. Mohamed Chambas
High Representative to the Silencing the Guns Initiative, African Union

H.E. Lindiwe Daphne Zulu
Minister of Social Development, South Africa

H.E. Alejandro Solano Ortiz
Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship, Costa Rica

CSO

Dr. Vasu Gounden
Executive Director, ACCORD, South Africa *(representing Civil Society)*

MEMBERS

Asif Saleh; Executive Director, BRAC

Daniel de Torres; Director, Small Arms Survey (former)

Helder da Costa; General Secretary, g7+

Etienne Krug; Director, Department for Social Determinants of Health, World Health Organization

Ghida Anani; Founder and Director, ABAAD–Resource Center for Gender Equality

Hajer Sharief; Co-Founder, Together We Built It

Howard Taylor; Executive Director, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (former)

Ilona Szabó de Carvalho; Director and Co-Founder, Igarapé Institute

Ilwad Elman; Director of Programs and Development, Elman Peace Center

Mark Downes; Director, Small Arms Survey

Najat Maalla M'jid; Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, United Nations

Óscar Escobar; Mayor, Palmira, Colombia (former)

Peter Batchelor; Director Partnerships and Advocacy, Principles for Peace Foundation

Tuesday Reitano; Deputy Director, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime

Robert Muggah; Co-Founder and Research and Innovation Director, Igarapé Institute

Verlaine-Diane Soobroydoo; Gender Adviser, United Nations

ADVISORS

Angela Me; Chief of Research & Trend Analysis, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Bernard Harborne; Country Representative for Timor-Leste, World Bank

Dean Peacock; Director—Countering Militarized Masculinities, Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Flavia Carbonari; Senior International Consultant, World Bank

Jordan Street; Senior Policy and Advocacy Lead, Saferworld

Kessy Ekomo-Soignet; Executive Director, URU/Peace Direct

Laurie Mincieli; Political Affairs Officer, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

Milton Nyamadzawo; Director, Southern Africa, Institute of Economics and Peace

Rachel Kleinfeld; Senior Fellow, Democracy, Conflict and Governance, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Rachel Locke; Director, Violence, Inequality and Power Lab, Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice,University of San Diego

Roberto Dondisch; Distinguished Fellow, Stimson Center

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Swati Mehta, Program Director, Justice for All, Pathfinders; Fernando Marani, Program Director, Inequality & Exclusion, Pathfinders; and Margaret Williams, Associate Director, SDG16+, Pathfinders, joined the internal review team. Inputs and support were provided by other members of CIC: Natalie Briggs, Nathan Edwards, Marta Bautista Forcarda, Karina Gerlach, Léah Guyot, Raquel Jesse, Roshni Menon, Themba Mahleka, Hanny Megally, Céline Monnier, Laura Ospina, and Laura Powers. We deeply appreciate the valuable support of Symphony Chau and Thibault Chareton in editing, finalizing, publicizing, and promoting the report. We also extend our gratitude to Lauren Stackpoole for her assistance with editing.

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Authors of the Chapter 4 Essays

4.1. "Urban Violence:" Bojan Francuz, on behalf of the Peace in Our Cities Network.

4.2. "Local dynamics of organized crime:" Antonio Sampaio, on behalf of the Global Initiative on Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC).

4.3.1. "Armed violence and small arms:" Yulia Yarina, on behalf of Small Arms Survey.

4.3.2. "Tools and instruments to prevent the proliferation and misuse of small arms:" Laurie Mincieli, on behalf of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

4.4. "Violence Against Women:" Luisa Portugal and Farida Nabourema, on behalf of the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC)**.**

4.5. "Violence Against Children:" Luisa Portugal, on behalf of the Pathfinders' Secretariat, with input from the World Health Organization, the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, and the (former) Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence is a universal challenge. Although commonly associated with conflict zones or marginalized sectors of society, violence is present in all regions, and its effects impact people of all demographics. 80 to 90% of all violence happens outside of armed conflicts, and has a direct impact on the daily lives of people around the world. Communities everywhere expect their leaders—local, national, and international—to reduce violence and create conditions for peaceful co-existence. Too often, however, these leaders fail to deliver on the promise of creating peaceful societies.

Violence impacts people in a variety of ways and poses a challenge to development goals in communities worldwide. It is not only an issue of men killing men. For each homicide, there are thousands of instances of assault; up to 1 billion children will experience violence in their lives, and one-third of all women will suffer violence at the hands of an intimate partner. In fact, by some estimates, the share of women who are victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) is higher than the share of the total population that is a victim of assault or homicides. In addition to the loss of human lives and physical suffering, violence manifests itself by making people feel unsafe in their homes, fearful on their streets, vigilant in schools and public spaces, and unable to access markets, the workforce, economic development opportunities, or social services and healthcare. The impacts of violent crime and interpersonal violence have intergenerational dimensions and victimization as a child can lead to consequences throughout a lifetime. Against this backdrop, **violence reduction is a cornerstone of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.1** directly calls for the reduction of all forms of violence, and thirteen other targets also refer to it—recognizing that violence must be prevented and reduced wherever it exists. The SDG targets are an acknowledgment that violence—especially against women, children, and marginalized groups—is not inevitable and that achieving substantial and measurable progress is possible.

Imbued with this confidence, **the Halving Global Violence Task Force was set up to outline the ways leaders across the world can achieve significant reductions in the most serious forms of violence**. While armed conflict understandably receives a substantial amount of the world's attention and investment, the work of the Task Force is focused on interpersonal violence—violence between people in the home and on the streets—which is too often overlooked.

More than its prevalence, what makes interpersonal violence a compelling focus and target for the work of the Task Force is its amenability to change. Cities like Palmira in Colombia, Pelotas in Brazil, and many others around the world have achieved upwards of a 60 percent reduction in violence rates by combining localized action, targeted investments, and the smart use of data. Experts have suggested it is like a disease that can be controlled, managed, and eventually eradicated.

This report reflects the Task Force's substantial efforts over the past three years to better understand the costly nature of interpersonal violence and develop concrete recommendations to address it, and to prove that Halving Global Violence is more than an aspiration or a talking point. It is achievable and an imperative that leaders and policymakers at every level of governance and across sectors can advance.

Failing to act on the evidence makes us complicit in the deaths and suffering that occur and the damage that violence causes both present and future generations. We have the knowledge and tools to achieve radical reductions in violence globally.

VIOLENCE IS UNIVERSAL

The headline figures on intentional homicide, assault, and intimate partner violence (IPV) reveal shockingly high levels of interpersonal violence around the world, regardless of a country's level of development. Contrary to popular belief, violence is not limited to the Global Majority or any particular region or group of people. For example, countries that score high on the Human Development Index (HDI) still have a homicide rate equivalent to two-thirds of that of countries that score low on the index.

Though widespread, violence is not evenly distributed among the world's population. The profile of violence drastically changes across regions and demographics and is often associated with structural inequalities. While people commonly think of violence as a problem associated with young men or with specific regions, the data paints a much more nuanced picture. It shows that different forms of violence touch every society with varying levels of intensity, with marginalized groups often experiencing the highest burdens of violence.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the region with the highest rates of homicides, with 21 homicides per 100,000 people, and men are indeed almost ten times more likely to be victims than women. However, the highest rate of assaults happens in Sub-Saharan Africa, with an assault rate of 15 percent, where women are slightly more likely to be victims than men. South Asia is the region with the highest rates of IPV, with 22 percent of women reporting experiencing violence from a partner in the last year. While murder certainly dominates headlines, incidents of non-lethal assault are much more prevalent, as outlined above. Furthermore, much of the violence is concentrated in cities, with small- to mid-size cities emerging as new hotspots for violence.

VIOLENCE IS COSTLY

Everyone has the right to live a life free of violence. The desire to save and improve lives and safeguard people from the long-lasting effects of violence should be a driving motivator on its own. Nonetheless, too often, violence is viewed as normal or inevitable, especially when its effects fall primarily on marginalized corners of society, which can cause apathy from both leaders and the general population. For this reason, it is worth noting that even though human suffering cannot be quantified, violence has immense financial costs that are often overlooked or grossly underestimated. Beyond a moral imperative to reduce violence, there is an economic incentive.

The costs of violence can be calculated using a range of statistics that include immediately tangible expenses like hospitalization for survivors and public resources allocated to security, as well as more intangible impacts due to factors that range from lost productivity to the psychosocial effects of trauma to decreased tourism. Violence furthermore detracts from other development efforts by both limiting economic growth and consuming public and private resources that could be invested in crucial development efforts.

These costs are staggering. According to the 2023 Global Peace Index (GPI), the global economic impact of interpersonal violence was USD 2.6 trillion in 2022, an increase of USD 35 billion compared to the previous year. The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (Pathfinders)' Cost of Violence Studies found that in South Africa, violence costs approximately 9.4 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and that in Switzerland, a country often associated with peace, safety, and violence costs more than 8 percent of GDP.

VIOLENCE IS PREVENTABLE, AND SUCCESS IS POSSIBLE

Despite these sobering figures on the costs of violence, experience has shown that effective and evidence-based solutions indeed exist to reduce and prevent violence.

Firstly, leaders need to understand the specific characteristics of the violence that they are targeting and how it manifests within their communities. Violence takes shape differently between and within countries and regions in terms of their nature, demographics, and scope, and it is crucial to have accurate, updated, and disaggregated data to form a comprehensive picture of the profile of violence in society. For example, according to the Pathfinders' *Cost of Violence Study: Switzerland*, the most onerous and prevalent form of violence is domestic violence, which overwhelmingly impacts women. Interventions implemented to directly address this issue have shown to be the most efficient and cost-effective in that country. In Costa Rica, however, the Pathfinders found that organized crime and the illegal drug trade are responsible for a disproportionate amount of violence, accounting for more than 60 percent of homicides alone. This data indicates that in Costa Rica, both national and transnational efforts to address drug and trafficking-related crime are critical.

Effective prevention strategies are networked—requiring action across sectors (criminal justice, health, education, social protection, etc.) and at different levels (including global and regional action to tackle transnational drivers, with an important role for subnational leaders such as mayors). They are also inclusive, with interventions designed and implemented with the people and communities most affected by violence being those most likely to deliver results.

Initiatives in numerous places, including those often associated with violence, show what is possible when political will, cross-sectoral coalitions, use of data and evidence, and smart investments come together. Their experiences, outlined in this report, show that it is indeed possible to halve violence and offer potential models to help do so.

THERE IS A STRONG BUSINESS CASE FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION AT MULTIPLE LEVELS

The Task Force has identified promising, relatively inexpensive individual and family, community, local, state, national, and international interventions to prevent and reduce interpersonal violence. The table on pages 12 and 13 shows a few select examples with proven results demonstrating that investing in violence reduction can be a low-cost endeavor, especially when compared to the enormous costs of violence to the economy. Some effective interventions cost as little as USD 0.10 per person reached, and an evaluation of a comprehensive violence reduction program in Costa Rica found a return of USD 2.12 for every dollar invested.

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY LEVEL

At the individual and family level, we see psychology and counseling-based interventions have often been effective at reducing and preventing violence. This includes providing counseling services to couples and families affected by violence, as well as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for individuals who have been involved with violence.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL LEVEL

At the community level, we see a mix of successful interventions that seek to change how communities approach violence. These approaches often combine law enforcement and community outreach and aim to break cycles of violence. Promising community-level approaches include investing in violence "hotspots" as part of larger development efforts. The "Cure Violence" model, associated with Chicago,

Illinois, in the US, but which has been replicated in many contexts, uses "violence interrupters" from the community to curb and prevent sharp spikes in violence, and. It has produced encouraging results in some of its iterations. Another promising approach is "focused deterrence," which uses targeted law enforcement and outreach to bring violence levels down long enough to bring in other services. Other initiatives, which have invested in transforming spaces to both prevent criminal activity and offer safer communal spaces, have also found success in reducing violence in targeted communities.

STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL

At the national level, there are examples of effective measures, although many of them have no measurable associated expenses or costs. These are often legislative or policy-focused aimed at factors that can drive or exacerbate violence. For example, policies that limit the proliferation of guns and alcohol routinely surface as quick and impactful ways to reduce violence. In South Africa, limitations on alcohol sales passed during the COVID-19 pandemic were followed by an almost immediate drop in violence. Communications efforts can also be effective and have more measurable investment costs. For example, various state and national-level "edutainment" initiatives have obtained good results in changing perceptions and behaviors around violence, particularly IPV, with costs as low as a few cents for each person reached.

INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

International and multinational actors have also had successes, including by providing financing for successful local and national efforts, as well as through the normative frameworks and playing an advisory role. For example, the Istanbul Convention, which provides a framework for domestic violence reduction, was used in Switzerland to evaluate existing laws. This review process identified critical gaps in Switzerland's laws surrounding domestic violence, which the legislature acted swiftly to close. Though it is difficult to directly estimate the costs of these efforts, research has shown that these legislative changes are associated with significant declines in the women-to-men mortality ratio.

STAKEHOLDERS AT ALL LEVELS CAN PLAY A ROLE IN HALVING VIOLENCE

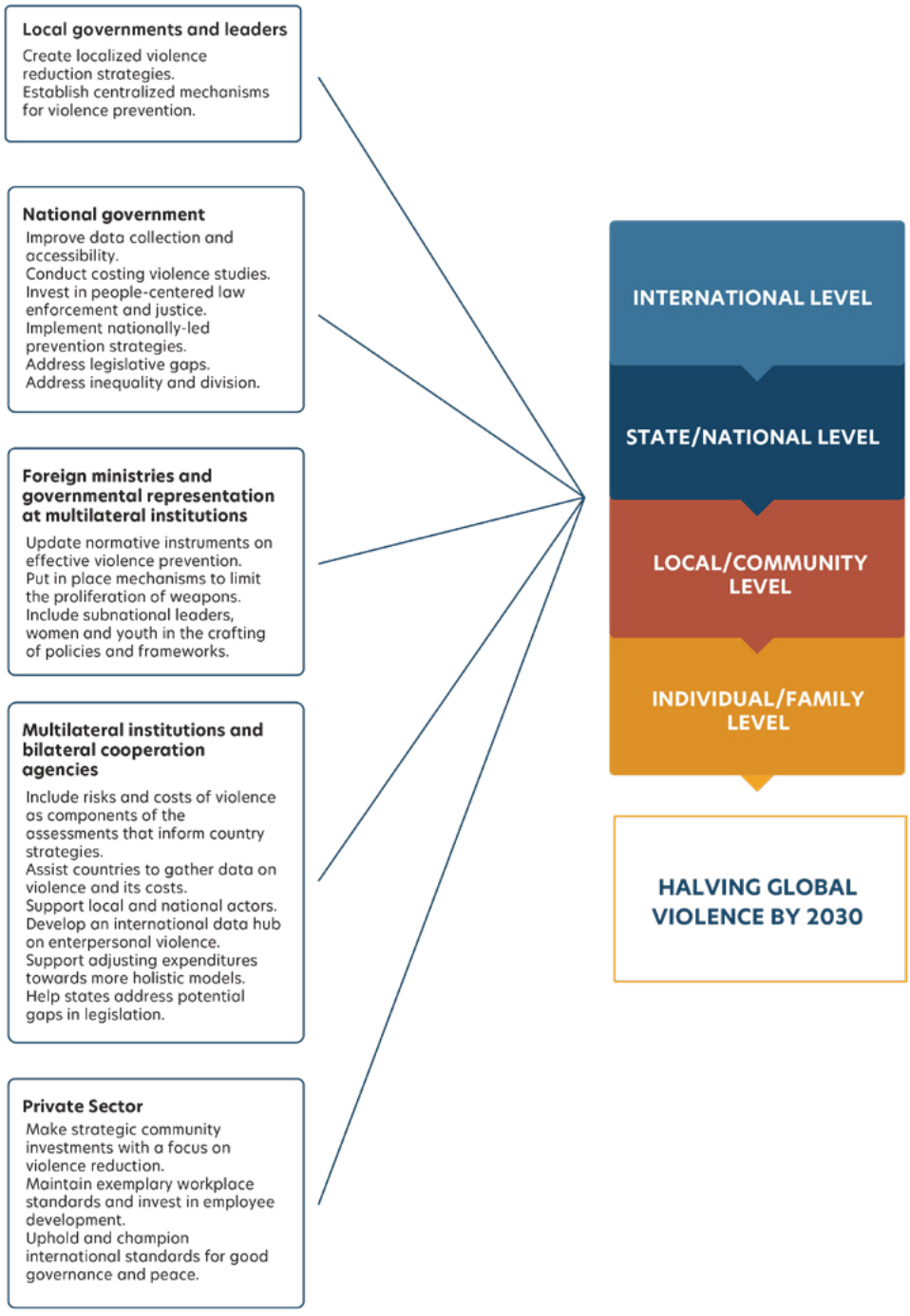
In addition to the recommendations to specific stakeholders outlined below, there are a few critical recommendations that should be heeded by stakeholders at all levels, as highlighted below:

- **Target investments and programs to specific at-risk places, people, and behaviors.** This has been a characteristic of almost every successful approach.
- **Invest in changing norms and behaviors.** This is critical to ensure the durability of changes.
- **Recognize that cross-sectoral partnerships are essential** and must involve local actors.
- **Address gender-based violence as a specific form of violence.** Often, gender-based violence is a unique form of violence that does not respond to broader reduction efforts. Policies, investments, and interventions specifically targeting gender-based violence are needed.
- **Seize the opportunity to obtain quick wins.** It is possible to invest in activities with the potential for immediate impact without taking resources away from longer-term social development policies required for lasting change.
- **Consider law enforcement as one element of a larger, holistic violence reduction plan.** Heavy-handed tactics that focus exclusively on law enforcement are ineffective and can escalate violence in the long term. Law enforcement is most effective when combined with social development efforts and when viewed as a component of a holistic violence reduction plan.

- **Promote collaboration among those working on different forms of violence.** Although the nuances of each different type of violence justify some level of specialization, there are many advantages to working across silos and finding an integrated approach to curb violence.

There are critical actions that stakeholders at every level can take to reduce interpersonal violence, as outlined in the figure below.

FIGURE 1: INTERVENTIONS BY STAKEHOLDERS



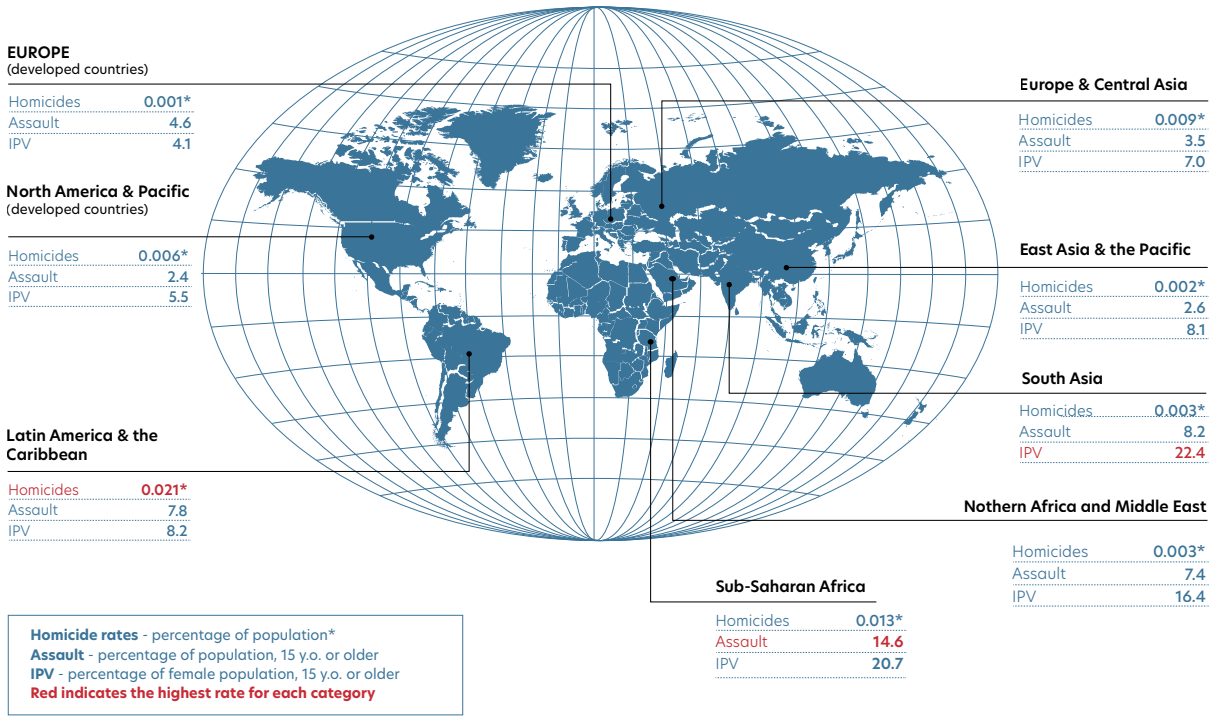
SELECT EXAMPLES OF IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES

Level	Intervention	Description	Impact on Violence	Cost (USD)
Individual and Family	**Sustainable Transformation of Youth Program (STYL)** Liberia (2009–2011)	A program that provided two experimental interventions to high-risk men and street youth: an eight-week CBT intervention and a cash grant.	Weapon carrying was 7.5% lower for the therapy group and 4.4% lower for the therapy and cash group compared to a 2.8% decrease for the control group.	USD 530 per participant
	Becoming a Man (BAM) United States (2012–2013)	An in-school program for at-risk students, combining sports, youth engagement, positive masculinity training with CBT, and weekly counseling.	Students are 40-50% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime.	USD 1,100 per student
	Violence and Alcohol Treatment Program (VATU) Zambia (2016-2018)	Mental health support program for couples to address depression, anxiety, IPV, and unhealthy alcohol use.	40% decrease in IPV reports by women in participating families.	USD 1,324 per adult client
Community and Local	**The Cure Violence Model** Multiple areas	Community mobilization and outreach focusing on high-risk individuals. The intervention focused on training community members to work as violence interrupters and de-escalate potentially violent crimes.	Significant decreases in shootings in Chicago and New York City project sites.	USD 3,500-USD 4,500 for every incident prevented
	Ceasefire Strategies United States (1990s, 2000s, 2010s)	Focused deterrence program aimed at reducing shootings and killings by focusing on social service, community-based, and criminal justice resources.	Significant decreases in gun homicides, nonfatal shootings, and “shots-fired” calls across multiple cities.	Annual budget of USD 240,000 (Chicago)
	Start Awareness Support Action (SASA!) Uganda (2007–2012)	Community intervention to combat the imbalance of power between men and women. SASA! consisted of four strategies: local activism, media and advocacy, communication materials, and training. Community activists were also trained.	Women in intervention communities were 52% less likely to report past year experience of physical IPV compared with women in control communities.	USD 392 per community activist supported per year
	LandCare Program United States (1999–2008)	Initiative to clean and add greenery to vacant lots to reduce space or refuges for criminal activity.	Reductions in assaults and gun violence by about 4% and 9%, respectively.	USD 177 annual cost to maintain one green lot or community garden

Level	Intervention	Description	Impact on Violence	Cost (USD)
State and National	**Soul City** South Africa (1994–2015)	Educational weekly TV drama series about social problems, including domestic violence and alcohol abuse. The series also promoted new norms and community behavioral responses to violence.	Survey found increased levels of support-seeking and support-giving behavior in response to violence associated with exposure to the series.	USD 0.10 or less per person reached
	Firearm regulations Australia (2002–2016)	A national reform unified and extended local laws around safe-storage, firearm registration, suicide prevention, gun-owner licensing, and introduced a gun buyback program.	Firearm-related mortality fell significantly from 3.6 to 1.2 per 100,000.	N/A
International	**Violence Prevention and Promotion of Social Inclusion** Costa Rica (2011–2018)	Multilateral bank funded series of initiatives aimed at reducing violent crime in Costa Rica through institutional strengthening and the establishment of Civic Centers for Peace and rehabilitation units.	Surpassed goal for reduction in the robbery rate (764%) and improvement in citizen's feeling of security (107%).	USD 187,752,000 total budget, return of USD 2.12 for every dollar invested
	Istanbul Convention Europe (2014–present)	Treaty of the Council of Europe that sets the standards for the prevention, protection, and prosecution of violence against women and domestic violence.	Changes in national legislation in signatory countries to better address domestic violence.	N/A

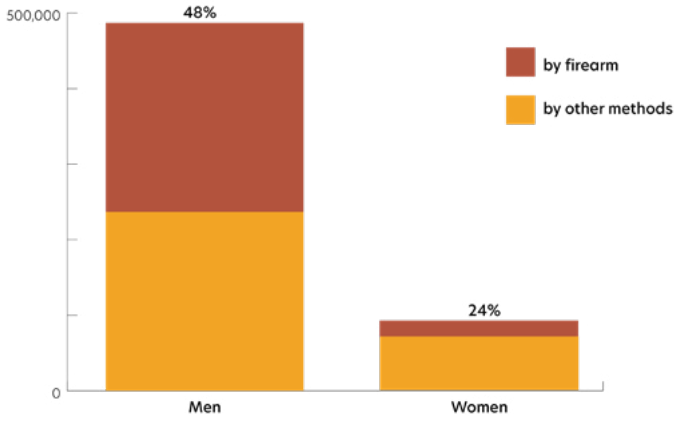
Interpersonal violence in four charts

FIGURE 2: RATES OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE PER TYPE AND REGION



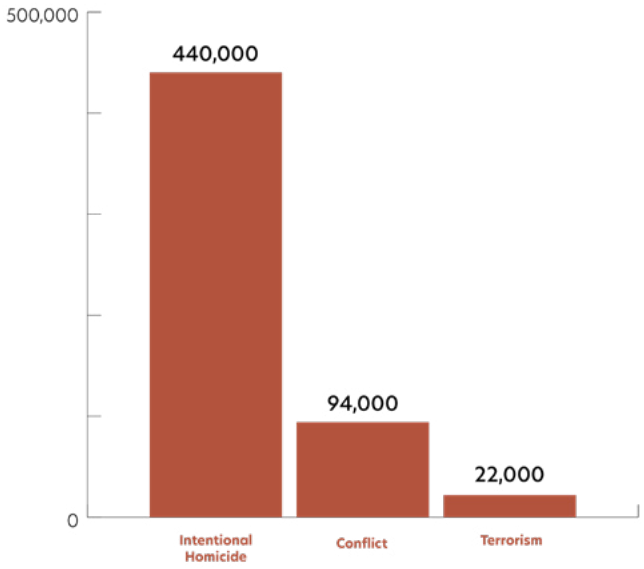
Although it is standard practice to show the homicide rate per 100,000 people, we chose to convert it to percentage to simplify the comparison with rates of assault and IPV.* **Source: Based on data from UNODC, Gallup's World Poll, and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals database. For more details, see Annex I in the full report on sdg16.plus/peace.

FIGURE 4: VIOLENT DEATHS BY GENDER AND METHOD



Source: "Global Violent Deaths (GVD) database 2004–2021, 2023 update, version 1.0," *Small Arms Survey*, December 1, 2023, https://zenodo.org/records/8215006.

FIGURE 3: DEATHS BY CAUSE, 2019–2021 AVERAGES



Source: "4th Edition Of The Global Study On Homicide 2023," *United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime*, 2023, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/global-study-on-homicide.html.

FIGURE 5: INTENTIONAL HOMICIDES BY PERPETRATOR AND GENDER

Source: Based on data from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Global Study on Homicides."

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Movement to Halve Global Violence

1.1.1 The foundations of the movement

The Halving Global Violence movement, and subsequently the creation of the Halving Global Violence Task Force, are driven by the conviction that significant reductions in violence are not only necessary, but also achievable in a relatively short time frame. The intellectual origins underpinning the Pathfinders' movement to halve global violence are rooted in past academic research and policy discussions regarding various forms of violence. These have been steadily building momentum and ultimately culminated in the creation of the high-level political Task Force on Halving Global Violence in 2020. The outcomes of these discussions, including policy documents and statements, relevant research, originally commissioned or otherwise, and input solicited from policymakers and experts during this period, are the primary sources of the material we drew on in producing this flagship report.

An essential element in this approach is the application of public health methodologies to violence reduction, a strategy that views violence not just as a social or criminal issue but as a preventable and treatable disease.[1] Another critical aspect is the alignment with the UN 2030 Development Agenda, in particular with the aspirations of the SDG16, to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, and specifically target 16.1 to reduce all forms of violence everywhere.[2]

The movement to halve global violence is not just a call for action but a call for a paradigm shift in how violence is understood and addressed. It represents an emerging consensus among academics, policymakers, and practitioners that violence is not an inevitable part of the human condition but a challenge that can be met with the right combination of knowledge, will, and resources.

One of the foundational political documents of this movement is the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence, adopted in 2008. This international initiative directly addressed the impact of armed violence on development, bringing together states, civil society organizations, and international agencies. At the time, it was a pioneering effort because it highlighted the global burden of armed violence and set measurable goals to reduce it. The declaration's significance lies in its recognition of the multifaceted nature of violence encompassing not only conflict zones but also post-conflict and non-conflict situations.[3]

In 2014, a landmark conference at the University of Cambridge brought together leading academics and practitioners in the field of violence reduction under the leadership of a renowned criminologist, Dr. Manuel Eisner. It reinforced the importance of targeted programs, early intervention, and taking a multidisciplinary approach to violence reduction, drawing on Eisner's research integrating insights from psychology, sociology, and criminology.[4]

In a 2017 policy brief, the Center on International Cooperation's (CIC) own experts, David Steven and Sarah Cliffe, suggested an integrated approach to prevention and outlined the links between prevention, the 2030 Agenda, and Sustaining Peace agendas. In 2018, the joint UN-World Bank *Pathways for Peace* report further expanded on these ideas, underscoring the imperative of shifting focus towards prevention. The report highlights that a proactive approach could save billions annually, funds that could then be redirected towards poverty reduction and improving population wellbeing.[5] Experts and thinkers at CIC contributed to clarifying and advancing these ideas.

In 2020, the Pathfinders published a blueprint on how partners and stakeholders at all levels can be united into a cohesive vision and comprehensive advocacy strategy. The Pathfinders' *Global Review of*

Evidence and a Strategy for Violence Prevention report underscores the profound impact of violence and emphasizes that there is growing evidence and research, including policy innovations and rigorous evaluations, demonstrating that violence in all its forms—from domestic to warfare—can be prevented. It set out the groundwork that inspired the creation of an organized global movement towards violence prevention and made the case that, beyond academic circles or high-level international declarations, the movement to halve global violence has very practical considerations and impact.[6]

These various milestones and strands eventually led to a significant body of evidence, much of which appears in the text and footnotes of this report. It ultimately led to a common belief: that a significant reduction in violence is possible and that a public health approach is critical to achieving this goal. This perspective treats violence as a contagion that can be understood, predicted, and prevented through careful analysis and targeted interventions.

1.1.2. The history of the Task Force

Inspired by the need to transition ideas from academia to political reality, the Halving Global Violence Task Force was formed as a high-ambition political coalition. Emulating successful task force models within Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies on issues of inequality and justice, the Halving Global Violence Task Force (henceforth "the Task Force") brought together a diverse group of members, including political co-chairs, civil society leaders, members of the multilateral system, and expert advisors. The Task Force set out its explicit aim to achieve a 50 percent reduction in global violence by 2030, driving the strategies of the global violence-reduction movement and elevating SDG16.1.

The Task Force members were charged with providing strategic direction and thought leadership, establishing high-level political support, and promoting the SDG16.1 commitment. They were mandated to inspire governmental commitments to violence reduction, mobilize international and regional organizations for support, and build a global movement with diverse stakeholders, with the flexibility to adapt to changes in membership and global dynamics, reflecting the evolving nature of their mission.

Following initial discussions in 2020, the first meeting of all Task Force members took place virtually in 2021 with the support of Wilton Park. The discussion centered on developing a concrete action plan and avoiding becoming just a discussion forum. Participants stressed the importance of a clear theory of change and establishing measurable success metrics, focusing on a range of violence types from collective to interpersonal.[7]

Box 1: Peace One Day Statement

Following the first full meeting of the Task Force, a group of members issued a joint statement on the International Day of Peace in 2021, endorsing the UN secretary-general's Our Common Agenda, which aligns with the aspiration of the Task Force and urging the international community to join their efforts in significantly reducing global violence levels, seizing the post-pandemic period as an opportunity for impactful change. Read the statement below:

Halving Global Violence: A crucial step towards peaceful societies

When adopting the SDGs in 2015, UN member states set out an ambitious mandate to "significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere" (SDG16.1). Six years on, we are off track. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, experts feared that the world would see an **increase in violent deaths by 2030** if decisive action was not taken without delay. The pandemic brought with it significant increases in violence against women and children in many households. Potential triggers of violence—such as inequality and polarization—are on the rise, as is social unrest in many countries. To turn things around, we need heightened ambition to envision a safer world—and decisive leadership to enact it.

Without a clear and shared target, the international community is unlikely to be galvanized into transformational action. The Pathfinders' Grand Challenge on **Halving Global Violence** establishes a concrete target—a 50 percent reduction in violence—as a north star that is ambitious but feasible. We have formed a future-facing platform, the **Halving Global Violence Task Force**, comprised of national and local leaders, prominent international practitioners, thought leaders, activists, and researchers in the broad field of violence prevention. We are all deeply committed to driving stronger collective action and delivering tangible outcomes to reduce global levels of violence by 50 percent by 2030. We aim to identify solutions, draw on national and city experiences, and **"build linkages across dimensions of violence," "bridging the silos"** between conflict, urban violence, and interpersonal violence.

The Halving Global Violence Task Force reflects a broad coalition in which different communities of practice and knowledge can connect, engage, and act, aiming to become a unified voice that will elevate the efforts of all constituting communities, with prevention as our guiding principle.

We are thrilled that the newly unveiled vision for the UN secretary-general's second term, Our Common Agenda, has endorsed Halving Global Violence under the proposed New Agenda for Peace. Noting that "reshaping our responses to all forms of violence" would "more effectively address violence holistically," the secretary-general suggests this could be done "through a multi-stakeholder effort to reduce violence significantly worldwide and in all its forms, including against women and girls, in line with target 16.1 of the SDGs, and building on the **movement to halve global violence by 2030**." We look forward to supporting Our Common Agenda's emphasis on prevention and renewed multilateralism, as well as working together to achieve measurable reductions across all forms of violence.

Now is the time for decisive action. The still elusive post-pandemic period offers a tipping point and window of political opportunity to shift narratives and adapt multilateral solutions towards complex global problems. As we celebrate the Halving Global Violence Task Force's public launch during this year's **Peace One Day** and warmly welcome Our Common Agenda, we call on the international community to join us, echoing the urgent need to reduce global violence levels and helping translate the audacity of our mission into reality.[8]

In 2022, the second Task Force meeting occurred in person in Geneva, Switzerland. This meeting marked a significant step forward, with discussions focused on setting specific goals to achieve in 2023 and beyond. The members planned to finalize this Flagship Report, continue researching the costs of violence, and explore collaborations with peacebuilding organizations. In this meeting, it was also decided that the Task Force would narrow its focus to interpersonal violence for reasons discussed below.

In 2023, the third meeting of the Task Force took place in person in eThekwini (Durban), South Africa, and focused on the cost and preventability of violence. The Task Force outlined key messages for this Flagship Report, emphasizing the universality and economic impact of interpersonal violence and presenting a strong business case for investing in violence prevention and reduction. It also discussed successful initiatives at various levels with the potential for significant reductions in violence with targeted, context-specific interventions.

Throughout these meetings, the Task Force evolved, adapting to changes in membership and global contexts changes. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced its strategy, underscoring the interconnection between health crises, economic conditions, and violence levels. The Task Force's commitment to concrete actions and effective strategies remained consistent, aiming to inspire national and subnational governments, mobilize support across sectors, and build a global movement for violence reduction.

Box 2: Halving global violence in the context of SDG16+

The Having Global Violence movement is part of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (Pathfinders). Pathfinders is a member-state-led multi-stakeholder coalition working to accelerate the implementation of SDG16+, an extension of SDG16 that includes all targets related to peace, justice, and inclusion in the 2030 Agenda. The commitment of the group comes from the recognition that these targets are not only interlinked but an integral part of any universal development agenda, and enablers of all other SDGs.

As such, when discussing the ambition to halve global violence, it is crucial to understand how the lack of access to justice and inequality are intrinsically connected to violence, and there is no way of obtaining sustained and significant progress in one of these areas without also addressing the others. In other words, there is no peace without justice and equality, and there is no equality and justice without peace.

Linkages between inequality and violence

There has been much written on the connection between inequality and violence: horizontal inequalities, in conjunction with political exclusion, are associated with an increase in conflict, whereas vertical inequalities—the disparity between rich and poor—are associated with interpersonal violence.[11, 12] Studies consistently show that high levels of income inequality, rather than poverty, are associated with high levels of homicide and violent crime.[13, 14] Some suggest that it is the sense of competition, anxiety, and lack of trust brought on by high levels of inequality that builds the connection between inequality and violence.[15] Estimated models indicate that even a slight, lasting reduction in inequality could lead up to a 20 percent decrease in homicides and robberies.[16]

Figure 6: SDG16+ wheel

The interaction between group-based and income inequalities appears to catalyze division. As unaddressed grievances erode trust in institutions and between groups, the exploitation of people's fear and frustration increases the risk of social turmoil. Discourses that leverage grievances to pit groups against one another have become increasingly normalized political tactics across many contexts. This has manifested in increased hate crimes, harassment, and hate speech towards marginalized groups in many contexts.[17, 18, 19] The record-breaking number of national elections in 2024 creates room for increased polarizing rhetoric, social unrest, and even politically motivated violence to occur.[20] A study shows that 58 percent of people around the world worry that political unrest in their country could lead to violence in the next year.[21]

Finally, it is important to address the role that gender inequalities and power imbalances have in making women vulnerable to violence, particularly IPV. Inequalities often have a ratcheting effect: studies show that women are at an increased risk of being victims of IPV in countries with high levels of gender inequality.[22] Furthermore, the low status of women and their vulnerability to domestic violence is a predictor of the overall levels of violence in a country.[23] In many countries, women still have fewer rights and protections under the law than men.[24] These discriminatory laws, combined with exclusionary social norms, prevent women from fully participating in the social, political, and economic lives of society and perpetuate the cycle of victimization and violence.

Linkages between access to justice and violence

Access to justice is an indispensable element of violence prevention and reduction efforts since it offers an alternative to resolving personal and political disputes that does not resort to violence and provides support to victims. And yet, 1.5 billion people across the world report having justice problems that they cannot resolve, with women and children facing the greatest challenges in having their justice needs met.[25]

Around one-fifth of the people struggling to resolve their justice problems are dealing with matters related to violence and crime.[26] Worldwide, only around one-third of assaults and one-tenth of sexual assaults are reported to the authorities.[27] Even more concerningly, estimates show that less than one percent of women who have been raped received justice.[28] Reports from different countries show that the majority of homicides go unsolved—only 40 percent of cases in the United States lead to an arrest or identification of suspects, and only 5 percent of cases in Mexico are resolved.[29]

However, the needs of people who suffered violence and crime go beyond conviction rates. Studies show that those victims are not necessarily interested in punitive approaches, but that they are concerned with being heard and having their cases dealt with sensitivity. They want resolution and, in many cases, reconciliation.[30] Most of all, they want to move on with their lives and feel safe in their communities. They also want to see more investment in the prevention and rehabilitation of offenders instead of in prisons.[31]

A people-centered justice approach is an indispensable factor of any comprehensive, holistic strategy to reduce and prevent violence, be it through the implementation and enforcement of legislation aimed at reducing violence, providing support to victims, improving the criminal justice system, and more.[32] Measures such as creating specialized drug courts have proven to reduce reoffending, while restorative justice approaches not only have a higher satisfaction rate for victims but also lead to reduced offending overall.[33] In Guatemala, rebuilding the justice system to combat impunity and tackle corruption led to a 5 percent decline in homicide rates.[34] On the other hand, "tough on crime" and "scared straight" approaches to policing and criminal justice have led to more violence and increased offending rates.[35] In El Salvador, their Mano Dura plan to reduce violence was followed by a 50 percent increase in homicide rates.[36] Even straying away from issues directly related to crime and policing, people-centered justice can prevent violence by giving people non-violent avenues to advocate for their rights. For example, in rural Mexico, a study estimated that certifying people of ownership of their lands could have led to a reduction of 13 percent of homicides in the area.[37] Meanwhile, over two billion people around the world lack proof of housing or land tenure, which greatly exacerbates the risk of emergent violent disputes.[38] Meeting the justice needs of these individuals is, therefore, a critical step in preventing and reducing violence worldwide.

1.1.3. Report Overview

The report begins with an overview of the various methods and data sources utilized. It then delves into the nature of interpersonal violence with an exploration of its prevalence and its geographic and demographic implications. The report then builds the business case for violence prevention and reduction with an exploration of the economic toll that violence takes on society, including three country-specific case studies and an examination of various measures that have proven effective at reducing violence on numerous levels. Based on these findings, the report offers recommendations for actors in numerous sectors on how to accelerate progress. The report also contains several issue-specific explorations of different violence manifestations and factors contributing to interpersonal violence, including violence against women, urban violence, organized crime, violence against children, and small arms proliferation.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Typology of violence

This report adopts the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of violence, which describes it as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation."[39] Depending on the perpetrators and victims, violence can be characterized as collective, interpersonal, or self-directed. Collective violence is perpetrated by a state or organized group to other states, organized groups, or individuals. It is often associated with conflict settings and war zones. Interpersonal violence and self-directed violence are both inflicted by an individual, but while the former is directed upon another individual, the latter is directed by an individual on themself.[40]

For reasons explained in the next chapter, the focus of this report will be on interpersonal violence. While all types of violence are interconnected and share commonalities in their causes and manifestations, for the goal of this work, it is sufficient to acknowledge the existence of collective and self-directed violence without delving deeper into their specific characteristics. In the case of interpersonal violence, however, it is worth expanding on some of its particularities.

Interpersonal violence can be perpetrated by family members and intimate partners, or it can be community violence, which is perpetrated by an individual outside of the family unit (who may or may not know the victim). Regarding its manifestation, it can be physical, sexual, psychological, or the result of neglect or deprivation (the latter type being particularly prominent in violence against children and the elderly). Going further into these divisions, interpersonal violence, like other forms of violence, is often separated in communities of practice depending on specific characteristics of its manifestations, such as context (e.g., urban violence), motivation (e.g., violent extremism), instrument (e.g., armed violence), and victims (e.g., violence against children or violence against women).

One of the main motivations behind the Task Force is to bring together these communities of practice and break down the silos between them, strengthening the case towards violence reduction by exploring the interconnections between the work being done in these different areas of violence, sharing best practices and lessons learned, and highlighting effective cross-cutting solutions to reduce violence.

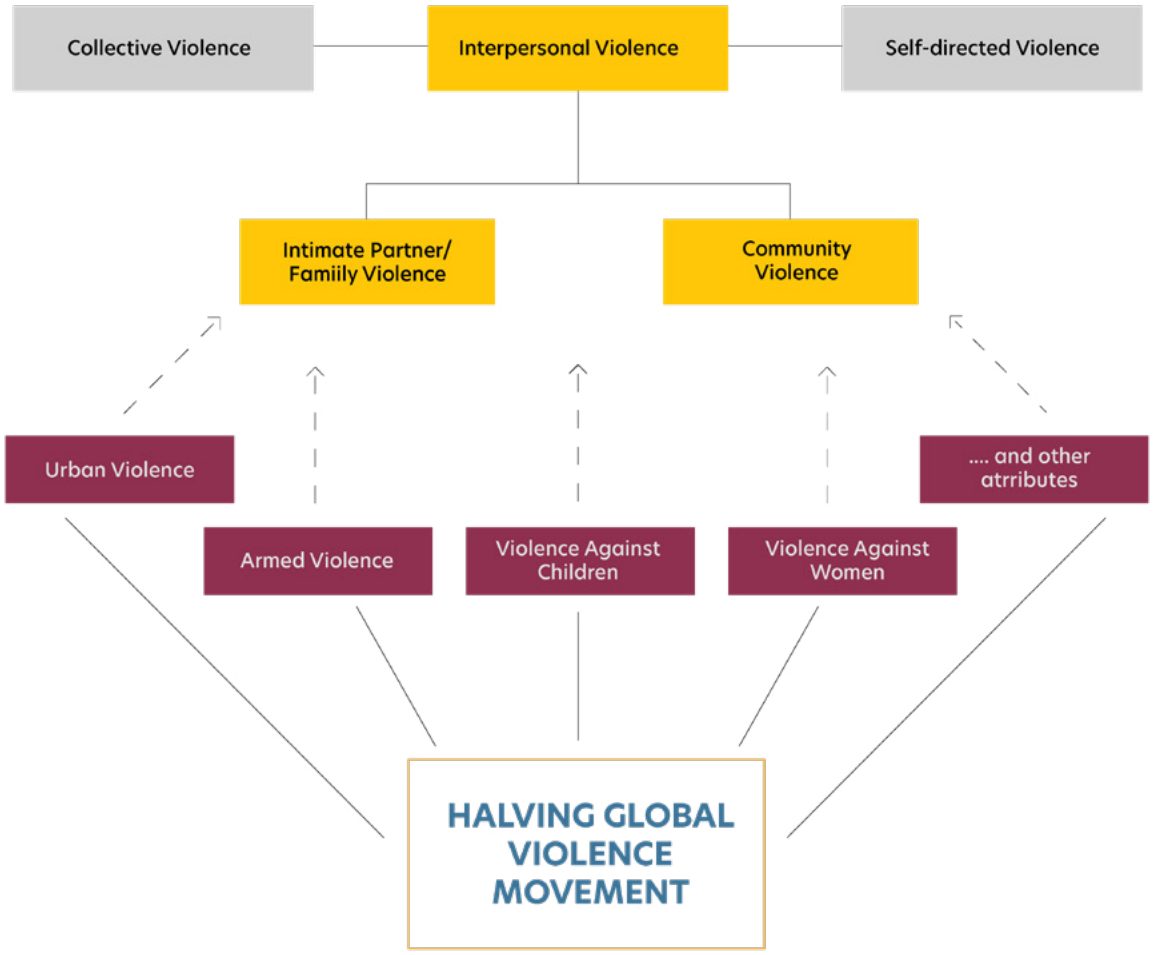
It is worth noting that different types of violence require different strategies and technical capacities. Elements such as the scale of the violence, the profile of the victim, and the drivers of violence make it so that what will work to prevent one form of violence may not work to prevent another or may not be as effective. Nonetheless, there are enough convergences in principles and approaches at the policy level that make the effort to work across silos and find an integrated approach to reduce violence a worthwhile endeavor.

1.2.2 Research methodology

The comprehensive research methodology employed in producing this report integrates quantitative and qualitative research. It uses diverse sources and approaches to thoroughly analyse global violence and its costs and suggest the most impactful and promising solutions to combat it. The methodology shapes the report's insights and recommendations, ensuring they are grounded in rigorous, multifaceted research and similarly rigorous contributions from partner organizations.

A cornerstone of the report is the original research focusing on the prevalence and economic impact of global interpersonal violence. This research is partly based on contributions by Dr. Jeni Klugman, which delves into global trends in violence costing and employs health, legal, and economic data to assess the economic burden of violence in society.

FIGURE 7: TYPOLOGY OF VIOLENCE AND THE HALVING GLOBAL VIOLENCE MOVEMENT



Additionally, the report incorporates national case studies that detail the financial implications of violence in specific national contexts. Those are Cost of Violence: Switzerland (authored by Li Li, Anke Hoeffler, and Teresa Artho), Cost of Violence: South Africa (authored by Richard Matzopoulos, Ian Neethling, and Sarah Truen, and developed in partnership with ACCORD), and Cost of Violence: Costa Rica (authored by Andrés Fernández Arauz and Camelie Ilie). These case studies offer a nuanced understanding of how violence impacts societies and economies differently across various nations.

The production of this report was also a collaborative endeavor of various partner organizations that make up the Task Force. In addition to the insight and feedback gathered across the three years of work of the Task Force, and a series of bilateral consultations, they have also contributed case studies and essays featured in this report. These case studies not only enrich the report with diverse perspectives but also provide practical insights into the implementation and outcomes of violence prevention strategies globally.

Additionally, the report draws upon materials from two key initiatives of the Task Force: the Peace in Our Cities Network (PiOC) and the Gender Equality Network on Small Arms Control (GENSAC). These member-driven programmatic networks help inform the Task Force's work and provide impactful avenues to implement the Task Force's recommendations. Through their engagement with members and partners working on the ground, these initiatives contributed valuable insights and case studies of the practical application of recommendations discussed in the report. A significant portion of the report's foundation is also built upon extensive desk research and a review of existing literature on violence prevention. This research was conducted by the Task Force secretariat and included reviewing a wide range of publications, studies, and reports.

In summary, the research methodology for the Halving Global Violence Task Force flagship report is a multifaceted approach that combines original research, contributions from diverse stakeholders, a comprehensive literature review, and valuable insights from expert convenings and interactions. This use of mixed methods ensures the report is not only data-driven but also enriched with real-world experiences and insights, making it a crucial tool in the global mobilization to halve global violence by 2030.

1.2.3 Indicators and data sources

Throughout this report, we use three indicators to measure the incidence and global trends in interpersonal violence: homicide, assault, and IPV. The statistical table in Annex I depicts the incidence of homicide, assault, and interpersonal violence by country and region.

Given the above, the data used for this report to measure homicides is based on the UN Office of Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) homicide statistics dataset,[41] which draws on national data obtained through the annual UN Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS), and complements it with other pertinent data sources. This dataset is widely acknowledged as the most comprehensive and reputable source on the subject.

For IPV, this report relies on data from the UN SDG database,[42] which presents prevalence rates for physical and/or sexual IPV against ever-partnered women aged fifteen years and older based on WHO's population-based surveys. The standardized definition of "current IPV" is the percentage of women who have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the preceding twelve months. These data have become more widely collected in representative population surveys following appropriate ethical protocols so there is no need to rely on reporting to the police.

For assault, this report opted to use data from the Gallup World Poll, which has far more extensive country coverage than other sources. Moreover, the data appears to be more reliable because it is based on representative population samples and does not depend on people's trust in police and law enforcement. There are, however, a few important distinctions between the UNODC and the Gallup World Poll databases. UNODC is based on police reports, and Gallup on self-reporting, UNODC includes all ages, while Gallup only covers people above the age of fifteen. Furthermore, indicators from UNODC and Gallup measure different concepts: UNODC refers exclusively to physical injuries, following the definition of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, while Gallup's question is broader and includes being mugged or threatened. However, the latter seems consistent with the WHO definition of violence employed by this report.

It is widely recognized that there are major gaps in data availability, particularly in developing and low-income countries. Even when data is reported by governments and to UN agencies, it is plagued by under-reporting, especially in settings where trust in institutions and police responses is low.

As an example, a recent estimate found that only 7 percent of women experiencing gender-based violence in developing countries formally reported the violence.[43] For this reason, we use population-based surveys and not official statistics to measure the extent of violence against women. Under-reporting arises for other violent crimes: a state-level assessment in Brazil between 2004–2011 estimated that about one-third of violent crimes were not reported.[44] In Nigeria, the officially reported homicide rate in 2019 was 6 per 100,000 inhabitants, whereas a household survey conducted by the UNODC and the National Bureau of Statistics in 2016 suggested that the national homicide rate was actually much higher, at 34 per 100,000 population.[45]

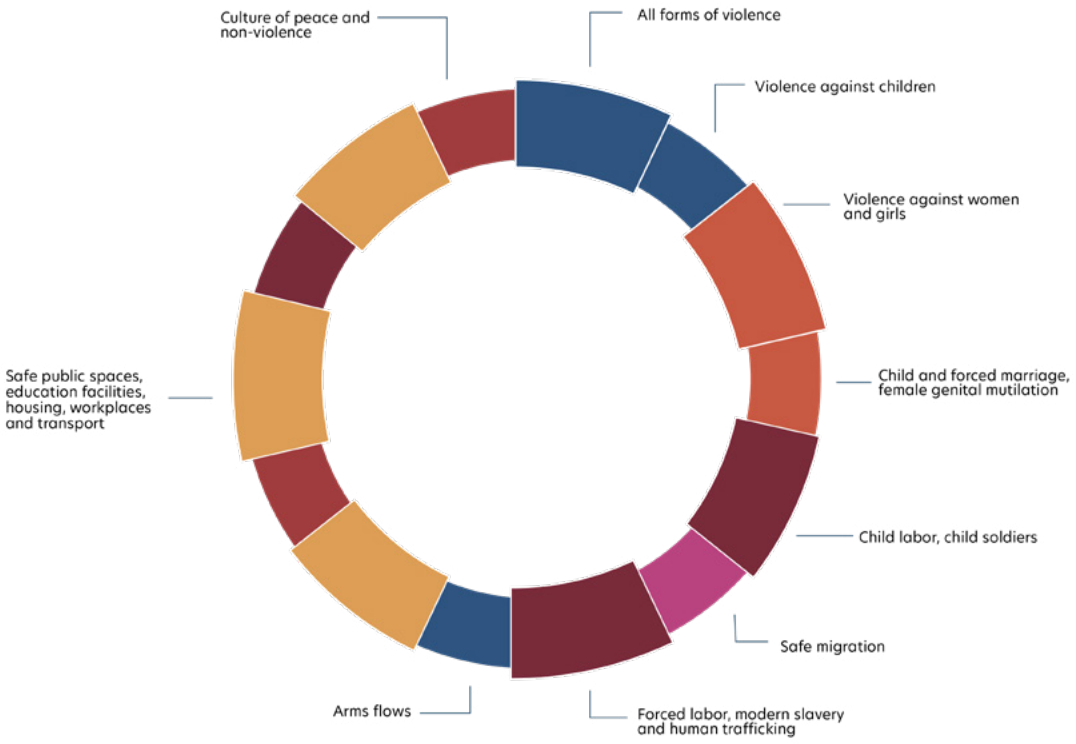
For this reason, it is important to exercise caution when analyzing published data on violence, especially official data. And because the imputations used to address missing data can lead to misleading correlations, we have not imputed country-level estimates.

CHAPTER TWO:
THE MANY COSTS OF VIOLENCE

2.1. Focus on interpersonal violence

The Halving Global Violence Task Force—and, by extension, this report—focuses predominantly on interpersonal violence. While conflict-related violence often dominates the headlines and captures much of the international community's focus,[46] the SDGs clearly call for the reduction of all forms of violence, which includes violence in places considered to be ostensibly at peace. A wide range of SDG targets have a focus or components that include interpersonal violence, as depicted below.

FIGURE 8: SDG TARGETS FOR INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE



While not always the center of attention, it is indeed interpersonal violence that comprises the overwhelming majority of global violence. Data shows that most of all violent deaths happen outside of conflict and that intentional homicides are the cause of almost four times more deaths than conflict and terrorism combined.[47, 48] With these numbers in mind, it is, in fact, impossible to achieve the secretary-general's recent call to halve global violence[49] without a heavy focus on interpersonal violence.

Interpersonal violence is a global phenomenon, albeit not evenly distributed. It impacts marginalized communities disproportionately and has a significant gendered component. However, interpersonal violence is not limited to the Global North or the Global South. It impacts people in countries suffering from conflict and those who outwardly appear to be at peace. Though too rarely a focus of the international community, interpersonal violence is frequently cited as a top concern by the populations of a diverse range of countries, and reducing it is a high priority for many national leaders.[50]

There is a clear demand for action and investment in effective violence reduction. If ignored, this demand can transform into calls for heavy-handed and law enforcement-centered approaches that are both ineffective in the long-term and create significant human rights concerns.

The loss of human life and human suffering due to violence have costs that cannot be measured and creates a moral imperative to prevent and reduce violence. In addition to those human costs, the economic costs can be measured and are extraordinarily high, reaching trillions of dollars in a year.[51] By contrast, many effective interventions are comparatively low cost but can yield tremendous benefits. There is a clear business case for investing in the prevention and reduction of interpersonal violence and this has been a strong focus of the Task Force.

Beyond these sobering reasons for focusing on interpersonal violence, there is a more optimistic cause for the Task Force's focus: its amenability to change. As this report explores, there are several proven policies and programs that have obtained significant reductions in violence. Halving global violence is not solely an aspirational goal. It is something that several places worldwide have already achieved with many successes, particularly at the community and local levels. The Task Force has closely examined many of these solutions, and this paper will recommend concrete steps that actors at every level can take to expand these successes.

Box 3: Conflict and the connections with interpersonal violence

Although the focus of this report is on interpersonal violence, it cannot ignore the effects of war and conflict. After decades of decline, the number of conflicts has been on the rise in the last few years, with a substantial increase in conflict-related fatalities.[52] While the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza have dominated both the headlines and multilateral fora, the immediate consequences of war are felt by an even wider range of the global population, with one in six people currently living in areas affected by conflict.[53]

FIGURE 9: DEATHS IN CONFLICT, 1989–2022[54]

Some effects of conflict are less immediately noticeable than its physical destruction but remain in society long after its end.[55] Conflict and its related traumatic psychosocial effects have a direct impact on levels of interpersonal violence. Studies show a direct association between armed conflicts and elevated levels of IPV and that exposure to conflict violence in youth significantly increases an individual's aggression towards their peers.[56, 57] Firearms used in conflict are also often diverted post-conflict, increasing the levels of armed criminality in affected countries and their neighbors.[58]

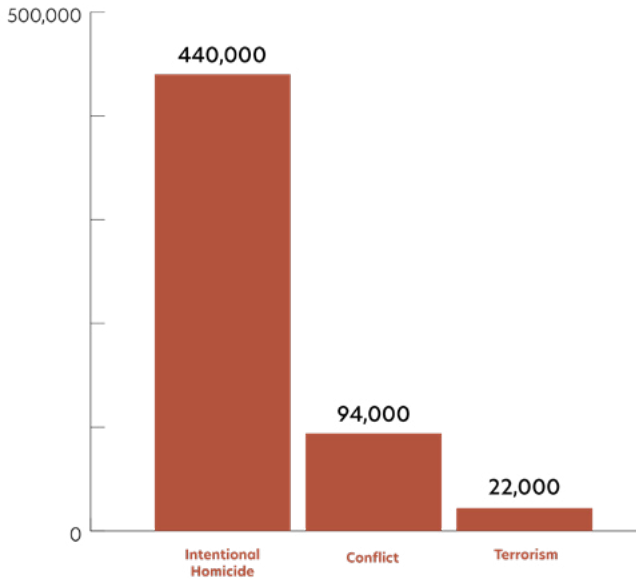
Additionally, evidence shows that exposure to conflict directly impacts human development and societies exposed will suffer worse health, have lower educational attainment, and eroded social cohesion. Exposure to war during childhood increases the likelihood that an individual will suffer from depression and reduces their chances of joining the labor force.[59] Those individuals will be less educated than the previous generation, with studies directly linking educational attainment with the number of conflict deaths to which an individual is exposed during childhood.[60] Not surprisingly, the effects of early exposure to conflict violence also significantly reduce social mobility in society, meaning that these individuals will have a lower lifetime income compared to previous generations.[61]

In the last couple of years, war has also led to the forced displacement of more than 200 million people.[62] For those who have to rebuild their lives in new countries and cultures, the effects of conflict can far outlast the violence. They often arrive in their host communities with no assets and networks, suffering severe psychological trauma, which makes them vulnerable to falling into a "poverty trap" that will set them back for generations.[63] These less visible effects of conflict not only negatively impact development but, in many cases, can exacerbate interpersonal violence dynamics.

2.2. The prevalence of violence

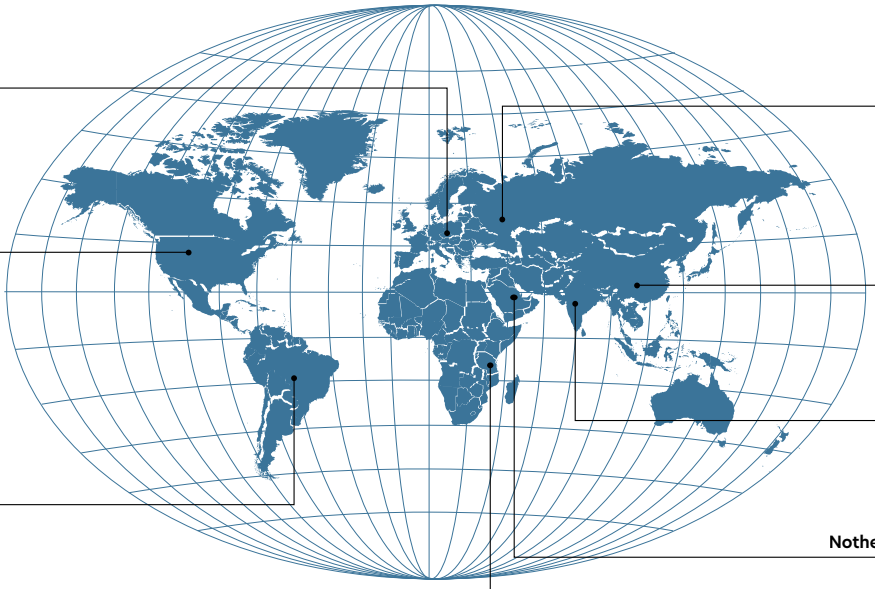
When thinking of violence, people often refer to scenes of war and conflict. However, interpersonal violence, perpetrated by individuals onto individuals (including individuals in positions of power and/or affiliated with the state), is much more pervasive, and its effects have profound, ingrained impacts on people's lives and society's development. As previously cited, most recent data shows that intentional homicides substantially outnumber deaths due to conflict and terrorism.[64] On top of that, instances of assault dwarf the number of homicides, with thousands happening for each homicide.[65]

FIGURE 10: COMPARISON OF DEATHS BY CAUSE, AVERAGE 2019–2021[66]



Violence is not restricted to certain areas or demographic sections, but its profile varies greatly from region to region. The rates of intentional homicide are highest in Latin America and the Caribbean, where homicides are the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 15–49.[67, 68] The highest rates of assault, however, are in Sub-Saharan Africa—with about one in seven people saying that they have been victims of assault in the past year.[69] IPV, in turn, is the highest in South Asia, affecting almost a quarter of the female population.[70]

FIGURE 11: RATES OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE BY TYPE AND REGION[71]



EUROPE
(developed countries)

Homicides	0.001*
Assault	4.6
IPV	4.1

North America & Pacific
(developed countries)

Homicides	0.006*
Assault	2.4
IPV	5.5

Latin America & the Caribbean

Homicides	0.021*
Assault	7.8
IPV	8.2

Europe & Central Asia

Homicides	0.009*
Assault	3.5
IPV	7.0

East Asia & the Pacific

Homicides	0.002*
Assault	2.6
IPV	8.1

South Asia

Homicides	0.003*
Assault	8.2
IPV	22.4

Nothern Africa and Middle East

Homicides	0.003*
Assault	7.4
IPV	16.4

Sub-Saharan Africa

Homicides	0.013*
Assault	14.6
IPV	20.7

Homicide rates - percentage of population*
Assault - percentage of population, 15 y.o. or older
IPV - percentage of female population, 15 y.o. or older
Red indicates the highest rate for each category

It is worth noting that violence is not exclusive to any particular region of the world. High-income countries, or countries that rank high on the HDI, still struggle with specific forms of violence within their borders, particularly IPV. Although they have comparatively low rates of many forms of violence, IPV affects 6 percent of the female population in high-income countries and 7 percent in countries that rank very high in the HDI.[72]

Furthermore, non-lethal physical violence is a much more prevalent issue than lethal violence, which can be seen even by the scale on which each of these phenomena is measured. While homicides are measured by 100,000 people, assaults are measured as a percentage of population, to account for its widespread incidence. As mentioned, in some regions of the world, almost 15 percent of the population report having been victims of assault in the last 12 months, but even in countries that rank high or very high in the HDI, not an insignificant share of the population—around 4 percent—reported the same grievance.

Beyond regional differences, there are great variations in levels of violence in country averages and city averages. For example, in Latin America, 50 percent of crimes are concentrated in 3-8 percent of street segments,[73] while 2 percent of municipalities in Brazil accounted for over half of all homicides in 2016.[74]

Also relevant to note is that there is a strong correlation between violence and the presence of organized crime in certain areas since crime, mainly organized crime and gang-related activities, are connected to nearly 40 percent of all global homicides.[75]

Violence also changes depending on the profile of the victim. Sex-disaggregated data show that men are more likely to be the perpetrators and victims of violence, with male identity and masculine norms being underlying drivers of the phenomenon.[76] However, women are the overwhelming majority of victims of IPV. In fact, while men are more likely to be victims of violence outside of their homes, over half of the intentional homicides of women and girls are perpetrated by intimate partners or family members, compared to only 11 percent of homicides with male victims.[77] Overall, rates of non-lethal violence tend to be more balanced gender-wise—in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the assault rate is even slightly higher for women than men.[78] Women also feel less safe in their communities than men. Surveys show that, globally, only 61 percent of women feel safe walking alone at night, while 71 percent of men feel the same.[79]

Finally, it is important to highlight the role of small arms, particularly firearms, in the perpetration of interpersonal violence worldwide. This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4 of this report, as 85 percent of firearms worldwide are in the possession of civilians, and those same firearms are responsible for almost half of all violent deaths.[80, 81] For this reason, when discussing the prevalence of violence and effective ways to reduce and prevent it, it is imperative to discuss the possession and trade of firearms and ammunition.

Box 4: Men and masculinities

It is impossible to paint a complete picture of violence in our society without addressing the gendered dimensions of the issue and their linkages to concepts of masculinities and male identities. Not only do men comprise the overwhelming majority of perpetrators of violence, but they are also the most frequent victims of violence, with over 80 percent of homicides targeting men and boys.[82] This gender imbalance in the experience of violence can be at least partially explained by notions of militarized masculinity seeping into broader society.[83] This happens when the concept of toughness, use of violence, and physical domination as aspirational male traits are adopted beyond the military, into other state institutions, and then to the wider population, drawing boys and young men to violence as a way to ascertain their social standing.

This issue is particularly insidious when discussing armed violence. Men are the primary owners and users of small arms, and the appeal of guns are often linked to notions of "manliness." It is estimated that over 90 percent of small arms in the hands of civilians belong to men, and every day, those same men and boys are targeted by the marketing of guns.[84] Magazine advertisements for guns almost exclusively show young men., In media, particularly in video games and movies, the links between masculinity and the use of weapons are further reinforced, with many of them representing military scenarios or gang-related conflicts, to underscore the relationship between gun ownership and men's social standing.[85] For example, in his book "We the Young Fighters: Pop Culture, Terror, and War in Sierra Leone," Marc Sommers describes how notions of masculinity portraits in American action movies shaped the behaviors and culture of young soldiers in Sierra Leone's Civil War.[86]

However, these same notions of masculinity that most often put men and boys as perpetrators and victims of violence also endanger women. Femicide, "honor" killings, and IPV disproportionately affect women and girls and make them victims in their own homes.[87] Violent masculinities also create targets of people in the LGBTQIA+ community, including those who do not conform to binary gender

expressions.[88] The issue of men and masculinities is, therefore, much broader than a men's-issue, and by repeating some of the patriarchal dynamics present in society, it renders people with marginalized identities as powerless victims of violence.

There have been examples of initiatives that are deconstructing these notions of militarized and armed masculinities to decouple violence and male identities, including educational and institutional approaches that seek to deconstruct the links between gender norms, masculinities, and armed violence. Program H is an example of a successful program that addresses myths about weapons as sources of protection or status. Implemented by NGO Promundo and initially launched in Brazil, it has been exported to more than thirty other countries.[89] The program educates young men on issues of gender equality and partner violence over several months, with a participatory curriculum offered by trained mentors. Results from several countries show reductions in male perpetration of partner violence or reduced acceptance of violence against women.[90]

Another example is ABAAD's Men Center, which provides individual, family, and community support, and has promoted non-violent behavior since its establishment in 2012. With the support of a mental health team, they aid participants in dispelling patriarchal notions of masculinity and model their behavior on non-violent and gender-equitable norms.[91] In addition to direct support to individuals—they have provided mental health support to over a thousand men and boys—they use the lessons learned from this project to inform national action plans and policies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Recruitment prevention programs that provide alternative lifestyles to joining gangs and other armed groups have also been shown to produce good results in keeping young men away from violence, such as the Young Men's Clubs Against Violence (YMCAV) implemented in the DRC by a partnership between the Living Peace Institute (LPI) and Promundo. These clubs strive to reduce violent activities perpetuated by local gangs by working with young men in the community to shift norms around masculinity and showcase alternative nonviolent expressions of manhood.[92]

2.3 Costing violence

2.3.1 Why calculate the costs of violence?

Everyone has the right to live a life free of violence. The desire to save and improve lives and safeguard people from the long-lasting effects of violence should be a driving motivator on its own. Nonetheless, too often violence is viewed as normal or inevitable, especially when its effects fall primarily on marginalized corners of society. This perception of violence can create apathy in both leaders and the general population. Even though human suffering cannot be quantified, violence has immense and calculable financial costs that are often overlooked or grossly underestimated. Beyond a moral imperative to reduce violence, there is an economic incentive to doing so.

Individuals, policymakers, and private sector companies regularly engage with the costs of violence on at least some level. Insurance companies calculate the value of a human life when issuing life insurance policies. Governments spend large amounts of public money addressing the consequences of violence. Individuals and families experiencing violence suffer losses of income and increased healthcare expenditures. Private companies, households, and governments spend money on security to protect their communities and homes. However, policymakers far less frequently seek to directly understand and calculate the costs of violence.

Despite this lack of attention, interpersonal violence costs are staggering and warrant a closer examination. Some recent estimates have found that globally, the costs of interpersonal violence amount to more than two trillion dollars a year.[93]

For this reason, better understanding the economic costs of violence has been a focus of the Task Force and forms an essential component of the business case for violence prevention and reduction. Studying the cost of violence in any given country or context can help build public support for expenditures and actions to prevent and reduce violence by highlighting the monetary cost it has on society and the cost effectiveness of investments in prevention. By demonstrating how and where violence is costliest, such studies can further guide investments and strengthen economic returns. A costing exercise can show how violence undermines development by both limiting economic growth and consuming resources that could otherwise be invested in crucial development efforts. They also provide baselines against which the cost-effectiveness of prevention and reduction measures can be evaluated. With this in mind, Pathfinders commissioned, at the invitation of the governments involved, a series of three different studies on the cost and prevalence of violence, as well as an examination of violence reduction policies and programs in Costa Rica, South Africa, and Switzerland. The results of these studies are outlined below.

2.3.2 Methods of costing

In terms of methodology, the cost of violence can be calculated by compiling a range of statistics and figures. "Tangible costs" of violence include expenses for the hospitalization of survivors, costs associated with investigating and prosecuting violent crime, imprisonment for offenders, and lost wages due to injuries stemming from violence.

To truly understand the economic impact of violence, costing efforts should also seek to estimate the "intangible costs" of violence, an example of which is lost productivity due to the psychosocial effects of trauma. The lost potential of a life cut short due to homicide can similarly be calculated. Again, from a moral standpoint, human life should be considered priceless, and many researchers are understandably opposed to reducing a human life to a monetary figure. These calculations are, however, necessary to truly capture the full economic impact of violence. Labor market data provides one such method of calculating these costs,[94] including the measure known as the "value of statistical life" (VSL),[95] based on the premium paid to workers carrying out risky jobs.[96] Indeed, intangible costs include a wide range of figures depending on both available data and context. For example, in countries with high rates of tourism, media coverage of violent events can as much as triple the immediate economic fallout through lost tourism.[97]

Notably, these intangible costs may greatly outnumber the tangible costs, underscoring the importance of including these measures in costing exercises. Looking at homicides, for example, the ratio of intangible to tangible costs is around 9:1.[98] In the United States, a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study estimates that in 2019, the economic cost of fatal and non-fatal injury in the United States totaled USD 4.2 trillion—of which USD 3.8 trillion was due to intangible costs associated with the VSL and quality of life, compared to the still staggering, but significantly smaller figures of USD 327 billion in medical care and USD 69 billion in work losses.[99] Related studies looking specifically at IPV found a similar breakdown between tangible and intangible costs in both the United Kingdom[100] and Canada.[101]

2.3.3 Challenges

While costing studies present a crucial method of understanding violence in a given context and building support to address it, there are distinct challenges associated with these exercises. Differing methodologies may be appropriate in different contexts depending on the nature of the economy and, perhaps most importantly, the availability and the quality of relevant data. Indeed, reliable data remains a significant challenge when conducting costing exercises. Studies must draw not only on relevant crime and violence statistics—a challenge in itself—but also on economic data, including those related to healthcare costs, security and justice system expenditures, and the labor market. Though the Pathfinders' "Cost of Violence Study: Costa Rica" study yielded significant valuable information, a true costing was simply impossible due to a lack of relevant data.

In many contexts, there may be significant underreporting in official crime statistics. This underscores the potential need to use a variety of measures to triangulate data on violence and prevalence, including available survey data. Though this is likely especially pronounced in the many contexts where confidence in police and law enforcement is low, even in Switzerland, a country with relatively high degrees of trust in police,[102] a recent study estimates that less than 10 percent of domestic violence cases are reported.[103] Additionally, most violence prevention and reduction interventions currently do not have comprehensive impact evaluations, including data surrounding implementation costs and the return on investment of the averted violence. Strengthening this area would enable an even more compelling argument on the business case for violence prevention and reduction.

2.3.4 Case studies: Staggering costs and differing profiles

To more directly examine the costs and prevalence of violence, both globally and in specific country contexts, Pathfinders commissioned a series of studies. The first study in the series was a global analysis of the costs and prevalence of violence, which included an examination of relevant policies and interventions and different costing techniques. It also includes a series of country-specific case studies conducted in Costa Rica, Switzerland, and South Africa at their request as co-chairs of the Task Force. Their request shows a commendable degree of political will to truly understand how violence manifests within their own borders. Engaging in these costing exercises is a beneficial practice that should be mirrored by any country committed to halving global violence. These countries also provide a useful cross-section for this analysis due to their significant differences in geography, economy, and demographics.

Researchers took somewhat differing approaches in each country based on context, available data, and other local priorities. Together, these studies show various, valid ways to approach costing studies depending on the data available and how expansive a view of costs is considered. The studies also underscore two central points from this report: that interpersonal violence has staggering costs everywhere, but the manifestations, prevalence, and nature of the costs vary tremendously between and within countries.

The Swiss study found that violence rates in the country were among the lowest in the world but that interpersonal violence is still widespread, likely with hundreds of thousands of cases of physical and sexual assault annually. It also found violence to be tremendously costly and estimated total violence costs at USD 66.3 billion, equivalent to 8.3 percent (2.3 percent tangible and 6 percent intangible) of the country's GDP. The study highlighted that the most onerous and prevalent form of interpersonal violence is IPV, and nearly half of all homicide victims were women.[104]

The South Africa study found very high rates of violence, especially lethal violence, in the country. The tangible costs are estimated to be approximately ZAR 129 billion, or 2.3 percent of 2019 GDP. Intangible costs were nearly ZAR 400 billion, or 7.1 percent of 2019 GDP. Intangible costs were calculated with a somewhat more expansive "lifecycle approach," but found a roughly similar proportion of intangible costs. By contrast to Switzerland, however, men were overwhelmingly the victims of lethal violence. There were 20,529 homicides in South Africa in 2019—of which 19,065 were male, and 1,463 were female.[105]

As mentioned, the Costa Rica study was unable to collect sufficient data for a true costing exercise but revealed significant information on the ways violence manifests in the country and varies according to both geography and hemispheric dynamics related to the drug trade. For example, organized crime and the illegal drug trade account for more than 60 percent of homicides.[106] Mapping the areas with the highest concentration of homicide also shows overlap with trafficking corridors. Looking at dynamics and trends, the study also showed that rates of violence against women are not necessarily tied to other violence trends, reinforcing that it must be addressed as a distinct issue. Despite being unable to calculate specific violence costs, this information will still help shape and guide interventions. However, it also underscores the importance of ensuring the availability of robust data to truly build a business case for anti-violence investment and allow for more refined targeting of interpersonal violence prevention and reduction policies and programs.[107]

Taken together, these studies show various valid ways to approach the costing exercise depending on the data available and how expansive a view of costs is considered. They also caution against directly comparing differing costing studies, as available economic and violence statistics, survey data, and factors involved in calculating costs may vary. Regardless, each study revealed useful information about how and where violence manifests, identified high-value violence reduction investments, and highlighted societal impacts. Each of these results helps to build the business case for violence prevention and reduction.

CHAPTER THREE:
WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE VIOLENCE

3.1 Evidence and emerging conclusions

Halving global violence is an attainable goal largely because there has been proven success in obtaining substantial interpersonal violence reductions. Three critical, interrelated themes emerge as the most promising and cost-effective. First, interventions should target specific at-risk places, people, and behaviors. Secondly, they should invest in changing norms and behaviors surrounding violence. This applies at the level of both individuals and broader communities. The third recurring theme is that successful interventions often adopt multi-sectoral approaches.[108] Taken together, these themes underscore the need to combine short- and long-term strategies within communities.

Our review examines interventions by their focus and stakeholders. We provide examples of proven successes focusing on the individual and family levels, the local and community levels, and state/provincial and national levels, as well as regional and international approaches. Admittedly, not every intervention neatly fits into one unique category, but these groupings provide a useful framework for conceptualizing policies and programs.

Box 5: The case for nationally-led violence prevention strategies

Prevention strategies are systems of efforts that seek to address the causes of violence and strengthen the conditions for peace.[109] By acting upstream, these strategies not only minimize the harmful effects of violence in society but also reduce its escalation. They are also better placed to focus on the structural risk factors instead of having to concentrate efforts to immediately cease ongoing violence.

As has been explored in this report, many of the risk factors for violence are deep-rooted in societal structures, such as inequalities (horizontal for conflict violence and vertical for interpersonal violence),[110] lack of social mobility, and identity-based discrimination. In addition to those, violence itself is a major risk factor for violence: children exposed to violence are more likely to be victims and perpetrators in adulthood, and most violent crimes are committed by individuals who have presented violent behavior before.[111, 112] It is, therefore, more effective to act on the side of prevention rather than reduction, allowing societies to break away from the insidious cycle of violence.

For these strategies to be effective and sustainable, a few factors need to be considered. First, they need to be led by national and sub-national actors both in its design and implementation.[113] This is important to dissuade concerns about undue meddling from foreign powers and ensure these strategies are sovereignty-enhancing and adaptable to specific socio-cultural and economic contexts. It is crucial that all levels of society feel ownership over these strategies and understand their benefits to ensure the needed commitment, buy-in, and social and political will to enact structural changes.[114] That is why these strategies are even stronger when they work by supporting and connecting local approaches and take into consideration the broad diversity of its constituents.

Second, they need to be multi-sectorial and engage stakeholders at all levels in integrated responses.[115] The root causes of violence are varied, complex, and interconnected. Successful strategies need to tackle all of these causes and address factors throughout the life cycle to guarantee that they are working towards long-lasting change.[116]

Third, well-designed violence prevention strategies need to be based on a sound diagnosis of risk and protective factors in specific national and local contexts. A clear understanding of those factors is only possible through scientific research on violence combined with a participatory element that can give those directly affected by it a chance to shape the process and input their priorities.[117] This evidence-based approach is crucial to ensure that programmatic activities target the risk and protective factors that most affect that specific context. Violence costing studies, like those referenced earlier in this report, are an example of one such evidence tool that may be useful.

Although these efforts need to be nationally led with substantial local-level involvement, international actors can also have an important role to play. By providing resources, expertise, and platforms for peer-to-peer exchange, international actors can become powerful allies in the development of more systematic evidence-based approaches to prevention and support national actors in developing prevention strategies that are still nationally championed.[118]

FIGURE 12: SUMMARY OF PROMISING INTERVENTIONS AT EACH LEVEL

3.2 Individual and family-based interventions

Individual and family-based interventions typically target high-risk adults, perpetrators, and at-risk children and youth. Successful programs may also work with parents and caregivers. These interventions often adopt similar methods in terms of target audience and approach. They are frequently geared to those most at risk of perpetrating violence and often entail counseling and therapy-based approaches. These include individual and couples-based programs involving smaller groups and more tailored approaches. They can also entail group-based programs catering to larger numbers of people from mixed backgrounds and usually work with a general curriculum in workshops and training sessions.

Cognitive-based therapy (CBT), specifically, is a feature of some successful individual-level approaches. CBT is based on the idea that crime and violence often result from poor decision-making and distorted thinking, and aims to diminish self-destructive habits and attitudes while developing positive new habits, like reducing substance abuse or not carrying a weapon.[119] A typical CBT treatment involves cognitive skills training and anger management. It is often applied as part of more holistic interventions and supplementary components such as social skills, moral development, and relapse prevention.[120]

In Chicago, the Becoming a Man (BAM) program is one such intervention that combines sports, youth engagement, and positive masculinity training with CBT and weekly counseling. Two separate and rigorous studies found that BAM students were 40-50 percent less likely to be arrested for violent crimes.[121] In Liberia, the Sustainable Transformation of Youth Program (STYL) provided CBT and cash to men actively involved in crime, violence, and drug dealing at USD 530 per participant.[122] Subsequent evaluations showed that the positive behavior change was sustained for over a decade among participants, especially when the therapy was combined with cash to support legitimate business

activities. The self-reported number of drug sales, thefts, and robberies fell by about half, with large effects among participants.[123] Related interventions focused on high-risk individuals include focused deterrence and community-level interventions, like Cure Violence, reviewed in the next section. Recruitment prevention programs that introduce at-risk youth to alternative lifestyles to joining gangs and other criminal activities have also proven to be successful. One example is the previously mentioned Young Men's Clubs Against Violence in the DRC.

From a gendered perspective, evidence suggests that it is better to combine men and women when carrying out interventions to combat IPV, however, some interventions that only target one gender have also been shown to be effective. Results from working with girls, as well as Promundo's work on changing masculine norms, show that programs that target specifically men or women can also have a significant impact in reducing forms of violence.[124]

Examples of programs that work with both men and women, and across the community to obtain reductions in levels of IPV include SASA!, implemented in Kampala, Uganda, which aims to change community attitudes, opinions, and beliefs that perpetuate violence against women by using local activism, media and advocacy, communication materials, and training sessions to spread awareness about gender equality, strengthen skills and communication among community members and encourage new behaviors.[125] After three years of implementation, women in participating communities were 52% less likely to report past year physical IPV, compared with women in control communities.[126, 127] Another successful example of this type of intervention is the Stepping Stones and Creating Futures (SSCF) program in South Africa. This intervention has demonstrated remarkable success, with a controlled trial in 2018 showing a 39 percent reduction in physical IPV, a 54 percent reduction in economic IPV, a 32 percent reduction in sexual IPV, and a 28 percent reduction in non-partner rape perpetration. Besides reducing violence, the program also enhances economic outcomes for women.[128] At the couple level, Indashyikirwa, a program implemented in Rwanda, worked with couples to address the triggers leading to violence, such as alcohol, substance use, and jealousy. A randomized control trial found that women participating in the program were less likely to report physical and/or sexual IPV at twenty-four months, and men significantly less likely to report perpetration.[129]

3.3 Community and local-level interventions

Community-based and local-level interventions encompass a range of solutions and programs designed to prevent and reduce violence. They are often applied in urban areas, focusing on hot spots and people in those locations to prevent the spread of violence. These models are most effective and empowering when communities are viewed as partners in these efforts instead of simply being intervention target groups.

The interventions highlighted below rarely served as stand-alone solutions to the problem of violence. They are most effective in combination with other interventions, particularly when employed as part of a more comprehensive strategy with political backing and appropriate resources. While that is not often possible, many of these interventions are relatively inexpensive and effective ways to secure quick wins in reducing violence and leverage results for further investment.

There is evidence of promising results for violence interrupters and street outreach programs, such as the Cure Violence model. The model relies on a three-pronged approach to combat violence, based on WHO's strategies for controlling infectious diseases, including employing community-based violence interrupters to mediate conflicts and outreach workers to support and guide high-risk individuals, mobilizing community leaders and residents to change social norms around violence, and utilizing workers who are credible and trusted within their communities to effectively influence behavior and attitudes.[130]

Successful implementations of this model in Chicago and New York, United States, demonstrate the practicality and effectiveness of this approach. One of the critical strengths of these programs is their affordability. The cost of preventing a single homicide through these initiatives is estimated to be between USD 3,500 and USD 4,500, making it a financially viable solution for many communities.[131] In Trinidad and Tobago, a comprehensive evaluation of the Cure Violence initiative revealed significant reductions in violence, as well as decreased numbers of calls to the police for violent incidents and gunshot wound admissions in a hospital near the intervention site. This indicates that the program can potentially not only reduce direct acts of violence but also decrease the demand on emergency services and healthcare systems.[132]

Group violence interventions, also known as focused deterrence, have also effectively prevented and reduced violence in different geographies. These interventions work by targeting small, specific groups or gangs that are most involved in violence, offering a blend of social services and credible threats of law enforcement action if violence continues. This combination offers a more balanced approach to crime reduction, as opposed to broad, sweeping tactics that may inadvertently expand the use of the criminal justice system. The success of these programs is most evident in urban contexts, and the proof of their effectiveness is most often documented in examples in the United States. While these U.S. cases have been promising, unfortunately, a notable lack of evidence from other contexts somewhat limits this analysis.

In Chicago, United States, the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (VRS) exemplifies the efficacy of focused deterrence. VRS delivers a focused-deterrence and legitimacy-based message to gang factions through “call-ins.” It eventually led to a substantial 23 percent reduction in shooting behavior and 32 percent gunshot victimization among participating gangs.[133] In another US city, Cincinnati, Ohio, the Place-based Investigations of Violent Offender Territories (PIVOT) program, developed in response to a surge in violence, relied on an innovative policing strategy concentrating on high crime micro-locations. It identified and transformed the physical infrastructure used by offenders to achieve significant reductions in violent crime, including by adding light towers in public spaces, renovating vacant lots and other blighted property, changing parking restrictions, installing public safety cameras at key locations, among others.[134]

In Los Angeles, United States, the famed Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) program operates in designated zones throughout the city, providing intervention and prevention services. The results show a substantial decrease in the risk of gang joining among GRYD program participants a notable number of violent gang crimes prevented, and the number of recruits joining gangs decreased.[135]

There is also a growing body of evidence showing the positive effects of summer youth employment programs (SYEP) in reducing violence across different cities in the United States.[136] A study in Chicago found that participants in the program were 43 percent less likely to be arrested for violent crimes in the follow-up of the program.[137]

Place-based interventions, which rely on redesigning environmental elements to reduce violence and crime, are increasingly popular in violence prevention and peacebuilding. Their popularity is largely due to their effectiveness in reducing violence and the tangible nature of changed physical space. Their use is particularly salient in urban settings due to high-density and small changes that can significantly impact community safety outcomes.

A compelling example of the effectiveness of place-based interventions to reduce crime and violence is the public transit system built in Medellín, Colombia, in 2004. This project connected isolated low-income neighborhoods to the city's urban center. It was accompanied by municipal investment in neighborhood infrastructure. Researchers attribute a 66 percent greater decline in homicide rates in intervention neighborhoods, with better connectivity than control neighborhoods.[138] A study conducted in Philadelphia, United States, concluded that modifying street layouts, improving the maintenance of buildings, enhancing natural surroundings, and other changes to the built environment are associated with drastic reductions in homicides, especially among young people.[139] As an example of that, in Philadelphia, the LandCare Program obtained a significant reduction in assaults and gun violence in the area by cleaning and greening vacant lots, to reduce space or refuges for criminal activity.[140] Additionally, interventions that focused on improving housing and upgrading informal slums have also proved effective. The experience of upgrading informal settlements in South Africa points to the conclusion that these interventions help in addressing the root causes of violence and crime in some of the most vulnerable areas.[141]

Group participation and community mobilization programs focus on changing attitudes to reduce violence. Often used to address IPV, these interventions target the root causes of violence and seek to transform social norms. Interventions might not deliver quick-win results, but provide a sustainable foundation for long-term societal change, which reaps results across decades and generations. In South Africa, the Men as Partners (MAP) program, and in Ethiopia, the Male Norms Initiative, which focused on group education, community workshops, and activities targeting young men, have shown promising results.[142, 143] These interventions focus on teaching gender equality, healthy relationship dynamics, and reducing stigmas around HIV/AIDS. 95 percent of respondents acknowledged a change in their thinking about gender, primarily in terms of eliminating violence against women.

In Liberia, a multifaceted female empowerment program that combined intensive psychosocial therapy with vocational skills training also showed impressive results in violence reduction. About twelve months after the program, there was a significant reduction in the number of women experiencing emotional, physical, and sexual IPV.[144]

Service-based programs focus on leveraging existing social service frameworks to deliver targeted interventions. This makes them efficient and practical tools for violence prevention and able to reach a wider audience. For example, the Safe Dates program in the United States has shown a significant impact in reducing violence perpetration among minority adolescents—specifically dating violence and other forms of youth violence, such as peer violence victimization, perpetration, and school weapon carrying. Safe Dates is utilized widely across the United States and a selected number of other countries in the world. It relies on a student-performed play, a ten-session curriculum, and a poster contest to change the norms around dating violence and gender roles.[145]

Another impactful service-based program is Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE) in South Africa. IMAGE combines microfinance with a gender/HIV training curriculum, addressing not just the economic aspects but also the social and educational components contributing to violence. The program led to a 55 percent reduction in physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partners among participants.[146]

Box 6: Community policing

Community policing has become a popular approach to combating crime and improving relations and trust between police and the local community. This may be especially important when heavy-handed policing has had negative repercussions. As outlined above, repressive measures are often ineffective or can even exacerbate violence in the long term. Similarly, aggressive strategies targeting individual disorderly behaviors have not been found to reduce crime.[147] The related "broken window" approaches, which arrest offenders for relatively minor infractions, have, at best, mixed results and raise major concerns about civil rights.[148]

Community policing seeks an alternative approach. Though there is no precise definition of community policing, and models may differ between places, it often entails citizen involvement and localized activities originating from discourse and interaction in each setting. It encourages citizens to share their concerns and information on where crime occurs and who is committing it, which is used to assist police in resource allocations. The aim is both to reduce violence and strengthen citizen trust in law enforcement.[149]

Studies on the effectiveness of community policing—mostly focusing on the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia found mixed results. One such study discovered that positive interaction with police—delivered through brief door-to-door nonenforcement community policing visits—significantly improved citizens' attitudes towards police, while a systematic review of 30 randomized experimental and quasi-experimental tests of disorder policing found that such strategies are associated with modest crime reductions but that aggressive strategies targeting individual disorderly behaviors do not reduce crime.[150,151] Furthermore, a broader study covering Brazil, Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Uganda found that there was no improvement in crime victimization, citizen perceptions of the police, police perceptions of citizens, or citizen-police cooperation.[152]

A recent PiOC brief suggests several cornerstones upon which law enforcement, supported by city leaders, should build their efforts to foster healthier relationships with communities—including proceeding fairly, narrowing the focus, and taking part in healing with the community.[153]

While further evidence and evaluation are needed, it appears that community policing alone is often insufficient to reduce violence but may have the potential to be an effective tool when applied as part of a broader range of community services and violence reduction investments.[154]

3.4 State and national-level interventions

At the national and state levels, we have found that many of the most successful or promising initiatives to prevent and reduce violence are legislative or policy-focused interventions that work to change behaviors, norms, and perceptions that have been proven to exacerbate violence. These initiatives include regulations on firearms and alcohol use.

Examples of successful legislation to regulate the use and possession of firearms can be found in South Africa, where there was an estimated 15 percent decrease in firearm homicides after they passed the Firearm Control Act (FCA) in 2000, followed by a 21 percent increase in 2010 after police started to fast-track firearm licenses applications.[155, 156] This reduction equates to more than 4,500 lives saved between 2001 and 2005. Similarly, Australia saw a two-thirds reduction in firearm-related mortality following a national reform that unified and extended local laws around safe-storage, firearm registration, suicide prevention, and gun-owner licensing and introduced a gun buyback program.[157] In the United States,

a study across states to identify the most effective legislation to reduce homicide rates through arms control indicates that laws that regulate who can access firearms, such as laws demanding background checks, are the most effective, while laws that regulate the selling of specific types of guns or gun-related products are not as effective.[158]

In terms of alcohol regulation, in Atlanta, United States, a push from the residents of a community for stricter enforcement of alcohol regulations, including the ones related to alcohol sales outlets density, led to a significant decrease in violent crimes.[159] In Diadema, Brazil, there was a 17 percent decrease in reported assaults against women in the three years following the enactment of a law requiring bars to close at 11 p.m.[160] In South Africa, restrictions imposed on the sale and consumption of alcohol during the COVID-19 lockdown were also associated with a decline in injuries, deaths, and hospitalizations.[161] Studies also show that higher alcohol taxes reduce acute and chronic alcohol-related harms. In New York City, United States, alcohol taxation reduced alcohol-related homicides from 3.2 to 2.4 per 100,000 people.[162]

Additionally, as obvious as it may appear, evidence indeed supports that laws that directly prohibit IPV can be effective in reducing its prevalence. A study based on 146 countries found that where there are laws in place prohibiting IPV and domestic violence, average rates are substantially lower compared to countries without these laws.[163] One of the most dramatic, documented declines in rates of IPV occurred in Nicaragua. A 2016 study found a 63 percent reduction in lifetime IPV and a 71 percent decrease in current rates of IPV in Nicaragua's second-largest city following the enactment of a comprehensive law on domestic violence.[164]

It should also be noted that civil society can play an important role in advocating for changes in legislation. Models for productive engagement between civil society and legislators include those undertaken by GENSAC members in Latin America and the Caribbean to craft "red flag laws" limiting gun ownership by domestic violence offenders (as described in more detail in the next section). Another successful example of such intervention is ABAAD's advocacy efforts in the #Undress 522 campaign, which led to the repeal of Article 522 from the Lebanese Penal Code. The campaign, which broadcasted the message, "A white dress doesn't cover rape," was a crucial effort to abolish the law that stated that prosecution for rape or kidnapping would be suspended in case of legal marriage between the perpetrator and the victim.[165]

Interventions that use media to educate the population and change perceptions and norms on topics related to gender and violence have also been shown to be effective tools in changing behaviors and attitudes towards IPV, even if direct results in reducing violence are not as clear. Costing less than a dollar for each person reached, these initiatives are also cost-effective (see Annex II for more details on costs of initiatives). In South Africa, the educational weekly TV drama Soul City discussed topics related to social issues, including domestic violence and alcohol abuse, and promoted new norms and community behavioral responses to violence.[166] Surveys found increased levels of support-seeking and support-giving behavior in response to violence associated with exposure to the series, with a 10 percent increase in respondents disagreeing that domestic violence was a private affair and a 22 percent shift in perceptions of social norms on this issue.[167]

3.5 International-level interventions

While many successful cases of policies, programs, and interventions appear to be focused on individuals, families, and neighborhoods, the international community has played a critical role in supporting these successes. Examples of successful actions to reduce violence at the international level have largely been through the creation of normative frameworks and the guidance and support given to national and local actors. This stands to reason, given the highly localized nature that characterizes so much of interpersonal violence as described above.

Financing successful interventions is a straightforward but hugely significant role played by the international community. Indeed, many of the successes outlined in this paper were initially financed by bilateral donors, international organizations, and international financial institutions (IFIs). Critically, IFIs and development agencies also supported many of the evaluations of these programs, which helped prove their success and, in some cases, replicability.

One example of such collaboration is the Violence Prevention and Social Inclusion Promotion Program, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and implemented by the government of Costa Rica. The program aimed to reduce violent crime in the country through three pillars: institutional strengthening, establishment of activity and social skills development centers targeting at-risk youth, and establishment of rehabilitation units. The program surpassed its goals for a reduction in the robbery rate by 764 percent and an improvement in citizen's feeling of security by 107 percent.[168]

Other international successes have come in the form of creating normative shifts and related protocols and frameworks for reducing various forms of interpersonal violence. Violence against women, in particular IPV and domestic violence, serves as a strong example. Domestic violence, in particular, by its very name, is often highly localized and restricted to the home, yet international bodies can still play a role in reducing it. Through a robust series of protocols, conventions, and declarations, there is now a clear global consensus that has made states responsible for addressing violence within households.[169] Collectively, these instruments have established that IPV is no longer a private issue, and governments are accountable for protecting women from violence and enforcing laws to prevent and punish violence against women.[170]

Switzerland's engagement with the Istanbul Convention shows how these international instruments can lead to concrete national action. The Istanbul Convention is a treaty of the Council of Europe that sets the standards for the prevention, protection, and prosecution of violence against women and domestic violence. An independent expert body monitors the implementation, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), and a Committee of the Parties.[171] In 2022, GREVIO praised Switzerland for its successful implementation of the convention, which includes early involvement of all levels of authority, adopting a national action plan, and improving the care and protection of women victims of violence. However, GREVIO also noted that in Switzerland, the legal definition of rape did not comply with international standards requiring explicit consent. This led to a swift update to the Swiss law being agreed upon by the Swiss parliament in June 2023.[172] As noted above, closing these loopholes can have an immediate and measurable effect on reducing violence, with studies finding that domestic violence legislation is associated with a 2.3 percent decline in the women-to-men mortality ratio.[173]

CHAPTER FOUR: EXPLORING SPECIFIC MANIFESTATIONS OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE AND RELATED ISSUES

The following section contains a series of short explorations into specific manifestations of interpersonal violence and the factors that can both positively and negatively impact violence dynamics. Task Force members contributed these, showcasing the diversity of expertise that comprises the Task Force. These studies are, by design, concise and do not represent a comprehensive overview of different forms and manifestations of violence. Rather, they serve as a small sample of the critical work being done in many fields to better understand and address a wide range of critical interpersonal violence dynamics.

4.1. Urban violence

BY THE PEACE IN OUR CITIES (PIOC) NETWORK

With half of the global population currently residing in urban areas—a figure expected to rise to two-thirds by 2050, according to the UN Population Division—understanding the dynamics of urban violence and addressing it becomes increasingly crucial.[174] This trend calls for a comprehensive analysis of urban violence, not merely as a distinct type of violence but as a spatial typology experienced both in conflict and non-conflict zones.

It is essential to remember that cities themselves do not necessarily foment violence but can foster conditions conducive to it. Factors such as overcrowding, socioeconomic disparities, inadequate infrastructure, weak governance, lack of affordable housing, and limited access to services can exacerbate tensions and contribute to violence in urban settings.[175] Furthermore, urban violence both affects and reflects patterns of governance at the local level, with criminal organizations and other armed groups often controlling limited sections of urban areas where the rule of law and grasp of formal institutions are weak.

Though urban areas are at the frontlines of many of the most pressing global challenges, cities are also often the pioneers of innovation and adaptation to these same challenges, such as climate change, inequality, and violence. Cities are also spaces where democratic governance can be fostered from the ground up. They also tend to have younger populations, the engine for the innovation needed to build a more just and equitable world.

4.1.1 Data limitations and global trends

A crucial challenge in addressing urban violence is the lack of comprehensive global data. In regions where urban violence is endemic, authorities often struggle to grasp the full scope of the issue. Much of what is known is extrapolated from the United States, global urbanization trends, and available data on violent deaths. Recent studies show that urban violence responds to roughly 88 percent of all lethal violence in the United States, and that globally, half of all residents of cities between the size of 250,000 and 500,000 face epidemic levels of violence.[176] Although we cannot use this data to infer the proportion of urban violence globally, which remains unknown, it is enough to show that it is a significant problem worldwide.

As discussed in this report, the vast majority of deaths happen outside of conflict zones. Data suggests that much of this violence is concentrated in urban areas and will only further increase in the future due to various global megatrends such as increased life expectancy, declining fertility rates, shifting urbanization patterns, and evolving socioeconomic dynamics.[177] Furthermore, as regions urbanize at different speeds, the risk levels for violence may also change. While regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean are currently considered hotspots for violence in cities, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, which are undergoing significant transitions and massive urbanization, are likely to emerge as new hotspots for urban violence in the near future.[178] To make the matter even more nuanced, contrary to common perceptions, large cities do not always experience the highest levels of violence.[179] In actuality, data shows that often smaller towns and cities, particularly those with populations ranging from 250,000 to 500,000, exhibit significantly higher risks of lethal violence.[180] However, as cities grow, becoming centers for migration, innovation, and economic activity, they also present risk factors that encourage violence, including mass unemployment, gang violence, weakened security institutions, and rising inequality. 75 percent of the world's cities have higher levels of income inequality than two decades ago, creating areas of strong disadvantage, social exclusion, and poverty where urban violence is most concentrated.[181]

4.1.2 The imperative to reduce urban violence

Violence in urban areas tends to be "sticky," meaning it is heavily concentrated among certain places, people, and situations.[182] The United States, which supplies the most robust data, shows that violent crime rates have fallen since the early 1990s, yet the country still experiences a high number of homicides per capita—6.38 per 100,000 people, compared to 2.58 in other high-income countries (see Annex I).[183] Violence predominantly affects people of color in low-income urban communities, with young Latino and Black men particularly vulnerable.[184] Furthermore, evidence from Latin American countries shows that up to 50 percent of crimes are concentrated in just 3–8 percent of city blocks.[185] Even though this percentage may not reflect the global situation accurately due to changing urban dynamics, it exemplifies how violence tends to concentrate in specific areas and neighborhoods.[186]

The concentration of violence underscores the impact it has on people. This impact is not felt the same by all urban residents. As with other manifestations of violence, inequality is a significant determinant of urban violence and disproportionately affects those with the least political influence and, most often, marginalized communities. It also affects people differently depending on income, race and ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexuality, and other identities, including their intersectionalities. People in lower income and wealth quintiles, as well as racial and gender minorities, are more likely to be victims of violence.[187] These individuals, typically lacking access to justice and public services, find themselves in communities where such provisions are poor or nonexistent. For this reason, solutions to address urban violence need to consider the specific needs and vulnerabilities of affected communities.

Gender is another significant factor in urban safety, especially in informal settlements. While young men, particularly those in underprivileged communities, are at a higher risk of both victimization and offending,[188] women and children residing in informal settlements are particularly vulnerable to urban violence.[189] The lack of basic services and infrastructure, combined with prevalent poverty and gender-based violence, exacerbates their vulnerability. Female-headed households in these areas are more likely to experience poverty, further increasing their exposure to violence.[190]

Overall, living conditions in informal settlements contribute to the cycle of violence and crime. Environmental factors such as poor town planning, lack of surfaced roads, insufficient street lighting, and inadequate housing structures facilitate crime and violence. People living in these communities are more vulnerable to criminal violence and have limited access to the criminal justice system or victim support services.

Additionally, relationships with local government—especially law enforcement—are often strained in disadvantaged communities. Excessive force by police can diminish trust, and the migration of residents from violence-affected neighborhoods can intensify insecurity in these communities and lead to spillover effects in more stable areas.[191]

Despite the lack of precise global data on its prevalence, the imperative to act on urban violence remains. The recognition that violence is concentrated and disproportionately impacts marginalized sectors of the population is a critical factor in addressing urban violence effectively, as it allows for targeted interventions. Effective strategies must focus on both mitigating risk factors and enhancing protective factors in urban settings. Tailored interventions, informed by robust data and grounded in equity principles, can significantly reduce urban violence and promote safer cities. Going forward, it can be expected that the rapid pace of urbanization worldwide will exacerbate these challenges, testing our ability to prevent an escalation of violence in cities.

4.1.3 Promising solutions to reduce urban violence

Considering how violence manifests in urban settings and who it impacts, it is evident that efforts to reduce urban violence require a multi-faceted approach that combines effective law enforcement with targeted social interventions. By focusing on hot spots, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, and implementing comprehensive, community-engaged strategies, cities can significantly reduce violence and improve the safety and well-being of their residents.

The first step in deconstructing the traditional dichotomy between reliance on law enforcement policies and social-prevention strategies is not to see them as mutually exclusive. To be effective, violence reduction requires a holistic approach that combines policing with people-centered delivery of justice systems and social services. Strategies outlined in the preceding section, like focused deterrence, hot-spot policing, and—in some contexts—community-oriented policing, have proven effective when complemented by social services to address the root causes of violence, such as inequality and marginalization.[192]

Other steps include being focused on and investing in underserved communities. Investments can take many forms, ranging from environmental design improvements, secure property tenure, and targeted service delivery.[193] They can also take the form of empowering communities and improving access to life skills and economic opportunities.[194]

Partnerships between city governments and civil society are critical for the successful implementation of policies. Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community organizations can offer valuable insights and help ensure that interventions meet community needs. Broad societal support is crucial for the sustainability of these policies.[195]

Box 7: Peace in Our Cities

Examples of promising solutions to violence reduction.

PiOC, a dynamic initiative launched in 2019 by Pathfinders at CIC, the Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at University of San Diego, and the Stanley Center for Peace and Security, now comprising more than 60 city and urban partners dedicated to reducing urban violence, is redefining the approach to urban violence reduction by fostering innovation, collaboration, and evidence-based strategies. Through its comprehensive efforts, PiOC demonstrates that significant progress in urban safety is not only possible but achievable. PiOC's multifaceted approach involves advocacy, knowledge exchange, and resource linkage. The initiative has facilitated mayors' and local leaders' access to influential multilateral platforms, spotlighting the issue of urban violence and its potential for change, including by launching the first-ever global resolution on urban violence endorsed by over 60 mayors and urban networks representing 1,500 cities.[196] Original research, monthly knowledge exchanges, and the establishment of an urban violence expert pool complement PiOC's advocacy efforts.

Informed by these practices and adjusted to local conditions, there are examples of incredible transformation through city and community action across the world. The examples below provide brief overviews of numerous cities that have successfully achieved substantial violence reduction. These experiences provide valuable lessons for other urban areas grappling with similar challenges, highlighting the importance of tailored, multi-pronged strategies in achieving sustainable reductions in urban violence.

One example is Pelotas, Brazil, where local authorities implemented a balanced approach combining public health initiatives with effective policing strategies. This dual approach led to significant improvements in community safety and well-being. Also in Brazil, the city of Niterói invested in the development of a comprehensive strategy for violence reduction that notably includes the deployment of technology alongside traditional crime prevention methods.[197] Palmira, Colombia, similarly designed multi-pronged interventions targeting youth and gang violence, the Paz y Oportunidades; Peace and Opportunities (PAZOS) program.[198] The program blends both targeted enforcement and service provision, focusing on the most high-violence and at-risk communities. A critical component includes engaging at-risk youth in constructive activities, thus reducing their involvement in violent activities.

Medellín, Colombia, once notorious for violence, has undergone a dramatic transformation through its triple nexus approach, which combines social programs, urban planning, and policing. This multifaceted strategy has significantly lowered the city's homicide rates.[199] In the United States, Oakland's focused efforts on reducing gender-based violence have been noteworthy. The city has developed specialized programs to protect vulnerable groups and support victims. Similarly, Oakland's initiatives to reduce gun violence have yielded positive outcomes. These efforts include community engagement, targeted policing, and support services for those affected by gun violence.[200]

In Glasgow, Scotland, employed centralized violence prevention efforts have led to a remarkable reduction in homicides. The city's commitment to addressing the root causes of violence, alongside effective law enforcement, has been a critical factor in this success.[201]

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that a combination of innovative, community-focused, and data-driven approaches can effectively reduce urban violence. They also share common factors such as holistic, multi-sectoral approaches. This speaks to the importance of centralized, coordinated violence reduction strategies, which include establishing municipal offices of violence prevention.[202]

4.2 Local dynamics of organized crime

BY THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (GI-TOC)

Organized crime has many faces—from financial crime and corruption to gang violence that rivals some war zones in lethality and use of military-grade rifles. Due to this diversity and its widespread prevalence, it is difficult to provide a cohesive summary of the various causal mechanisms and impacts of organized crime on communities globally. However, three features have been widely detected as helping to shape the strategies of organized criminal groups of different sizes at the local level. Understanding these features is a crucial step in planning preventative actions and responses for policymakers and civil society.

First, it is no secret that violence involving organized criminal groups such as gangs and other mafia-like organizations predominantly impacts cities. Recent academic and policy research has shed light onto a broader range of effects beyond homicides, showing the involvement and even embeddedness of criminal groups in the governance of urban spaces and the political economy on which vast informal settlements rely. This became particularly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic when increased socio-economic hardship was accompanied by the imposition of additional rules on behavior by gangs in many urban areas. A study by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) on criminal governance in five cities of Latin America and Africa found that social distancing rules were enforced by gangs but came accompanied by predatory practices such as extortion and armed clashes in densely inhabited areas.[203]

Second, our understanding of criminal groups, particularly gangs, has changed gradually over the past few decades. More recently, experts and civil society actors have increasingly highlighted the political interests—both in controlling security provision in some urban areas and establishing links with state authorities, therefore impacting popular trust in governments and even democracy at the local level. Evidence from places as varied as Haiti, the United States, and Kenya show that gangs have become "institutionalized" (long-lasting) groups responding to social and political-economic processes such as urbanization, globalization, and the growing socioeconomic inequalities in cities.[204]

Third, government responses in a wide range of countries have consistently relied on repressive policing, including armed incursions into gang territories, deployment of military or gendarmerie-style forces, and mass incarceration, all of which have tended to lead to significant casualties among uninvolved residents, especially in low-income urban areas.[205] El Salvador has been living under a state of emergency declared initially for one month in March 2022 and extended several times to combat gangs, with reports of enforced disappearances, arbitrary mass arrests, and deaths in custody.[206] The case of El Salvador is a cautionary tale for what could take place in other settings where repressive policing approaches are the predominant policy to tackle criminal violence and gangs. Furthermore, significant evidence points to the counterproductive effects of repressive and militarized approaches. In South Africa, research has shown that "iron fist" approaches based on dismantling gangs and imprisoning members are frustrated by the high degree of groups' adaptability and the usefulness (ironically) of prisons for gangsters to gain status and hierarchy.[207]

These three features—the localized orders linked to criminal groups, their local political strategies, and states' tendency towards repressive policies—combine to paint a picture of a widespread and urgent problem facing governments and civil society globally. Despite the general recognition that organized crime has developed deep roots within societies and political systems, governments' toolbox has been fairly limited to short-term crackdowns. Organized crime's corrosive impact on human security and popular trust in democracy requires states to act.

The magnitude of the challenge is illustrated by GI-TOC, which found that 83 percent of the global population lives in countries with high criminality scores—up from 79 percent in 2021.[208] As its Global Organized Crime Index points out, this shows that "global anti-organized crime efforts often deploy a securitization approach" and neglect communities most vulnerable to the impact of organized crime, including but not limited to armed violence.

Not all is bad news, though. Amid a global geopolitical tug-of-war between democracies and autocratic forms of government, the Index shows that full democracies exhibit higher levels of resilience to organized crime than other types of regimes, thanks to good governance practices and greater civil society participation—although these positive qualities are often unevenly distributed across countries' territories and marginalized communities, such as informal settlements, enjoy less good governance.

These findings are important as governments, international organizations, and the expert community seek lessons and strategies to reduce criminal violence and other impacts of organized crime on human security and political stability. The importance of curbing organized crime to advance SDG16 and halve global violence is visible in homicide trends laid out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which estimates 40 percent of all homicides to be related to organized crime and gangs.[209] Disheartening as these numbers might be, the widespread character of organized crime and gang violence means that there is also a large base of evidence on potential preventative and responsive measures.

The evidence seems solid about the ineffectiveness in the long term—and potential counterproductive effects—of repressive and overly militarized approaches. Cities in Latin America have also shown that extending public services and infrastructure to marginalized urban areas can contribute to public security goals—the case of Medellín, Colombia, and the momentary improvements in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during the early 2010s, are examples, although these measures alone have not led to lasting change in urban inequalities or police conduct. Research has also shown that there are certainly alternative law enforcement approaches to the heavy-handed ones, with more citizen-oriented and publicly accountable police presence in vulnerable communities being particularly effective when integrated into an institutionalized security approach, as opposed to short-lived experiments.[210]

Alternative security policies and shifts in socioeconomic and governance patterns of vulnerable urban areas require political will and resources. Security policies and interventions such as security sector reform (SSR) have often marginalized the perspectives of communities most affected by violence instead of integrating them. A co-production of security is needed to incorporate local actors and better integrate potential or former gang members into productive social and economic roles. Aside from the Latin American examples cited above, the UN has gradually implemented "community violence reduction" programs in a few contexts, an approach that directly engages communities to find solutions to violence and prevent youth from joining armed groups, including gangs.[211] Multilateral organizations and national governments are critical in encouraging such approaches, which engage communities rather than seeing them as mere receptors or bystanders of security forces.

Additionally, municipal governments have pushed some innovations—which historically have tended to have a light role in security policies—through initiatives broadly focused on increasing the quality and local detail of crime data and improving law enforcement's relations with civil society. Building long-term initiatives can be challenging for local and national governments in both Global North and Global South countries given competing public policy priorities. Nevertheless, the global aspiration for less violence and more effective approaches to security—encapsulated in SDG16—signals a level of commitment by governments and civil society to fight organized crime and the various armed groups associated with it. This effort will be more effective when informed by the evidence highlighted above about organized crime's deep roots in local communities, pointing to solutions that not only target criminal groups but also states' own historical gaps in servicing their citizens.

Box 8: The private sector as a partner and an agent for violence reduction

Traditionally, violence reduction, safety, and security are associated with government, public institutions, and, increasingly, civil society. The private sector was often simply not considered in violence reduction discussions or even potentially viewed as counterproductive. However, the private sector can play an important role in these efforts, especially in contexts of low state capacity. It is difficult to precisely define the private sector's role in violence reduction given the diversity of private sector actors, ranging from microenterprises firmly grounded in a community to large multinationals with complex supply chains, global workforces, and resources exceeding those of sovereign states. While some private sector actors in specific sectors may benefit from violence or insecurity, many businesses have a vested interest in promoting peace and stability, recognizing that a peaceful environment enhances workforce productivity, broadens consumer bases, and ensures the long-term viability of their operations. Amidst this complexity, research is relatively sparse but points to several important considerations when engaging the private sector in support of violence reduction.

First, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the enterprises that often appear to be best situated to reduce violence at the community level are those most dependent on the communities where they operate. Secondly, businesses are well-positioned to make changes within their own operations that can have an outsized impact, as well as through their advocacy efforts and engagement with policymakers. And finally, there is space for creating global normative frameworks on business and interpersonal violence reduction that could have a significant catalytic effect. Against this backdrop, there are actions and examples of what private sector actors can do to prevent and reduce interpersonal violence at every level.

Highly localized companies, including small-to-medium-sized enterprises—or those with specific locational factors like extractive industries, agribusiness, and infrastructure companies—often find themselves most directly impacted by violence and instability.[212] This makes their engagement in violence reduction initiatives not just beneficial but sometimes necessary for their survival. Their engagement may be to spearhead their own initiatives, as seen in the case of Santa Teresa's Project Alcatraz in Venezuela, which worked to rehabilitate violent gang members and reintegrate them into society, combining vocational training with psychological support and community engagement.[213] Local chambers of commerce, alongside individual local businesses, may also find it beneficial to partner with local public sector and civil society organizations to invest in these efforts, as seen in the case of the Commercial Club of Chicago's role in supporting the mayor's violence reduction strategy, focusing on root causes and investing in neglected neighborhoods.[214]

Large businesses, particularly large multinationals, can play an important role in reducing violence through efforts with their staff and operations. Though this may seem limited in scope, the sheer size of these companies means even internal efforts can have an outsized impact. Concretely, this can entail adhering to codes of conduct regarding labor practices, supply chain management, and environmental standards and promoting a culture of personal safety and peace in the workplace. Specific initiatives can include creating awareness programs about workplace and domestic violence, ensuring employees are aware of available resources and support for those experiencing violence and harm, and fostering an environment of peace and tolerance. The recent International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work is a major innovation that calls for the private sector to take action to eliminate violence in the workplace.[215] Other promising solutions include Avon's efforts to provide everyone they work with—representatives, employees, customers, and partners—with information and tools to recognize and safely respond to violence against women.[216]

Beyond financial contributions, large businesses and local and national-level chambers of commerce can play a crucial role in advocacy and raising awareness. Companies can use their platforms to bring attention to issues of violence, advocate for policy changes, and promote a culture of non-violence and respect. Their advocacy can lead to enhanced legal frameworks, better resource allocation, and more robust community support structures.

As referenced above, there are frameworks and initiatives that private sector actors can draw from, including the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and Call to the Private Sector to Advance Democracy.[217, 218] However, there is a general lack of consolidated principles or practices on interpersonal violence that private sector actors—or those wishing to engage the private sector—can draw on. Creating such a centralized framework would be beneficial in strengthening norms on private sector violence reduction, outlining best practices, and streamlining cooperation between the private sector and other actors.

The private sector has a dual role as both a partner and an agent for violence reduction. It can contribute to global peacebuilding efforts, transcending its traditional commercial objectives. By fostering collaboration, ensuring accountability, leveraging resources, and focusing on sustainable practices, the private sector—whether a company firmly grounded in the community, chambers of commerce of all sizes, and large multinationals—can be a valuable partner in creating safer, more peaceful communities.

4.3. Armed violence and small arms

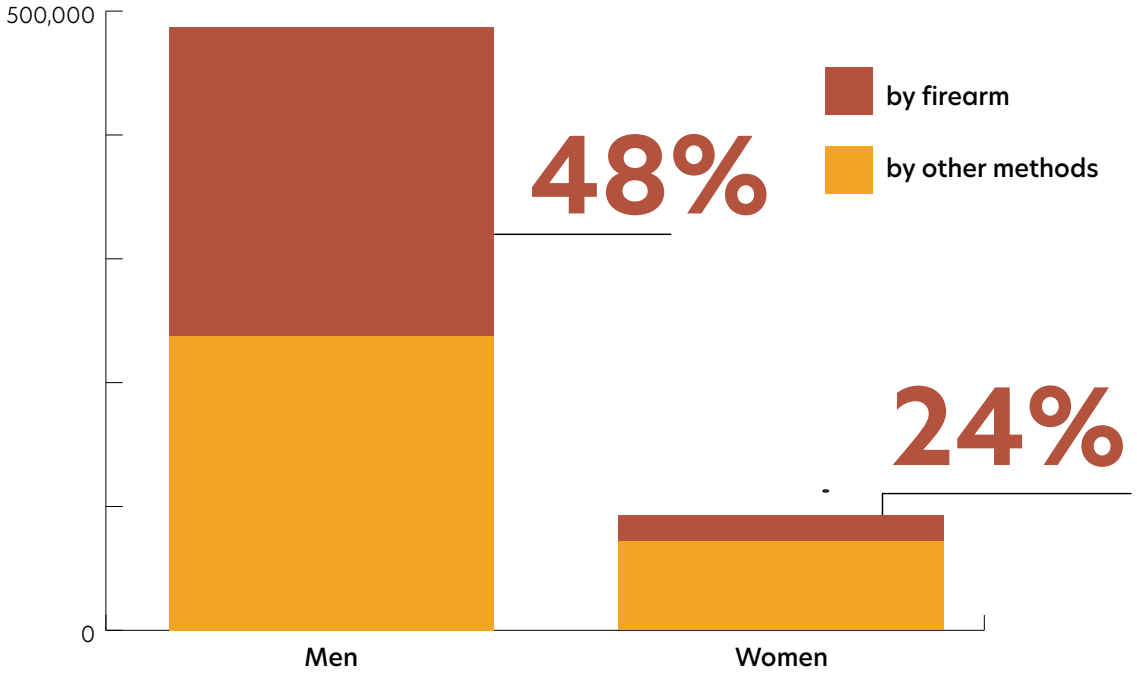
4.3.1 The state of armed violence

BY SMALL ARMS SURVEY

Global violent deaths and firearms

The uncontrolled circulation of firearms poses a threat to human security globally. In 2021 alone, out of 580,000 violent deaths worldwide, 260,000 (45 percent) were committed using a firearm, with 236,000 men and 22,000 women as victims.[219] This number is a minimum estimate derived from reports where firearms were specifically mentioned as used weapons.

FIGURE 13: VIOLENT DEATHS BY GENDER AND METHOD, 2021[220]



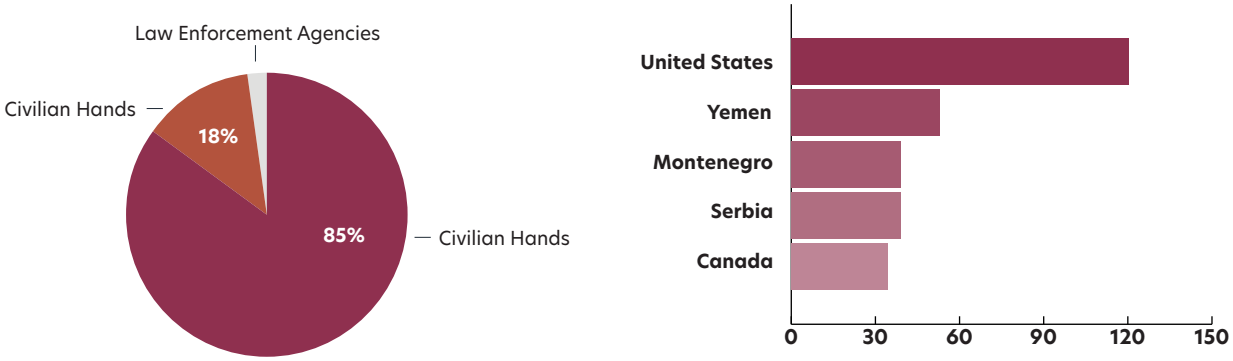
Men are much more likely to fall victim to homicides caused by firearms, both intentional and unintentional, than women. Looking further at the geographical distribution of violent deaths and violent deaths explicitly caused by firearms, there are clear "hotspots" of firearm-induced deaths around the globe. In total, South America and South Asia recorded the most violent deaths in 2021, as well as the most violent deaths by firearms, together with Central America. However, if we look at the rates per population, the whole of the Americas, the Caribbean, Western Africa, and West Asia seem to be the regions with the highest ratio of violent deaths by firearm, even in the absence of large-scale conflict in the Americas or the Caribbean.

Global number of firearms

Of the one billion firearms in global circulation as of 2017, 857 million (85 percent) are in civilian hands, 133 million (13 percent) are in military arsenals, and 23 million (2 percent) are owned by law enforcement agencies.[221] The regional distribution of firearms varies greatly depending on whether they are in civilian hands, held by the military, or by law enforcement. The region with the most firearms civilians hold is the Americas, followed by Asia, with Europe having a share of only 11.2 percent. However, Asia is the region with most military and law enforcement-held firearms, followed by Europe and only then the Americas.[222]

Furthermore, the country rates of civilian firearm ownership also vary significantly across the globe, with about 121 firearms for every 100 residents in the United States, 53 in Yemen, 39 in Serbia, and 35 in Canada. On the other end, countries such as Indonesia and Japan have a rate of less than one firearm per 100 people.[223]

FIGURE 14: POSSESSION OF FIREARMS AND TOP COUNTRIES BY POSSESSION OF FIREARMS IN CIVILIAN HANDS (PER 100 RESIDENTS), 2017[224]



It is worth noting that global stockpiles have increased over the past decade, primarily due to civilian holdings, which grew from 650 million in 2006 to 857 million in 2017. Moreover, while it is easier to collect data on registrations and civilian firearm holdings, the Small Arms Survey does not see the same level of transparency when it comes to military holdings and those of law enforcement agencies.[225]

Examples of mass proliferation after conflicts

In times of conflict and civil unrest, the mass proliferation of weapons inside a country or across its borders adds to the threat to human security and deepens the suffering of the population. The case of Libya illustrates how weapons from government-owned depots and foreign military assistance can be diverted beyond conflict and destabilize neighboring countries. The 2011 Libyan revolution resulted in a large-scale diversion of somewhere between 400,000 and 6 million small arms and light weapons and substantial ammunition losses.[226]

Quite early on in the conflict, the western borders of the country became a hot spot for arms trafficking, with a significant impact on the region.[227, 228] As of 2015, the UN Security Council panel report concluded: "Arms originating from Libya have significantly reinforced the military capacity of terrorist groups operating in different parts of the region, including in Algeria, Egypt, Mali, and Tunisia in particular."[229] Small arms diverted from conflict can also have direct impacts on levels of interpersonal violence and violent crimes in non-conflict zones. Following the independence process in Namibia, many of the weapons that were not seized following the disarmament agreement were diverted to neighboring countries, which experienced a subsequent sudden and dramatic rise in armed criminal violence.[230] The issue of ex-combatants in possession of small arms has also been shown to contribute to elevated levels of violence and crime in the affected countries and their neighbors following a conflict, particularly when there is no effective implementation of demobilization and reintegration programs.[231] This is, therefore, one of the many ways in which societies emerging from conflict struggle to keep levels of interpersonal violence low.[232]

4.3.2 Tools and instruments to prevent the proliferation and misuse of small arms

BY THE UN OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

The impacts posed by the illicit proliferation, diversion, and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) are varied, but all enact a significant human cost. Small arms, including firearms, can fuel or prolong conflict, lead to human rights abuses and gender-based violence, facilitate organized crime, including terrorism, cause mass displacement, complicate humanitarian assistance, and stunt sustainable development. As noted by the Small Arms Survey, firearms are responsible for nearly half of all violent deaths in the world.

These grave consequences require urgent and persistent action by states, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, and civil society. Traditionally, the approach to this issue has focused on two tracks: **the supply side of illicit small arms and ammunition** and the **drivers of their demand.** While these are both important, the tracks have been managed independently, often resulting in incomplete, ineffective, unsustainable approaches that do not focus on the context, the people most impacted, or the enablers of violence that affect them. To achieve the goal of halving global armed violence by 2030, we need to adjust our course by instilling socio-economic development elements into the demand factor analysis. Conceived from this angle, SALW control needs to be "developmentalized," particularly in fragile and post-conflict settings where a secure environment is needed for development to thrive.

Practically, this requires multi-pronged approaches that catalyze mechanisms and tools at the global, regional, and national levels while also ensuring effective collaboration across each. At the global level, several instruments and frameworks, both politically and legally binding, provide guidance and outline commitment for national and regional efforts to tackle illicit SALW, including the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the International Tracing Instrument, and the Arms Trade Treaty the Firearms Protocol. More recently the importance of addressing illicit proliferation of ammunition

has come into focus, most notably addressed by the new Global Framework on conventional ammunition. Given the transnational nature of the proliferation, diversion, and misuse of SALW and ammunition, regional organizations can play a critical role in setting regional agendas and developing regional mechanisms that address these issues, promote collective targets, and allow for cross-border collaboration.

However, the most important action is securing national ownership over both the demand and supply of small arms and ammunition, including control measures and mechanisms. States should consider developing national targets and achievement indicators that can help translate their global commitments according to their priorities, resources, and capacities. By integrating armed violence reduction approaches, prevention strategies, and gender mainstream SALW control, states can address the multisectoral and gendered impacts of small arms and ammunition. Further, it is important to understand, monitor, and investigate the through-life supply/diversion chain and the multiplicity of actors that form the networks of small arms proliferation and work with the main producers, both national authorities and industry/private sector, on their responsibilities for addressing the illicit arms and ammunition problems. Combining these elements into a national action plan that sets forth each state's weapons and ammunition management strategies, actions, and timelines can help ensure a coordinated, holistic, and effective approach.

States are not alone in their efforts, and several tools and assistance mechanisms have been developed over time to support states in bringing a more holistic approach and financial support to SALW control and ammunition management. This includes the Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT), a UNODA initiative supported by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (UN PBSO). SALIENT supports catalytic activities in operationalizing and mainstreaming small-arms control and armed violence reduction in development efforts and policies. In Jamaica, the SALIENT project integrated both weapons supply and demand approaches into one programming modality through activities such as reviewing Jamaica's firearms legislative framework, providing relevant training to national law enforcement officials as well as engaging educators, mostly women, in community-based peacebuilding and conducting Jamaica's first violence audit to collect relevant data.

The international community can also provide resources for project implementation and technical assistance. For example, the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) supports projects, such as technical assistance for national authorities in areas such as weapons marking, destruction, tracing, stockpile management, and assistance for civil society organizations. Through the presence on the ground of Country Teams with donor support, international organizations can also help support whole-of-government approaches that integrate SALW control into national development frameworks and tackle the root causes of demand for weapons on the premise that sustainable development needs an environment free of illicit flows and misuse of SALW to blossom.

The secretary-general's July 2023 policy brief, "A New Agenda for Peace," recognizes the importance of effective small arms control in preventing conflict, building sustainable peace, and enabling sustainable development. The call for reducing the human cost of weapons is an urgent one and one that can help support global efforts to advance sustainable development by 2030 and beyond.

4.4 Violence against women
BY THE GENDER EQUALITY NETWORK FOR SMALL ARMS CONTROL (GENSAC)

Although many forms of violence predominantly affect men, violence against women (VAW) is a critical issue in every region of the world and has marked characteristics that differentiate it from other forms of violence. The killing of women and girls does not seem to follow overall trends in homicides, particularly when it comes to reductions. While estimates point to a fall in the overall number of homicides after a peak in 2021, the number of women and girls killed intentionally in 2022 was the highest in over two decades.[233] Furthermore, while men are more susceptible to being victims of violence outside of their houses, women are at a higher risk of being victims of violence in their homes and at the hands of a family member or intimate partner: 56 percent of intentional homicides of women and girls occur at home, compared to 11 percent of homicides where the victim is male.[234] On average, a woman or girl is the victim of an intentional homicide in their homes every twelve minutes, and almost one-third of women will experience IPV in their lifetimes.[235, 236] With that said, women still face a wide range of violence types outside the home unrelated to IPV. This violence is similarly unevenly distributed by region, as outlined in the preceding chapter on violence prevalence and costs.

FIGURE 14: PERCENTAGE OF HOMICIDES PERPETRATED BY INTIMATE PARTNER OR FAMILY MEMBER, BY GENDER[237]

This violence carries a heavy burden to individuals and society. Women who have been victims of violence can suffer its effects for a lifetime, and it directly impacts the lives of their children. Sexual and physical abuse can have long-lasting effects on women's physical and mental health that go beyond any injuries that they might suffer. Sexual or physical abuse puts women at higher risk of having a sexually transmitted disease and makes them twice as likely to suffer from depression and struggle with alcohol.[238] Additionally, the impacts of VAW can be multi-generational. Children who grew up in homes witnessing IPV have a higher risk of experiencing both behavioral and emotional issues, and are more likely to perpetrate or be the victims of IPV themselves.[239]

Furthermore, the experience of women suffering from violence cannot be separated from the patriarchal context in which it occurs. Around the world, women are only granted 77 percent of the same rights as men, with many women being constrained in their economic rights, freedom of

movement, and decision over their marriage status.[240] Since the beginning of their lives, they are given fewer opportunities than men, with less than half of all countries having achieved gender parity in primary education, leaving almost 130 million girls outside of school.[241] These restrictions on women's lives put them in a vulnerable position as victims of violence, particularly when perpetrated by family members or intimate partners, and often prevent them from escaping dangerous scenarios.

On a more encouraging note, there are a few examples of promising interventions that have obtained significant results in reducing VAW, providing support to victims, and minimizing the reverberating effects of violence. The RESPECT women: Preventing Violence Against Women framework offers a package of practical resources and tools aimed at supporting the implementation of policy and programming to prevent VAW.[242] The framework highlights seven types of strategies that are consistent and effective: **Relationship skills strengthening; Empowerment of women; (ensuring provision of) Services; Poverty reduction; (making) Environments safe; (preventing) Child and adolescent abuse; Transforming attitudes, beliefs, and norms.[243]**

In alignment with the RESPECT framework, psychosocial support and other psychological interventions have proven to be effective at both preventing VAW and providing support to the victims. In Zambia, the Violence and Alcohol Treatment Program (VATU) provided mental health support for couples to address IPV and connected issues such as depression, anxiety, and unhealthy alcohol use. Women in families that participated in the program reported 40 percent fewer cases of IPV in the subsequent years compared to the national average.[244]

Interventions that combine economic empowerment and social training have also been proven effective. One example is the Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS & Gender Equity (IMAGE) initiative in South Africa, which combined microfinance with a participatory gender and HIV training curriculum in rural communities. Participants reported a 55 percent reduction in the past year's experience of physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner.[245]

In addition to these examples, interventions that aim to change unequal gender norms through community mobilization, school programs that enhance safety in schools and eliminate harsh punishments, school curricula that challenge gender stereotypes, and group-based participatory education aimed at generating critical reflections about power imbalances related to gender, have all produced positive results in reducing VAW.[246]

Box 9: GENSAC

Another critical step in combating VAW is supporting and empowering women to become key actors in violence prevention. GENSAC is an example of an initiative that puts women at the forefront of efforts to reduce violence in their communities and beyond. Established in 2019, the network is formed by women working in community-based organizations, the security sector, academia, and international organizations across the Western Balkans, Latin America the Caribbean, and Africa to advance gender-responsive small arms control. With more than 100 members across its focus regions, the network has already made significant progress in changing norms and regulations and protecting women from armed violence.

In Latin America, network members initiated a regional Parliamentarian Roundtable to discuss legislative efforts to advance gender-responsive arms control. These annual gatherings of legislators, civil society,

and researchers, which have taken place in 2021, 2022, and 2023, have involved policymakers from eight Latin American countries (Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, and Mexico) and have led to the establishment of a repertoire of legislation on femicide, IPV, and other forms of violence against women, including so-called "red flag" laws to limit gun ownership by domestic violence offenders. They also worked to track progress on legislation in various countries in the region and sustain collaboration in advancing gender-responsive arms control.

In Africa, particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Senegal, members of GENSAC have actively undertaken initiatives to engage elected representatives and security authorities at both the national and local levels. Their primary aim has been to advocate for the meaningful inclusion of women in arms control efforts. In tandem with these efforts, GENSAC members have collaborated closely with local communities to create an early warning system. This was accomplished through the establishment of a committee dedicated to alerting and responding to incidents of violence against women, with the overarching objective of enhancing preventive measures and deterring such acts.

Another noteworthy contribution made by GENSAC members in Africa has been their effort to educate religious and traditional leaders about violence against women, most specifically, firearm-related violence targeting women. They have leveraged the influence of these leaders in their communities to raise awareness of violence against women and encourage violence prevention through community dialogue.

4.5 Violence against children

BY THE PATHFINDERS SECRETARIAT, WITH INPUT FROM WHO, THE OFFICE OF THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN, AND THE (FORMER) GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP AND FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Children who experience violence have their lives irrevocably changed. The effects of said violence carry enormous costs to individuals, the economy, and society. Every year, one billion children experience some form of violence—physical, sexual, or emotional, and 120 million girls suffer forced sexual contact before the age of 20.[247, 248] Children under the age of 18 are the victims of over 15 percent of intentional homicides globally.[249] For those who survive, the effects of violence will be felt throughout a lifetime. They will be at increased risk of experiencing mental illness and chronic diseases, including cancer and heart diseases, and engaging in high-risk behavior, such as the harmful use of alcohol and drugs, smoking, and engaging in unsafe sexual intercourse.[250] For society, the costs are staggering, including costs related to healthcare, the criminal justice system, and loss of productivity. For example, in the United States alone, the estimated cost of child maltreatment in a year is USD 428 billion.[251]

Furthermore, child violence victims are prone to continuing the cycle of violence and crime. Individuals exposed to repeated acts of violence at a young age are four times more likely to be perpetrators or victims of violence as adults and thirty times more likely to attempt suicide.[252] A society that allows their children to be repeatedly exposed to the threats of violence will continue to be burdened by the effects of said violence for generations to come.

Protecting children and providing them with a safe, nurturing environment may seem an easy cause to advocate for, and there is no shortage of campaigns and well-intentioned citizens calling to end violence against children. However, efforts to tackle the issue too often fall short. Its intersectional nature makes it challenging to establish clear lines of command and generate the needed political will among target stakeholders. Almost all countries report that there are multiple government sectors responsible for addressing issues related to violence against children, including the health, education, justice, and social services departments.[253] Although there are justifiable reasons to divide responsibilities based on the many ramifications of the problem, in practical terms, this can mean that no one sector considers itself primarily responsible for addressing the issue.

Additionally, even though most countries have legislation in place to prevent violence against children and support victims, those laws are most often inadequately implemented or enforced, and little is known about their effectiveness in preventing violence. Relatedly, although 80 percent of countries report having a national action plan to address violence against children, only 20 percent of countries report having their plans fully funded, underscoring the importance of adequate financing to accelerate progress to end violence against children.[254]

The lack of a clear definition of what constitutes violence against children creates challenges for practitioners and decision-makers to collect disaggregated data and assess the scale of the issue. To overcome this challenge, representatives of national statistical offices, government institutions, academia, civil society, and international organizations created the International Classification of Violence against Children (ICVAC), which offers a comprehensive definition of violence against children that for the first time covers all its dimensions.[255] Underreporting, however, is still a prevalent issue in this area, and frequently, population-based surveys find that rates of violence against children are much higher than the official statistics.

Fortunately, there are examples of initiatives that have made remarkable progress in reducing violence against children. INSPIRE: Seven strategies for ending violence against children is an evidence-based technical package to support countries in preventing and responding to violence against children aged 0–17 years. The prevention strategies listed in INSPIRE have achieved 20 to 50 percent reduction in violence against children.[256] The technical package consists of strategies that address risk and protective factors at four levels of risk (individual, relationship, community, and society). It includes guidance for selecting, implementing, and monitoring effective policies, programs, and services through a multisectoral response to prevent and respond to violence against children. The strategies are as follows:

Table 1: The INSPIRE "Seven strategies for ending violence against children" and interventions[257]

INSPIRE Strategy	Interventions
Implementation and enforcement of laws	Laws banning violent punishment, criminalizing sexual abuse, preventing alcohol misuse, and limiting youth access to firearms.
Norms and values	Interventions seeking to change harmful gender and social norms, such as targeting child marriages and educating communities about domestic violence.
Safe environments	Interventions seeking to address hotspots for violence and improve the built environment.
Parent and caregiver support	Home visits, comprehensive welfare programs, and interventions in community settings.
Income and economic strengthening	Interventions providing cash transfers, as well as interventions that combine microfinance or loans with gender equity training.
Response and support services	Counseling and therapeutic approaches, including offering treatment programs for juvenile offenders and working with social welfare services in foster care interventions.
Education and life skills	Interventions to increase enrollment in schools and establishing schools as safe environments. This also includes life and social training skills, along with improving children and adolescents' knowledge about sexual abuse and IPV.

An example of such an initiative is the *Parenting for Lifelong Health: Sinovuyo* program, designed to help families navigate the challenges of parenting children and adolescents in low- and middle-income countries. The program consists of fourteen sessions, ten jointly attended by caregivers and adolescents and four separately for the adolescents. These sessions take place in local community halls, churches, or outdoors under trees—facilitated by trained community members using collaborative learning techniques such as traditional stories, role plays, and home practice. The program showed significant positive effects in a study conducted in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa. Families participating in the program reported lower instances of abuse and corporal punishment, along with improvements in positive and involved parenting practices. The program effectively reduced caregiver corporal punishment endorsement, mental health problems, parenting stress, and substance use.

CHAPTER FIVE:
RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACCELERATE ACTION

5.1 Recommendations for all stakeholders

There are critical actions that stakeholders at every level can take to reduce interpersonal violence—many of which apply to actors at multiple levels or at different levels depending on context. For example, police and justice institutions may be municipal, provincial, or national, depending on the form of state and form of government. The following recommendations can help ensure effective and impactful policies, programs, and investments, whether applied to a community or a continent.

- **Target investments and programs to specific at-risk places, people, and behaviors.** This has been a characteristic of almost every successful approach outlined in this report. It also underscores the recommendations regarding the importance of data collection.
- **Invest in changing norms and behaviors.** This is critical to ensure the durability of changes.
- **Recognize that cross-sectoral partnerships are essential,** and must involve local actors. This is a critical feature of most evidence-based successes identified by the Task Force.
- **Promote collaboration among those working on different forms of violence.** Although the specificities of each manifestation of violence justify some level of specialization, there are many advantages to working across silos and finding an integrated approach to curb violence. In addition to the need for cross-sectoral collaboration, individual institutions and sectors should create working groups to bridge the divides between communities of practice and ensure regular information sharing among all those working on violence issues.
- **Prevention is more efficient than reduction.** Violence creates more violence. By acting upstream and addressing the structural risk factors for violence, national and local actors can concentrate efforts to effect long-term change instead of "putting down fires." While prevention efforts are more effective when nationally led, international actors are well-placed to support these endeavors.
- **Address gender-based violence as a specific form of violence.** Often, gender-based violence is a unique form of violence that does not respond to broader reduction efforts. It exists in countries with low homicide rates and, crucially, does not necessarily drop when other violence indices fall. Policies, investments, and interventions specifically targeting gender-based violence are needed.
- **Seize the opportunity to obtain quick wins.** Investing in activities with the potential for immediate impact without taking resources away from longer-term social development policies required for lasting change is possible. Policies like alcohol restrictions and programs like violence interruption can create immediately tangible results that save lives, build public support for investment in violence reduction, and create space for longer-term programs.
- **Consider law enforcement as one element of a larger, holistic violence reduction plan.** Heavy-handed tactics that focus exclusively on law enforcement are ineffective, require substantial resources, and, along with a political backlash against administrations that implement them, can escalate violence in the long term. Law enforcement is most effective when combined with social development efforts and when viewed as a component of a holistic violence reduction plan. Even community-oriented policing has mixed results at best when applied without other interventions.

Other actions to accelerate violence reduction are more specific to actors at certain levels, as described below.

5.2 Recommendations for local governments and leaders

- **Create localized violence reduction strategies.** Local-level violence reduction and prevention efforts are where the foundational research found the best evidence of success. A successful strategy will coordinate actors from across sectors within a community, target the specific neighborhoods and populations most at risk, and help guide investments and support from national governments, international donors, and the private sector to support a holistic strategy. Such strategies should be based on data regarding prevalence, geography, demographics, and impact evaluation of programs.

- **Establish centralized mechanisms for violence prevention.** These can take many forms, including offices of violence prevention, and serve to coordinate various local public, non-profit, and private actors to implement a successful multi-sectoral strategy like those described above. They will additionally foster relations and facilitate partnerships with international actors, foreign funders, and counterparts in other municipalities to mobilize resources and enable crucial information sharing on best practices.

5.3 Recommendations for national governments

- **Improve data collection and accessibility.** To prevent and reduce violence, stakeholders must understand the specific characteristics of the violence that occur within their borders. To that end, governments need to invest in making accurate, comprehensive, and disaggregated data easily accessible to a wide range of actors. Different types of violence have different victims, perpetrators, and solutions. To reflect this, data needs to be disaggregated by gender, age, race, ethnicity, and other demographic information. Data on violence is most useful when available at the local level to allow targeted action in the most affected areas. Even in some of the settings with the most robust data, improvements are still needed to obtain sufficiently localized data.

- **Conduct costing studies to build a strong business case for violence prevention and reduction.** National governments can consider undertaking violence costing and cost-benefit studies to build a strong business case for violence prevention and reduction. Early findings have shown that violence prevention initiatives have a good return on investment. More studies at the national level are needed to strengthen the argument. Governments can then utilize the results of these studies to foster inter-ministerial discussions (such as between social, interior, finance, and justice ministries) to better target investments if they have the cost-benefit of interventions. They may also use the studies to communicate data publicly, to build support for greater investment in violence reduction, including the types of longer-term investments required to ensure durable results.

- **Invest in prevention plans that address the linkages between peace, justice, and inclusion.** When justice's needs go unmet, and inequality rises, so do risks of violence. A holistic prevention plan is sovereignty-enhancing, evidence-based, inclusive, and invests in protective factors addressing the root causes of violence. This includes supporting people-centered justice initiatives that respond to people's daily needs, systematically reduce inequality, and pursuing measures to counter polarizing and divisive narratives.

- **Invest in justice systems that are people-centered and address legislative gaps.** Lack of resolutions to legal problems can exacerbate feelings of exclusion and create tensions. Justice and law enforcement systems that respond to citizen's needs are a crucial part of holistic violence prevention strategies. Furthermore, fair legislations enhance access to justice, address the root causes of violence and are

a necessary tool in these efforts. A useful starting place for many countries will be laws surrounding firearms, alcohol, and IPV, which are frequently occurring gaps that can yield immediately tangible results when addressed.

- **Design and implement nationally-led prevention strategies.** Well-crafted national prevention plans are sovereignty-enhancing. They have to be context-specific, evidence-based, sustainable, integrated, and inclusive of all elements of society.
- **Address inequality and division.** Extensive literature shows that horizontal and vertical inequalities can be drivers of different types of violence. Furthermore, increasingly common polarizing narratives, including hate speech, create feelings of exclusion and exacerbate social tensions. Addressing this is critical to any long-term violence reduction effort.
- **Support adjusting expenditures towards more holistic models.** Many countries' budgets and the financing they receive are still heavily focused on counterproductive models focused on law enforcement and could be improved with investments in community-focused prevention models.

5.4 Recommendations for foreign ministries and governmental representation at multilateral institutions

- **Consider investments in interpersonal violence reduction as a crucial part of the SDG investment portfolio.** As shown throughout this report, investments in initiatives that target interpersonal violence are cost-effective and can act as a propulsor mechanism to advance other targets of the 2030 Agenda.
- **Limit the proliferation of weapons by following existing protocols and commitments.** The life management of ammunition, including tracing mechanisms, should be seen as a critical component of these efforts in line with the recommendations of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ammunition, co-chaired by Costa Rica and Germany. Member states could work together to ensure proper implementation of all mechanisms and instruments on the topic, including the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the International Tracing Instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Firearms Protocol, and the new Global Framework on Conventional Ammunition.
- **Consider updating and creating normative instruments on effective violence prevention to address interpersonal violence.** These could include the 2024 Pact of the Future at the UN or a new version of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.
- **Include subnational leaders, women, and youth in crafting international policies and frameworks impacting interpersonal violence.** Given the highly local nature of interpersonal violence, the international community would greatly benefit from the increased inclusion of subnational leaders in these processes. This includes mayors and civil society leaders. They are closest to the violence, most directly impacted by it, and in the strongest position to inform impact. The inclusion of women and youth in these processes is similarly crucial. Their lived experiences can provide invaluable insights into nuanced dynamics and inform policies and programs that address specific vulnerabilities and protective factors.

5.5 Recommendations for multilateral institutions and bilateral development cooperation agencies

- **Include risks and costs of violence as components of the assessments that inform country strategies in all situations where violence is a significant development issue.** The UN country teams, the multilateral development banks, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) all conduct assessments that inform their countries' strategies and programs. These assessments do not regularly incorporate analysis of violence prevalence and economic and development costs and their drivers but could be adapted to do so.
- **Assist countries in gathering data on the prevalence of violence and its costs.** This could be done through existing support for the design of household surveys, statistical capacity, and administrative data collection systems in the health and security sectors. Financing national studies costing out the economic impacts of violence can also be an effective way to help national leaders build political will and strengthen the business case for violence prevention and reduction.
- **Support local and national actors.** While implicit as part of the multisectoral recommendations above, this is arguably the most impactful role of the international community. Unlike armed conflict, interpersonal violence and its solutions are highly localized. Support can occur through assistance in drafting prevention plans and financial resources for programs and interventions.
- **Develop an international data hub on interpersonal violence.** Platforms such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Humanitarian Data Exchange have proven extremely useful to practitioners and decision-makers around the world. A similar initiative that seeks to agglomerate available data on interpersonal violence in a central platform would greatly aid efforts in this area. A possible blueprint for this hub could be the recently launched Peacebuilding Impact Hub, which aims to be a one-stop resource for a deeper understanding of the effects and impact of peacebuilding interventions and practice.
- **Help states address potential gaps in legislation.** This can occur through legally binding instruments that provide frameworks to address specific manifestations of interpersonal violence, following the model of the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.

5.6 Recommendations for private sector actors

- **Make strategic community investments focusing on violence reduction.** Businesses should recognize their unique position to stimulate local economies by creating jobs and providing vocational training opportunities specifically geared towards people with a history within the justice system and at-risk youth. By collaborating with local community groups and governments at various levels, they can also pinpoint areas where investments are most needed and fund novel promising approaches to violence reduction.

- **Maintain exemplary workplace standards and invest in employee development.** Companies must establish and regularly update a robust system to ensure a safe and equitable environment for all employees. In addition, training programs can help equip employees with the skills necessary for effective dialogue, conflict resolution, and peaceful negotiation. This can have a ripple effect in promoting non-violent norms inside the workplace and on the broader community. Similarly, strategic hiring practices can work as violence prevention tools by providing opportunities to those who survive violence, are at risk of perpetrating it, or who have already been involved in the criminal justice system. This will create a safer workplace and an overall improved operating environment in the companies' communities.

- **Uphold and champion international standards for good governance and peace.** By committing to a growing number of international standards that govern labor practices, supply chain management, community engagement, and environmental protection, businesses help create conditions conducive to peaceful coexistence. These can both reduce violence and, in turn, foster a more stable and predictable business environment. Similarly, businesses can serve as models and champions for investing in interpersonal violence reduction, including through the adoption of global frameworks and their engagement with local and national government leaders.

CONCLUSION:
A CALL TO ACTION

Violence is an insidious and pervasive global phenomenon. It is a universal issue, and it is every country's and every leader's responsibility to eradicate violence within their borders, cities, and communities. Nonetheless, its impacts are uneven and disproportionally affect marginalized communities. Its costs are staggering: in addition to the immeasurable human and societal costs, it has tremendous financial implications. Preventing violence is, therefore, not only a moral imperative but an economic one.

The positive news is that significant reductions in violence are possible. While no single approach will match every context, we have identified and listed in the report several successful principles, policies, and programs that have proven effective in preventing and reducing many forms of violence. Notably, these efforts are frequently developed and led by the communities most impacted by violence. Still, there are significant contributions that actors at every level and across all sectors can make.

The findings and recommendations of this report have resulted from several years of efforts by the Halving Global Violence Task Force, built on and alongside the enduring work of many individuals, governments, organizations, and institutions driven to see a more complete peace. Through this report, the Task Force has attempted to present its most firmly held belief: that violence can indeed be halved.

To achieve this goal, however, we must confront violence in all its forms, particularly when it impacts our homes, streets, and communities. As we move to the next phase of our work, we are reminded that only by breaking down the silos between different communities of practice we will be able to effectively and efficiently reduce all forms of violence. As the Task Force moves its focus to advancing the implementation of the recommendations in this report, we are committed to developing a framework of action that will unite practitioners, policymakers, and funders across global communities of practice to work towards our ultimate goal of halving global violence by 2030. We thank you for being a part of this global movement and hope you will join us in these efforts.

ANNEX I:
STATISTICAL TABLES FOR HOMICIDE, ASSAULT, AND IPV; MOST RECENT YEAR

	Homicide									Assault victims						Intimate Partner Violence	
	Rate per 100,000/Share of population (2018-2022)									Share of population, age 15 and older (2018-2022)						Share of population, age 15 to 49 (2018-2022)	
	All			Female			Male			All		Female		Male		Female	
Country	per 100,000	(%)		per 100,000	(%)		per 100,000	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Afghanistan	7.18	0.01		1.27	0.00		12.96	0.01	o	8.55		9.71		7.36		35	b
Albania	1.65	0.00		0.07	0.00		3.24	0.00		1.21		0.57		1.88		6.2	
Algeria	1.77	0.00		0.51	0.00		2.99	0.00		8.47		8.51		8.44		18.1	d
Andorra	2.57	0.00		0.00	0.00	l	5.05	0.01								6.4	d
Angola	4.10	0.00	m													25	b
Antigua and Barbuda	10.67	0.01		2.04	0.00		20.10	0.02								16.3	d
Argentina	4.31	0.00		1.51	0.00		7.16	0.01		10.31		10.30		10.32		4.5	
Armenia	2.22	0.00		0.91	0.00		3.74	0.00		1.03		0.82		1.29		4.6	
Australia	0.83	0.00		0.51	0.00		1.18	0.00		3.25		2.83		3.68		2.9	
Austria	0.88	0.00		0.90	0.00		0.86	0.00		5.52		4.60		6.57		3.6	
Azerbaijan	1.91	0.00		1.32	0.00		2.52	0.00		0.80		0.89		0.71		5.2	
Bahamas	31.22	0.03		4.67	0.00		60.26	0.06								16.0	d
Bahrain	0.07	0.00		0.18	0.00		0.00	0.00		8.58		5.10		10.67		18.1	d
Bangladesh	2.34	0.00								15.55		14.08		17.17		23.2	
Barbados	15.27	0.02		1.36	0.00		30.35	0.03								16.2	d
Belarus	2.33	0.00		1.67	0.00		3.09	0.00		2.22		2.26		2.18		6.3	
Belgium	1.08	0.00		0.19	0.00		1.99	0.00		3.40		3.00		3.80		5	b

Belize		27.88	0.03		4.47	0.00		51.04	0.05								7.8	
Benin											12.01		14.88		8.89		13.9	c
Bhutan		2.46	0.00		1.38	0.00		3.42	0.00		8.17	e	7.30	e	8.98	e	9	b
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)		3.97	0.00		2.72	0.00		4.65	0.00		7.96		9.05		6.90		18	b
Bosnia and Herzegovina		1.08	0.00		0.73	0.00		1.38	0.00		5.05		5.57		4.53		3.4	
Botswana		10.55	0.01		7.63	0.01					12.29		11.29		13.52		17	b
Brazil		21.26	0.02		3.53	0.00		39.55	0.04		5.46		4.83		6.14		6.5	
Brunei Darussalam		0.49	0.00	j													3.5	d
Bulgaria		1.12	0.00		0.83	0.00		1.43	0.00		4.50		3.24		5.82		5.9	
Burkina Faso											10.39		10.37		10.40		11	b
Burundi		5.82	0.01	m	2.24	0.00	m	9.47	0.01	m	13.83		12.22		15.51		27.9	c
Cabo Verde		6.18	0.01		3.07	0.00		9.32	0.01								10.9	
Cambodia		1.84	0.00	h							2.29		2.59		1.94		5.4	c
Cameroon		4.54	0.00		2.27	0.00		6.82	0.01		19.90		18.29		21.60		21.5	c
Canada		2.27	0.00		1.05	0.00		3.46	0.00		3.96		4.35		3.56		2.6	
Central African Republic											25.38	f	19.09	f	32.15	f	21	b
Chad											13.23		14.76		11.82	e	16	b
Chile		6.74	0.01		1.48	0.00		12.09	0.01		6.95		6.31		7.68		5.8	
China		0.50	0.00								2.79		2.36		3.21		7.6	
Colombia		25.38	0.03		3.81	0.00		47.56	0.05		9.32		9.08		9.58		11.9	
Comoros											8.65		8.69		8.61		8	b
Congo											22.90		21.51		24.25		33.8	d
Congo, Democratic Republic of the											14.26	f	14.56	f	13.96	f	36	b
Costa Rica		12.82	0.01		2.17	0.00		20.63	0.02		3.93		3.94		3.91	e	7.2	
Côte d'Ivoire											8.30		8.83		7.79		16.4	
Croatia		0.77	0.00		0.68	0.00		0.87	0.00		5.20		4.86		5.61		4.0	

Cuba		4.42	0.00		1.85	0.00		7.02	0.01							5	b
Cyprus		0.64	0.00		0.64	0.00		0.64	0.00		4.21		4.10		4.31	3.1	
Czechia		0.83	0.00		0.73	0.00		0.93	0.00		2.77		2.19		3.39	4.1	
Denmark		0.99	0.00		0.78	0.00		1.20	0.00		2.79		2.77		2.82	3.3	
Djibouti		0.00	0.00													26.9	d
Dominica		15.19	0.02		5.50	0.01		22.20	0.02							16.1	d
Dominican Republic		12.37	0.01		2.73	0.00		21.94	0.02		10.28		10.83		9.72	9.6	
Ecuador		26.99	0.03		4.65	0.00		49.23	0.05		12.48		10.65		14.49	8.1	
Egypt		1.34	0.00	n	0.55	0.00		4.21	0.00	i	5.12		4.64		5.59	15	b
El Salvador		7.83	0.01		2.14	0.00		14.09	0.01		4.38		4.11		4.74	5.7	
Equatorial Guinea																29	b
Eritrea		14.57	0.01	i												26.8	d
Estonia		4.14	0.00		0.57	0.00		3.49	0.00		2.60		2.03		3.29	4.2	
Eswatini		12.66	0.01								7.77		8.63		6.71	18	b
Ethiopia		8.63	0.01	i							11.39		12.12		10.66	26.5	
Fiji		2.17	0.00		2.65	0.00	k	1.73	0.00	k						23.2	
Finland		1.21	0.00		0.82	0.00		1.61	0.00		1.52		2.13		0.90	8.1	
France		1.70	0.00		0.68	0.00		1.62	0.00		4.99		4.57		5.43	5.0	
Gabon											14.26		15.59		12.80	22	b
Gambia											29.57		28.19		31.11	10.4	c
Georgia		2.04	0.00		1.20	0.00		3.94	0.00		1.90		1.97		1.81	2.9	
Germany		1.17	0.00		0.80	0.00		0.87	0.00		8.37		10.00		6.56	3	e
Ghana		1.84	0.00		0.58	0.00		3.10	0.00		19.62		19.13		20.14	10.2	
Greece		1.13	0.00		0.85	0.00		1.42	0.00		3.24		3.93		2.54	5.1	
Grenada		4.01	0.00		1.61	0.00		6.41	0.01							7.8	
Guatemala		21.71	0.02		6.13	0.01		34.13	0.03		7.85		7.54		8.19	7.3	

Guinea											14.18		14.74		13.56		20.8	
Guinea-Bissau		1.12	0.00	n													19.7	d
Guyana		35.42	0.04		2.19	0.00		30.99	0.03								10	b
Haiti		18.02	0.02		3.10	0.00		33.23	0.03		13.37		10.90		15.96		12.2	
Honduras		35.09	0.04		6.47	0.01		69.30	0.07		6.73		6.32		7.24		7.2	
Hong Kong, SAR, China		0.40	0.00		0.32	0.00		0.49	0.00		0.55		0.34		0.80		3	b
Hungary		0.94	0.00		0.85	0.00		1.04	0.00		3.42		4.05		2.74		5.7	
Iceland		0.54	0.00		0.55	0.00		0.53	0.00		2.86		4.05		1.61		2.8	
India		3.71	0.00		2.50	0.00		3.35	0.00		8.11		7.64		8.53		24.0	c
Indonesia		0.32	0.00								1.11		1.27		0.95		9	b
Iran (Islamic Republic of)		2.42	0.00	k	0.57	0.00	k	4.22	0.00	k	3.51		3.37		3.65		18	b
Iraq		9.41	0.01	j	3.04	0.00	j	15.82	0.02	j	9.92		6.98		12.73		16.5	d
Ireland		0.88	0.00		0.39	0.00		1.37	0.00		4.53		4.51		4.56		3.3	
Israel		1.63	0.00		0.53	0.00		2.73	0.00		5.78		4.90		6.71		5.6	
Italy		0.55	0.00		0.42	0.00		0.68	0.00		3.50		4.28		2.73		3.5	
Jamaica		53.34	0.05		8.70	0.01		98.69	0.10		2.95		3.17		2.71		7.3	
Japan		0.35	0.00		0.21	0.00		0.25	0.00		1.63		0.92		2.39		3.9	
Jordan		1.12	0.00		0.70	0.00		1.51	0.00		7.01		5.14		8.62		13.8	c
Kazakhstan		6.12	0.01		1.52	0.00		5.00	0.00		1.97		2.05		1.88		6.0	
Kenya		4.89	0.00		2.66	0.00		7.16	0.01		25.57		27.27		23.75		22.8	
Kiribati		7.17	0.01	i													25	b
Korea (Democratic People's Rep. of)																	7.7	d
Korea, Republic of		0.53	0.00		0.53	0.00		0.53	0.00		1.31		1.26		1.35		8	b
Kosovo under UNSCR 1244		1.99	0.00		0.36	0.00		3.62	0.00		1.58		1.17		1.99		5	b
Kuwait		0.25	0.00		1.07	0.00		1.09	0.00		4.19		5.42		3.55		18.1	d
Kyrgyzstan		3.58	0.00								2.05		2.17		1.90		13.3	

Lao People's Democratic Republic											1.73		0.63		2.90		8	b
Latvia		3.62	0.00		4.03	0.00		3.03	0.00		1.88		1.91		1.85		6.3	
Lebanon		2.26	0.00		0.99	0.00		5.64	0.01		8.93		5.93		11.97		18.2	d
Lesotho											5.71		1.97		9.87		16	b
Liberia		3.12	0.00	i							27.75		25.52		30.14		34.8	c
Libya											13.86		10.04		16.97		18.3	d
Liechtenstein		5.12	0.01		5.08	0.01		5.17	0.01									
Lithuania		2.44	0.00		1.99	0.00		2.94	0.00		3.16		4.21		1.90		5.2	
Luxembourg		1.54	0.00		1.55	0.00		1.53	0.00		4.08		4.95		3.23		3.5	
Macao, SAR, China		0.29	0.00		0.54	0.00		0.00	0.00									
Madagascar											10.14		11.99		8.10		15.6	c
Malawi		1.79	0.00	i							8.28		5.96		10.93		16.6	
Malaysia		0.72	0.00								3.19		2.35		3.97		19	b
Maldives		0.59	0.00		2.50	0.00	n	10.64	0.01	n	3.99		3.41		4.64		5.6	c
Mali											19.37		16.67		22.23		20.9	c
Malta		0.57	0.00		0.00	0.00		0.73	0.00		2.32		1.74		2.86		4.0	
Marshall Islands																	19	b
Mauritania		1.02	0.00								8.98		8.95		9.02		6.4	c
Mauritius		2.23	0.00		1.52	0.00		2.97	0.00		2.83		2.09		3.63		13.2	d
Mexico		26.11	0.03		6.01	0.01		46.22	0.05		8.16		6.93		9.49		9.9	
Micronesia (Federated States of)		0.90	0.00		1.81	0.00		0.00	0.00								21	b
Moldova, Republic of		3.01	0.00		1.61	0.00		4.57	0.00		3.33		4.42		2.13		9	b
Monaco		0.00	0.00	m	0.00	0.00	l	0.00	0.00	l							6.5	d
Mongolia		12.28	0.01		2.55	0.00		9.81	0.01		2.78		1.13		4.58		11.5	
Montenegro		2.55	0.00		1.86	0.00		3.27	0.00		4.15		3.19		5.05		4.4	
Morocco		1.65	0.00		0.42	0.00		2.86	0.00								10.5	

Mozambique		3.57	0.00	h							11.96		10.09		14.09		16.4	
Myanmar		3.87	0.00		1.14	0.00		6.63	0.01		6.25		5.49		7.04		11	b
Namibia		12.45	0.01		6.80	0.01		18.51	0.02		15.03		13.85		16.34		15.9	
Nauru																	20	b
Nepal		2.21	0.00	j							10.60		11.38		9.72		11.4	
Netherlands		0.81	0.00		0.54	0.00		1.08	0.00		2.79		1.90		3.70		5.1	
New Zealand		0.62	0.00		0.54	0.00	n	0.94	0.00	n	2.65		1.35		3.97		4.2	
Nicaragua		11.01	0.01		3.11	0.00		19.14	0.02		6.29		4.74		7.98		6.4	
Niger		4.39	0.00	i							18.50		21.51		15.53		13	b
Nigeria		21.74	0.02								15.76		16.88		14.66		13.8	c
North Macedonia		0.86	0.00		0.29	0.00		1.44	0.00		3.78		4.72		2.82		4.2	
Norway		0.55	0.00		0.52	0.00		0.58	0.00		1.79		0.69		2.87		4.4	
Oman		0.26	0.00		0.28	0.00		0.25	0.00								18.1	d
Pakistan		4.21	0.00								4.59		4.64		4.54		14.5	c
Palau		11.20	0.01														14	b
Palestine, State of		1.41	0.00		0.27	0.00		2.56	0.00		8.30		7.09		9.56		19	b
Panama		11.32	0.01		1.86	0.00		20.78	0.02		2.41		2.19		2.65		7.8	
Papua New Guinea		9.40	0.01	g													47.6	c
Paraguay		6.96	0.01		1.92	0.00		13.70	0.01		5.93		6.23		5.63		5.5	
Peru		0.95	0.00		2.14	0.00		9.19	0.01		11.74		11.38		12.12		11.1	
Philippines		4.32	0.00		0.80	0.00		7.73	0.01		3.03		3.40		2.65		5.9	
Poland		0.68	0.00		0.44	0.00		0.92	0.00		3.09		3.29		2.89		3.1	
Portugal		1.53	0.00		0.46	0.00		1.17	0.00		2.74		2.76		2.71		4.4	
Puerto Rico		17.59	0.02		3.08	0.00		33.83	0.03								16.3	d
Qatar		0.33	0.00		0.54	0.00		0.26	0.00								18.0	d
Romania		1.26	0.00		0.84	0.00		1.70	0.00		2.48		2.92		2.00		6.9	

Russian Federation		6.81	0.01		3.30	0.00		10.80	0.01		3.19		1.99		4.62		8.0	d
Rwanda		3.59	0.00								16.17		18.31		13.64		23.8	c
Saint Kitts and Nevis		29.41	0.03		4.07	0.00		56.48	0.06								16.2	d
Saint Lucia		36.70	0.04		9.90	0.01		64.08	0.06								16.2	d
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		40.41	0.04		9.80	0.01		69.91	0.07								16.1	d
Samoa		6.20	0.01		0.97	0.00		11.20	0.01								18	b
San Marino		0.00	0.00	h	0.00	0.00	h	0.00	0.00	h							6.5	d
Sao Tome and Principe		3.23	0.00	h	0.00	0.00	h	0.00	0.00	h							18	b
Saudi Arabia		2.22	0.00														18.0	d
Senegal											4.98		5.43		4.48		6.1	c
Serbia		1.02	0.00		0.53	0.00		1.56	0.00		4.37		5.11		3.52		3.9	
Seychelles		4.70	0.00		5.25	0.01	k	26.47	0.03	k							13.3	d
Sierra Leone		2.14	0.00								27.23		25.52		29.10		40.0	c
Singapore		0.12	0.00		0.07	0.00		0.16	0.00		1.14		0.73		1.54		2	b
Slovakia		0.74	0.00		0.59	0.00		0.76	0.00		1.43		1.60		1.25		5.9	
Slovenia		0.61	0.00		0.47	0.00		0.75	0.00		2.82		2.52		3.13		3.4	
Solomon Islands																	28.1	
Somalia											6.41	h	7.14	h	5.67		27.0	d
South Africa		33.96	0.03		9.02	0.01		66.05	0.07		16.02		13.88		18.30	g	13	b
South Sudan		14.05	0.01	i							25.40	f	22.76	f	28.04	f	26.7	
Spain		0.68	0.00		0.50	0.00		0.88	0.00		2.75		3.22		2.29	e	2.9	
Sri Lanka		3.43	0.00		2.22	0.00		4.72	0.00		3.45		3.42		3.48		4	b
Sudan																	16.7	
Suriname		7.28	0.01		3.22	0.00		11.38	0.01		6.69	g	6.83	g	6.55		7.7	
Sweden		1.10	0.00		0.44	0.00		1.75	0.00		2.01		1.80		2.20	f	6.3	
Switzerland		0.49	0.00		0.45	0.00		0.53	0.00		3.11		2.66		3.60		1.7	

Zimbabwe		6.65	0.01		2.32	0.00		11.50	0.01		5.68		4.89		6.54		18.2	
Developing regions	p																	
Northern Africa & the Middle East		2.82	0.00		1.02	0.00		5.16	0.01		7.39		6.55		8.14		16.42	
East Asia and the Pacific		1.73	0.00		1.45	0.00		9.60	0.01		2.55		2.20		2.89		8.14	
Europe and Central Asia		4.28	0.00		2.01	0.00		6.75	0.01		3.49		2.31		4.82		8.87	
Latin America and the Caribbean		20.88	0.02		3.85	0.00		38.13	0.04		7.77		7.10		8.49		8.20	
South Asia		3.07	0.00		2.35	0.00		3.66	0.00		8.17		7.74		8.57		22.37	
Sub-Saharan Africa		12.53	0.01		3.63	0.00		19.53	0.02		14.62		14.92		14.29		20.70	
Developed regions	p																	
Europe (developed countries)		0.88	0.00		0.59	0.00		1.17	0.00		4.56		5.04		4.05		4.10	
North America and the Pacific (developed countries)		6.01	0.01		2.57	0.00		9.50	0.01		2.37		1.82		2.94		5.54	
Income category	p																	
High income		2.58	0.00		1.24	0.00		4.06	0.00		3.30		3.24		3.37		5.52	
Upper-middle income		6.75	0.01		3.41	0.00		26.63	0.03		4.35		3.71		5.00		8.52	
Lower-middle income		4.95	0.00		2.19	0.00		5.50	0.01		7.72		7.44		7.98		18.54	
Low income		9.71	0.01		3.26	0.00		31.72	0.03		13.02		13.42		12.59		22.56	
Human development category	p																	
Very high human development		3.12	0.00		1.43	0.00		4.97	0.00		3.57		3.25		3.90		6.58	
High human development		6.06	0.01		3.05	0.00		26.27	0.03		3.95		3.50		4.41		9.05	
Medium human development		4.80	0.00		2.58	0.00		7.49	0.01		9.12		8.69		9.52		21.03	
Low human development		9.69	0.01		2.29	0.00		12.59	0.01		11.32		11.71		10.91		20.19	
World	o	5.47	0.01		2.27	0.00		10.70	0.01		6.07		5.73		6.41		13.94	

NOTES:

a) Refers to the most recent year with data within the interval.
b) Estimates (modeled) from WHO's "Violence Against Women, Prevalence Estimates," 2018, More details can be found on the WHO website, https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256.
c) Estimates based on the USAID Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) Program 2018–2022. More details can be found on the DHS overview website, https://dhsprogram.com/Methodology/Survey-Types/DHS.cfm.
d) Estimates (modeled) from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME)."Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Intimate Partner Violence Indicator 1990–2019," *Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington.* June 16, 2022, https://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/ihme-data/global-sustainable-development-goals-sdg-intimate-partner-violence-indicator-1990-2019.
e) Estimates based on data from the following report, "Violence against women: An EU-wide survey," *The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights*, March 2014, https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report.
f) Based on the DHS 2016. .
g) Refers to 2010.
h) Refers to 2011.
i) Refers to 2012.
j) Refers to 2013.
k) Refers to 2014.
l) Refers to 2015.
m) Refers to 2016.
n) Refers to 2017.
o) Approximated from the available counts and rates.
p) The aggregated homicide rates are not strictly comparable across gender groups because the national homicide rates presented in this table often refer to different "most recent years" for female and male victims and the total. For some countries, only the total homicide rate is reported.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Homicide (intentional):** Intentional homicide is defined as unlawful death purposefully inflicted on a person by another person(s).
- **Assault:** Percentage of people (both sexes, females or males) age 15 and older who answered "Yes" to the question: "Within the past 12 months, have you been assaulted or mugged?"
- **Intimate partner violence:** the percentage of ever-partnered women 15 years old or older in a given population who have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the 12 months (preceding the survey).

DATA SOURCES:

Homicide: “Homicide Country Data,” UNODC, 2023, https://dataunodc.un.org/content/homicide-country-data, downloaded on January 7, 2024.

Assault: Gallup's World Poll database, https://www.gallup.com/analytics/318923/world-poll-public-datasets.aspx, downloaded on April 5, 2023.

Intimate Partner Violence: “UN Sustainable Development Goal Database,” UN Stats, https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataContacts?selectIndicator=&selectAgency=who, downloaded on April 2, 2023.

ANNEX 2:
EVIDENCE TABLE FOR BUSINESS CASE FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION

Intervention	Level	Description	Impact on Violence	Cost and Return on Investments (USD)
Sustainable Transformation of Youth Program (STYL)[259] Liberia (2009–2011)	Individual and Family	A program that provided two experimental interventions to high-risk men and street youth: an eight-week CBT intervention and a cash grant.	Long-lasting results. Self-reported results ten years after implementation of the program show that weapon carrying was 7.5% lower for the therapy group and 4.4% lower for the therapy + cash group compared to a 2.8% decrease for the control group.	USD 530 total per participant.
Becoming a Man (BAM)[260, 261] United States (2012–2013)	Individual and Family	In-school programs for at-risk school children. It combines sports, youth engagement, positive masculinity training with CBT, and weekly counseling.	Becoming a Man (BAM) students are 40-50% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime.	USD 1100 per student.
Violence and Alcohol Treatment Program (VATU)[262, 263] Zambia (2016–2018)	Individual and Family	Mental health support program for couples to address depression, anxiety, IPV, and unhealthy alcohol use.	Women reported a 40% decrease in IPV in participating families. Reached 246 adults and estimated to have achieved 264 IPV-free person-years.	USD 1,324 per adult client (12 sessions).
Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)[264] United States and various countries	Level	Intervention consisting of sessions on parenting, resources, and media campaigns aimed at strengthening parenting and reducing child maltreatment.	33% reduction in child maltreatment cases and 13% reduction in child hospitalizations for injuries at the county level.	

Intervention	Level	Description	Impact on Violence	Cost and Return on Investments (USD)
Parenting for Lifelong Health: Sinovuyo[265] South Africa (2012–2016)	Individual and Family	The program consists of sessions conducted by trained community members to help families navigate the challenges of parenting adolescents in low- and middle-income countries by using collaborative learning techniques such as traditional stories, role plays, and home practice.	Participating families reported lower abuse, corporal punishment, and improved positive parenting.	
The Cure Violence Model [266, 267] New York City (2010–2012), Chicago (2012–2013), and other regions	Community and Local	Community mobilization and outreach focusing on high-risk individuals. The intervention focused on training community members to work as Violence Interrupters and de-escalate potentially violent crimes. The program was implemented in many places, but results are based on New York and Chicago studies.	63% drop in shootings in New York City and a 48% decrease in shootings in Chicago.	USD 3,500-4,500 for every violent incident that has been prevented.
Project REASON [268] Trinidad and Tobago (2015–2017)	Community and Local	Adaption of the Cure Violence model, which trains community members as Violence Interrupters.	Reported a 23% reduction in violent crime based on police reports and a 38.7% reduction in shootings based on hospital-recorded injuries. Also reported were 45.1% fewer violent crimes within one year than the control group.	USD 3,577 per violent crime prevented (USD 937,139.82 total program cost).
Ceasefire Strategies [269] US cities (1990s, 2000s, 2010s)	Community and Local	Focused deterrence program aimed at reducing shootings and killings by focusing social service, community-based, and criminal justice resources on a small group of people involved in most of the city's violence. Employed a data-driven strategy coordinating law enforcement, social services, and the local community.	In Chicago, shootings were reduced to 17% of pre-program levels, and there was a 63% increase in "no-murder" months compared to 50% in comparable areas. In Oakland, there was a 43% reduction in gun homicides and a 50% decrease in nonfatal shootings. In Boston, there was a 63% decrease in mean monthly youth homicide and a 32% decrease in "shots-fired" calls.	Annual budget of USD 240,000 (Chicago).

Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) [270, 271] United States (2008–2015)	Community and Local	Focused deterrence approach aims to increase community awareness, protectaiming at increasing community's awareness, protecting at-risk youth, and coordinatecoordinating well-structured responses to gang violence. It sought to strengthen youth/young adults, family, and community resilience to the influence of gangs using community engagement, gang prevention, gang intervention, and violence interruption. Community members were trained as Community Intervention Workers.	Reported a 30% reduction in gang retaliation. In 2014 and 2015, outreach workers prevented 185 violent gang crimes.	USD 30 million per year. The number of homicides prevented by the program was estimated to save the LA city authorities USD 89 million over two years (2014–2015).
Program H [272, 273] Brazil, India	Community and Local	Workshops and community mobilization to change attitudes among young men. Aimed at educating young men on issues of gender equality and IPV, with a participatory curriculum offered by trained mentors in weekly small group sessions.	Significant positive changes in gender attitudes, partner communication, and partner violence. Results in India showed that men who reported IPV declined to less than 20% of the original number.	USD 108-61 per male participant.
Start Awareness Support Action (SASA!) [274, 275, 276] Uganda (2007–2012)	Individual and Family	Community intervention to combat power imbalance between men and women. SASA! consisted of four strategies: local activism, media and advocacy, communication materials, and training. Community activists were also trained.	Women in intervention communities were 52% less likely to report past year experience of physical IPV compared with women in control communities.	USD 392 per community activist supported per year.
Indashyikirwa [277] Rwanda (2015–2018)	Community and Local	Program aimed to change gender norms through individual and couple-based IPV prevention programs and training community activists. Intervention drew heavily on SASA!	Women were less likely to report physical and/or sexual IPV at 24 months (adjusted relative risk 0.44). Men were significantly less likely to report perpetration of physical and/or sexual IPV at 24 months.	
Safe Dates [278] North Carolina (1998)	Community and Local	Workshops for middle-school students raising awareness on what constitutes a healthy and abusive relationship.	Treatment group reported 25% less psychological and 60% less physical violence.	USD 17.40 per student.

Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE) [279] South Africa (2001–2004)	Community and Local	Microfinance initiatives combined with gender and HIV training.	Reported a 55% reduction in the past year's experience of physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner.	USD 43 per client in the trial phase and USD 13 per client in the scale-up phase. Cost-effectiveness ratios for the trial and the scale-up phase were USD 710 and USD 213 per woman per IPV-free year gained.
LandCare Program [280] United States (1999–2008)	Community and Local	Intervention that cleaned and greened vacant lots, to reduce space or refuges for criminal activity.	Reductions in assaults and gun violence by about 4 and 9%, respectively.	USD 177 annual cost to maintain one green lot or community garden. Every dollar invested in the program yielded USD 26 in net benefits to taxpayers from reduced gun violence and up to USD 333 in societal costs, such as pain and suffering associated with a gun assault.
Stepping Stones and Creating Futures (SSCF) [281] South Africa (2015–2018).	Community and Local	Program aimed to decrease IPV and HIV risks in informal settlements through peer-led, interactive sessions held with young adults. Aimed to build knowledge, risk awareness, and communication skills around gender, HIV, violence, and economic skills.	39% reduction in physical IPV, a 54% reduction in economic IPV, a 32% reduction in sexual IPV, and a 28% reduction in non-partner rape perpetration	

Men as Partners [282] South Africa (2004–2005).	Community and Local	Launched to challenge attitudes, values, and behavior of men that compromise their health and encourage men to be involved in HIV prevention. Educational workshops with groups of men. Evaluation had a qualitative component, as well as pre- and post-workshop questionnaires.	95% of respondents said that MAP workshops changed their way of thinking about gender, mainly in terms of eliminating violence against women.	
Peace and Opportunities for Palmira (PAZOS) [283] Colombia (2021–2022)	Community and Local	The program blends targeted enforcement and service provision focusing on the most high-violence communities. It offers skill-building and social development activities to at-risk youth.	Significant reduction in the number of homicides, increased participation in the labor market by youth targeted by the program	
Place-based intervention in Medellin[284] Colombia (2004–present)	Community and Local	Place-based intervention that built a public transit system to connect isolated low-income neighborhoods to the city's urban center, together with municipal investment in neighborhood infrastructure.	66% greater reduction of homicides in intervention neighborhoods. Reports of violence decreased by 75% in intervention neighborhoods.	
Soul City [285, 286] South Africa (1994–2015)	Community and Local	Educational weekly TV drama series about social problems, including domestic violence and alcohol abuse. The series also promoted new norms and community behavioral responses to violence.	Survey found increased levels of support-seeking and support-giving behavior in response to violence associated with exposure to the series.	USD 0.16, USD 0.01, and USD 0.10 per person reached by television, radio, and print media, respectively.
PMC- Saliwansai [287] Sierra Leone (2012–2015)	State and National	National radio drama focused on obstetric fistula, ending female genital mutilation, stopping gender-based violence, and preventing HIV infection.	Listeners are 1.6 times more likely than non-listeners to say they know of an organization or people that advocate against domestic violence.	USD 0.53 per listener.
Violence Prevention and Promotion of Social Inclusion [288] Costa Rica (2011–2018)	International	Multilateral bank funded a series of initiatives to reduce violent crime in Costa Riça through institutional strengthening, the establishment of Civic Centers for Peace, and rehabilitation units.	Surpassed the goal of reducing the robbery rate (764%) and improving citizens' feeling of security (107%).	USD 187,752,000 total budget. The cost-benefit of the program was estimated to be USD 2.12 for every dollar invested due to crime prevention.

Istanbul Convention Europe (2014–present)	International	Treaty of the Council of Europe that sets the standards for prevention, protection, and prosecution of violence against women and domestic violence.	Changes in national legislation in signatory countries to better address domestic violence.	

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