



PREPAREDNESS & Security Sector Reform

This paper is one in a series that examines how the act of helping civilians brace for violence can complement and benefit efforts in many fields related to peace and conflict.

Local capacity for self-preservation has powerful implications for protection, human rights, nonviolent resistance, development aid, disaster risk reduction, early warning and response, humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, and security sector reform, as well as efforts to manage conflict, reduce recruitment into violence, mitigate displacement, and prevent conflict returning.

The knock-on effects of civilians being better prepared for inexorable violence have scarcely been considered (even within the field of protection). Nothing else has such crosscutting potential as preparedness: It is the hidden common denominator of our work.

Aid service providers will often be the best situated to support local preparedness. But by getting better joined up with such providers, the practitioners in these other fields may see a very impactful multiplier upon their work on the ground.

Join state security reform tomorrow with local security provision today.

1. One prominent strategy for local preparedness has often been community policing. “Community policing has a long history: elements of it are found in most traditions and customs across the world.”¹ There can be major benefits for state-based security to get better joined up with informal, non-state (civil society-based) security. Yet “the actual role and influence of civil society in the post-conflict reconstruction of security institutions has received surprisingly little systematic attention and analysis.”²
2. Local policing can prove to be a crucial bridge for those who need security during the dangerous months or even years in which formal security sector reforms (SSR) are slowly taking hold. Whether this means a period of “substitution” or a relationship of “synergy,” it begins this way: respect and support for local preparedness.
3. The 2007 *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform* says “in post-conflict environments the capacity of the state to fulfill its basic role as provider of justice and security is often very weak. In some cases, the major providers can be non-state actors who are more effective, more accessible, fairer, quicker, cheaper, and more in tune with people’s values.”³ It warns that “an approach that focusses solely on developing state capacities is unlikely to be sustainable or effective in many developing countries or fragile states. There, the state often has significant capacity deficits (financial, personnel, infrastructure), may not be viewed as legitimate by significant portions of the population, and historically may never have exercised full sovereign authority over its territory... Research suggests that, in fragile states, non-state actors provide up to 80-90% of the delivery of all justice services and a large proportion of security services as well.”⁴

4. Significantly, the handbook says “the challenges in connection with non-state justice and security are often no more severe than those linked to the state system. In fact, they often mirror each other.”⁵ It concludes that SSR efforts should adopt a “multilayered” approach blending state and non-state actors and systems. Such efforts should make “local ownership the point of departure,” “build on what exists and support local ongoing initiatives,” and “focus on sustainability, adapting programming to local resources, values and capacities.”⁶
5. Bruce Baker, who has written exhaustively about non-state policing, likewise finds that it often shows significant local ownership, accountability, cultural relevance, effectiveness, accessibility, low cost, speed, sustainability, and resilience amid violence. Not always, but often. He also writes that “though war and conflict quickly decimate state structures, these groups have a history of being resilient and of being adaptable to the changing needs of the local populace.”⁷
6. Whether security burden sharing established today is what security provision should look like tomorrow is a separate question. But the potential for building local/state trust now can be of incalculable benefit for the future.
7. There are many styles and vendors of non-formal policing. As one example of that variety, some are armed and others are not. There are weaponless facets—patrolling, observation or listening posts, interdiction and questioning techniques, situational awareness; command, communication and control; dispersion and maneuver; cover and deception; rehearsal and much more—which save lives. The existence of nonlethal policing functions increases the field of actors who might want to support security preparations. (The caveat is that policing is not for amateurs per se. Locals with experience and nonlocals with expertise can jointly devise modules on the subject.)
8. Given that weak, recovering states often struggle with reach and capacity, this is another example in which one might look to sync up with aid service providers already on the ground. Baker lauds the interest of many in “regarding law and order issues as an entry-point to development projects.”⁸ He notes “there are development NGOs that aim to enhance the prospects for better safety and security of person and property” and that “support for community-policing initiatives by independent NGOs can be of enormous benefit.”⁹ “Together every local community organisation, international NGO and government agency concerned with improving the quality of life in the community... can develop a community safety plan...”¹⁰
9. This again goes to the heart of something quite like the process of preparedness support which the Center for Civilians in Harm’s Way advocates..
10. Preparedness support can help bridge the efforts of state and non-state security sector actors.

Endnotes

¹ *African Union Mission in The Sudan: Police Component*; p. 7 of article. Found at: <http://amis-sudan.org/PoliceComponent.html>.

² Marina Caparini, "Enabling Civil Society in Security Sector Reconstruction," *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, Editors: Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi, Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Geneva, 2005; p. 69.

³ The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2007; p. 104.

⁴ The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2007; p. 67.

⁵ The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2007; p. 104.

⁶ The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2007; p. 26, 63 and 64.

⁷ Bruce Baker, "Beyond the Tarmac Road: Local Forms of Policing in Sierra Leone and Rwanda", *Review of African Political Economy No. 118*, ROAPE Publications Ltd., 2008 p. 568.

⁸ Bruce Baker, "Multi-Choice Policing in Uganda", *Policing and Society*, Vol 15 (1): 19-41, 2005; p. 15. Found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1043946042000338913>. **See also:** Bruce Baker, *Multi-Choice Policing in Africa*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Elanders Gotab AB, Stockholm 2008; pp. 170 and 198.

⁹ Bruce Baker, *Multi-Choice Policing in Africa*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Elanders Gotab AB, Stockholm 2008; p. 198.

¹⁰ Bruce Baker, "Multi-Choice Policing in Uganda", *Policing and Society*, Vol 15 (1): 19-41, 2005; p. 15. Found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1043946042000338913>.