

National and local reports on security and armed violence

Overview

Expert group on security and armed violence reports

1. What is this initiative?

This initiative works to increase the number of countries and local governments producing regular reports on security and armed violence.

A clear constituency of Member States committed to building national systems to monitor insecurity and armed violence has been growing within various international and regional frameworks.¹ At national and local levels, public health institutions, security agencies and civil society organisations are all increasingly engaging in measuring and monitoring this problem.

The 2011 Outcome Document of the Review Conference of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development for example calls on countries to “(...) *establish national armed violence monitoring and reporting mechanisms.*” In line with this growing focus on understanding armed violence through evidence, Norway, Guatemala, France, and Peru have all produced a national overview of, or strategy on, the problem of armed violence.

In 2012 a number of interested civil society organisations² came together to discuss a joint strategy to promote and harmonise national and local reports on security and armed violence. They formed an expert group dedicated to work with countries and local governments to produce the report, analyse its content and inform action based on the evidence collected.

2. What can the expert group do?

The members of the expert group are available to:

- Play a facilitation role in reaching out to the relevant actors to be engaged in the initiative;
- Support countries with technical expertise;
- Facilitate access to technical and human resources needed to implement this initiative;
- Analyse the information included in the reports; and
- Work with countries to discuss how the information can be used to inform practical action.

In fulfilling these roles, the Expert Group does not see itself as a monitoring body but rather as a facilitator of national and local engagement with the process.

As a first step, the expert group has elaborated a template and a set of guidelines that can guide countries and local governments in the elaboration of the reports.

¹ The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development and the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence as well as the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Parliamentarians’ initiatives such as the General Assembly of the Parliamentarian Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons that adopted a statement calling for the production of national reports on armed violence and the parliamentarians attending the Organisation of American States’ Summit adopting a resolution calling on countries in the region to produce national reports on armed violence.

² The following organisations are members of the expert group: Action on Armed Violence (UK), Asociación para Políticas Públicas (Argentina), Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (Colombia), Global Alliance on Armed Violence, FOMICRES (Mozambique), Geneva Declaration Secretariat (Switzerland), Oxford Research Group (UK), Small Arms Survey (Switzerland), Women’s Institute for Alternative Development (Trinidad and Tobago).

3. What is the purpose of the reports?

The reports aim to assess the incidence of and responses to insecurity and armed violence at a national, as well as local level.

They are tools to drive and strengthen responses to violence.

They aim to engage all the relevant actors at local and national level to facilitate coordinated approaches to insecurity and armed violence.

They are national and local in nature. The objective is to build on international good practices for national and local use and not to create some kind of international ranking of states.

4. Why produce a national or local report?

Nowadays, evidence is essential to any approach aiming to understand and address armed violence. Evidence is what is needed to identify the problem, elaborate the response and measure the impact of the response. Without this information, it becomes very difficult to engage local, national, regional and international partners in efforts to tackle such complex issues. Through the reports, countries and local governments have the opportunity to increase understanding of the causes and consequences of violence. The evidence can be used to reach out to partners, as well as international donors in order to elaborate joint approaches to the problem.

Insecurity and armed violence are multifaceted issues that require a coordinated response between governmental and nongovernmental institutions. To respond to this reality, the reports contain different sets of data, for example health data, crime and justice information, victimisation surveys, conflict/non conflict data, which jointly provide a comprehensive overview of the impact of insecurity and armed violence. This approach generates a dialogue between actors in order to drive new ideas on how to address the problem.

The reports facilitate the promotion of effective practices to reduce insecurity and armed violence so that experiences can be shared and adapted to other realities.

With the evidence included in the reports, government agencies and civil society have the opportunity to identify specific areas that need to be addressed. Where relevant, the expert group can support countries in analysing the content of the reports in order to determine adequate responses to identified challenges.

The reports harmonise various reporting needs and obligations. By providing a space to include links to relevant documents that the country produces on topics related to this problem, the reports facilitate the concentration of relevant evidence into one document, avoiding duplication of efforts and improving the access to relevant knowledge.

5. What is the content of the reports?

To reflect the multi-faceted nature of insecurity and armed violence, this report uniquely integrates the main indicators used by countries and the international community to monitor violence.

In order to allow for a comprehensive analysis, it comprises both conflict and non-conflict figures.

Recognising the challenges in recording and monitoring data on insecurity and armed violence, the report has been split in two separate Tiers:

- Tier 1 contains basic information on the impact of violence: data on violent deaths, physical assaults, robberies, and rapes. This part of the report should be filled in completely.
- Tier 2 contains additional indicators such as intentional injuries, kidnappings and information on victimisation surveys that provide further insights on the extent of the problem. It also disaggregates the information for the main indicators and provides a space to highlight particular hotspots of violence. This Tier can be filled in if such information is available.

Each Tier contains a section to showcase successful programmes and policies, a section for contextual information and a space to provide comments on the data. Each Tier allows countries to include links to relevant reports containing useful information on this matter.

Sources of data

The report integrates different sources of data, for example public health information, crime statistics and household surveys. Practice shows that each of these sources is relevant to understand and identify certain causes and consequences of insecurity and armed violence. Crime statistics for example are important to gather information on the perpetrators of violence, the mechanisms used to kill, the circumstances of the violent act, and the relationship between victims and perpetrators. Public health data is very comprehensive in terms of deaths due to violence and can complement crime statistics that often suffer from high rates of under-reporting. Public health data is also very useful to gather demographic information on the victims. Other sources of data such as household surveys are key to collect information on specific types of violence that are often captured only partially by crime and public health data. This is the case for rape and sexual violence rates for example.

The process to produce the report

The structure of this report requires countries and local government to reach out to several actors who record specific information on insecurity and armed violence and are in charge of implementing actions that respond to the challenges. The process of producing the report, analysing it and building recommendations for action is a unique opportunity to strengthen collaboration between key actors.

The expert group will produce an online tool that can guide countries in the elaboration of the report. Experts will also be available to interested governments at the time of analysing the information and elaborating relevant recommendations.

For further information please contact the expert group: expertgroup@dggroups.org

