to provide security is a prevailing culture of impunity in the security sector. In many cities, police are known to use unnecessary force, including torture and unlawful killings, without legal ramifications. For example, research by a Nigerian human rights organization found that senior officers, inspectors and superintendents were knowledgeable of, and even complicit in, acts of torture leading to death perpetrated by police officers.[30] Thus, even when security forces have the capacity, they may still choose not to provide public security in some cases.

The failure of public security and public distrust of security forces can be mutually reinforcing phenomena. Widespread distrust of security forces operating in urban areas can stem from three main sources. The first is their known or suspected collusion with gangs in criminal activity. Security officers have long been known to participate in the illicit drug trade, and to provide arms or information — or turn a blind eye — to criminal activity in many cities. The second is an excessive use of force against people on the streets and in police custody. In extreme cases, this includes torture, rape and unlawful killings.

The third is the practice of targeting minorities, young people and marginalized groups for security crackdowns. For example, in 2002

*The use of torture, unlawful killings, and routinely high levels of corruption among security forces have been reported in cities throughout the world, in both developed and developing countries.*

Kenyan state forces arbitrarily arrested hundreds of refugees from Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo who were living in Nairobi's approximately 130 slums, in a massive military-style operation.[31] Children and youth are also frequently targets of excessive force used by security forces. Although these campaigns are often pursued under the guise of enhancing public security by ridding the streets of "objectionable" individuals, they are perhaps one of the most flagrant examples of the failure of public security resulting from an unwillingness to protect vulnerable groups. Such operations not only exacerbate insecurity and mistrust in communities, but also undermine the legitimacy of state security forces.

Because an excessive use of force is sometimes used by those who patrol slum communities, it is not always clear if these security forces are enhancing or undermining human security. One study in Brazil found that inhabitants of *favelas*, or shantytowns, lacked effective protection from police, but "…when the police [did] intervene, it [was] often by mounting 'invasions' — violent mass raids using no warrants or, on rare occasions, collective warrants that label the entire community as criminal."[32] The use of torture, unlawful killings, and routinely high levels of corruption among security forces have been reported in cities throughout the world, in both developed and developing countries.

## The privatization of security

When security forces are unable or unwilling to protect cities, residents are left to provide their own security. Thus, in many cities, security has become a private commodity among wealthy elites. In South Africa, for example, the number of private security guards has increased by 150 percent since 1997, compared to a 2.2 percent *decrease* in the number of police officials in the same period.[33] Even state police forces there have turned to private security companies to protect some police stations.