

Further developments

In addition to these four themes, where else are cities exerting independent impacts on traditional human security concerns?

Several new avenues for research were identified by our experts:

- the ways in which political insurgencies of various sorts are exploiting the impenetrable qualities of many informal settlements, as bases for the prosecution of strategies of political violence;
- the parallel re-organization of formal state militaries into organizations whose de facto function is to fight against the urbanizing insurgencies just outlined;
- the ways in which both terrorist and insurgent groups and formal state militaries are increasingly targeting the everyday infrastructures and sites of cities within their respective programs of political violence;
- the nexus between technology and cities;
- the role of sport as a conflict resolution field; and,
- the role of urban diasporas in preventing and fuelling conflict.

Moreover, with rapid urbanization in much of the developing world, are cities more likely to be building blocks of peace or tumbling dominoes of conflict?

We need to explore the barriers to putting international city organizations on the global agenda. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a viable partner, and has found some support in the international community. However, the UN still does not recognize local autonomy as a universal principle, and cities are still classified as NGOs rather than government partners. The growing and positive role of UCLG-Africa in spreading professional, democratic, city-level administration has helped to transcend language and colonial-experience barriers that had inhibited effective regional association development in Africa. Experiences such as this are rare, but point to the viability of cities as full-fledged agents of peace.