

patronage at that level. Localized group-on-group conflict over delivery of essential local government services is a key problem for South African cities.

Early warning indicators for city fragility include rising murder rates and gang activity, rapid population growth without concomitant economic activity, more frequent and intense people-power events in cities (demonstrations, riots, strikes), and dominance of organized crime syndicates with respect to service delivery, among others. The dynamism of urban centres makes prediction difficult, however.

On **slum insecurity**, many slums operate in a police vacuum, with 48% of Latin American and Caribbean cities, or parts of cities, considered dangerous or inaccessible to police. In these cases, many slums are 'governed' by organized crime syndicates, gangs, militias, or other armed groups, who collect revenues through some loose tax structure, and use the slum as a base for urban protest or guerrilla activities.

In areas where police do patrol slums, their links with locals are weakened by poor community relations. Rio de Janeiro's slums are sometimes patrolled by a special police force that uses armoured personnel carriers to conduct operations.

In addition to these options for security provision, other slums have engaged in 'community defence' mechanisms. This pluralization of slum security weakens citizen allegiance to the state as security devolves from a public to private good.

On **cities and conflict prevention**, cities can play different roles at various stages of the conflict cycle. Prior to a conflict eruption or after a conflict has subsided, cities can use their symbolism, proximity to the people, mass communication, and 'city diplomacy' to improve the prospects for peace.

Local governments are also able to involve a greater variety of people with different backgrounds at a higher proportion than at the national level, and are able to engage their constituents at the most basic and concrete community level.

Finally, cities can also engage in city-to-city diplomacy, as the Municipal Alliance for Peace between Palestinian and Israeli cities has done, to engage in concrete development and community-building measures that directly engage the people on the ground.