

Over the past two years the concept of human security has increasingly centred on the human costs of violent conflict. Here, practice has led theory. Two initiatives in particular, the campaign to ban landmines and the effort to create an International Criminal Court, have demonstrated the potential of a people-centred approach to security. Anti-personnel landmines are a clear example of a threat to the security of people. While contributing only marginally to the security of states, mines have a devastating impact on ordinary people attempting to rebuild their lives in war-torn societies. The International Criminal Court establishes a mechanism to hold individuals accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and holds the promise of preventing the future abuse of people by governments and other parties to conflicts. Both measures are practical, powerful applications of the concept of human security.