

# Foreword

The objective of this project has been to examine in detail the nature and scale of organized armed violence in urban areas and to explore the value of bringing a human security lens to the challenges posed by cities at the beginning of an “Urban Century.”

For the first time in history, the majority of people now live in cities. Rapid urbanization is already shaping trends in global peace and security. Armed violence is increasingly taking place in sprawling hillside slums, involving adolescent boys with automatic weapons, corrupt police officers determined to “clean up” city streets, or vigilante groups who take justice into their own hands. The violence feeds on the toxic mix of transnational criminal organizations and failed public security.

This book is the product of a unique research partnership between the Human Security Research and Outreach Program of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, and the Canadian Consortium on Human Security, a research network operated through the University of British Columbia’s Centre of International Relations. Over the past year, our two organizations have together explored

the issues of human security in urban spaces. Through this partnership, we have sponsored expert dialogues and conferences, supported graduate student research awards, created a new website ([www.humansecurity-cities.org](http://www.humansecurity-cities.org)), and presented our early findings to international experts at the United Nations World Urban Forum in Vancouver in June 2006.

*Building secure cities will be critical to the prevention of armed violence and the protection of civilians.*

These research and outreach efforts were critical to the identification of a new community of expertise relevant to the human security and cities agenda. This book provides an overview of what we have learned from these expert consultations. It provides a collection of contributions from 40 leading academics, civil society experts, government officials, and graduate students woven together with a general narrative

that tells a compelling story about the human security challenges and opportunities we will face.

Among its main conclusions is that building secure cities — cities with effective public security; inclusive, participatory governance; and positive social capital — will be critical to the prevention of armed violence and the protection of civilian populations from such violence when prevention fails. This research suggests that achieving “cities without slums” — the 11<sup>th</sup> target of the seventh UN Millennium Development Goal — will require a clear recognition of the linkages between security and development. It also suggests that much more work is required by researchers and policy makers in order to fully understand the profound implications rapid urbanization holds for the human security agenda.

Michael Small

Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Global Issues, Foreign Affairs  
and International Trade Canada

Brian Job

Principal Investigator, Canadian  
Consortium on Human Security