

WHOSE SECURITY COUNTS?

Participatory Research on
Armed Violence and Human Insecurity in Southeast Asia



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Acknowledgements

People who are affected by armed violence are rarely in a position to explain how it impacts their lives. This three-year project, now in its second year, is dedicated to exploring the views, understandings and interpretations of survivors and witnesses of armed violence in different settings.

This project began in 2001 in South Asia with four researchers from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Acknowledgments are due to their formative work summarized in the report *Small Arms and Human Insecurity*, published in 2002, which focused on the broad impacts of small arms misuse. That report has now been circulated to all governments in the region, and to over 500 NGOs who work on issues associated with violence, conflict resolution and small arms.

The 2001 research has been built upon by the four researchers of the present study, who live and work in Southeast Asia. Their research, which focuses on the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar) and Cambodia, provides a new, thematic, application of participatory research techniques. The present report captures only a narrow bandwidth of the rich findings of the individual authors that reveal a number of common themes and recommendations.

The next phase of the project will begin in late 2003, and focus on the South Pacific. A group of new researchers, from the Solomon Islands, Bougainville and Papua New Guinea, will carry out substantive participatory research on small arms and violence reduction programmes in the South Pacific. A final synthesis report of their findings, together with the studies from South and Southeast Asia, will be released in 2005.

The editors of this volume wish to thank the literally thousands of people who have participated in the case studies in each of the five countries. It is first and foremost to them that this report is dedicated. This report has been released in Thai, Khmer, Filipino, Burmese and Indonesian, as well as English in order to disseminate the findings as broadly as possible.

We would like to acknowledge the support of a large number of unnamed staff at the Small Arms Survey and Nonviolence International. Particular thanks are due to Mallika Samaranayake of the Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development of Sri Lanka for her encouragement and training of our young researchers in participatory research methodology. We would also like to acknowledge the role of the Third World Studies Center and the Gaston Z Ortigas Peace Institute in Manila, the Working Group on Active Nonviolence and the Working Group for Weapons Reduction in Phnom Penh, and the Peace Information Center in Bangkok.

Our goal in undertaking this research is to bring about greater human security, frequently summarized as the freedoms from want and fear. Until the concerns raised by the communities in this survey are addressed, the only real freedom available to too many people in Southeast Asia will be the freedom from justice.



Participatory Researchers for Southeast Asia

(L to R): Chutimas Sucksai, Thailand & Burma/Myanmar;
Daraaceh (requested anonymity), Aceh-Indonesia;
Raymund Narag, Philippines;
Keng Menglang, Cambodia.

Executive Summary

Whose Security Counts distils the real and perceived impacts of small arms misuse on the human security of civilians in a number of regions of Southeast Asia. *The Small Arms Survey and Nonviolence International* jointly commissioned four researchers to apply qualitative participatory research methods to appraise how people are affected by small arms *in situ*. The research focuses on five communities in *Burma/Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Aceh-Indonesia and the Philippines*. It considers the role of small arms availability and misuse in a wide spectrum of contexts - from fraternity violence to resource exploitation and dam-related development to state and insurgency-directed bloodshed. This report collates the key findings of these studies and highlights, to the extent possible, the voice of the affected populations.

The five case studies reveal surprisingly *common patterns of small arms misuse* that undermine human security. Though each case is distinct and the findings cannot be generalized to the region as a whole, there are a number of crosscutting trends that are relevant to all five focused studies. These include:

- ⌘ the predatory nature of security sector actors;
- ⌘ the frequently coercive dynamics of development;
- ⌘ the various forms of resistance to abusive authority; and
- ⌘ the secondary effects of small arms misuse on livelihoods and rights

Moreover, the studies highlight the potential of participatory methods for better understanding the implications of small arms misuse on personal security, as well in relation to monitoring and evaluating interventions designed to improve safety and security.

First, the cases reveal the regular abuse and predatory tendencies of the security sector (public and private) - often abuses carried out with officially held or distributed small arms. In all cases, there was ample evidence of the abusive role of formal authority structures - particularly the institutions of public and private security - on civilians. These predatory tendencies are a consequence of many of the authoritarian governing structures and institutions at the macro-level - and are experienced locally.

Second, each of the cases highlights how development processes are often pursued coercively - through the use of armed violence. In areas where development projects, including dam building, logging, rubber tapping, oil exploitation and even the education sector take place, small arms are often used as a means of forcibly expelling people, appropriating land or other resources, or as a tool of intimidation.

Third, in each case, resistance - formal and informal, violent and non-violent - are common responses to the coercive use of small arms by authorities. Though resistance can be pursued through formal judicial processes and informal negotiation - where small arms were present, resistance often takes on a militant tenor. Small arms misuse perpetuates asymmetries of power and can lead to violent confrontation and widespread fear.

Fourth, the cases highlight how the availability and misuse of small arms generate ripple effects - often overlooked - that can undermine access to common property resources, reduce development opportunities and exacerbate impoverishment. In resource-scarce areas, particularly in poor rural communities, small arms availability and misuse lead to a spiral of insecurity, affecting fundamental access and entitlement to basic goods and services.

Fifth, the research itself demonstrates the constructive role participatory research methodologies can play in understanding and responding to the manifold effects of arms availability and misuse. Such methods can be used in developing locally-relevant indicators of insecurity that can be measured over time. They can also be drawn upon to improve and make more inclusive the planning and implementation of interventions designed to reduce armed violence. Finally, they can play a key role in monitoring and evaluating specific programmes such as weapons collection and destruction, demobilization and reintegration, and, where appropriate, broad security sector reform interventions.



Nonviolent protest encampment by Pak Moon villagers in Bangkok is destroyed and removed by police after being declared illegal.

The responses of individuals and communities that participated in this study varied according to the radically different level of violence they faced. On the whole, however, groups tended to resolve their original problems through pre-existing social institutions and mechanisms. Only when these mechanisms failed, or where people faced the overwhelming violence by authorities, did the situation become militarized. In each context, individuals evolved local and organised systems of resistance, drawing on existing resources and social capital. Very rarely did they seek assistance from the agencies of the state.

Introduction

A People-Centred Understanding of Small Arms Misuse in Southeast Asia

Armed violence kills or injures an unknown number of civilians in Southeast Asia. Governmental records do not record the weapons used in the more than 15,300 registered homicides every year (see Table 1).² An analysis of available national data suggests that armed violence is relatively low in Southeast Asia, compared to South Asian and South Pacific countries. But it must be recalled that official police figures - particularly aggregate statistics - do not include the many victims of civil wars in Aceh, Mindanao or Myanmar. They rarely capture deaths and injuries suffered in inaccessible villages or insecure areas where the dead are buried or cremated without record, autopsy or media scrutiny. In short, current national statistics on small arms related fatal injuries in Southeast Asia are incomplete and unreliable.³

Despite comparatively low national homicide rates, there is a sense that the region is becoming increasingly militarised. There is a growing perception that the availability and abuse of small arms and light weapons are central to this new insecurity complex. Indeed, such weapons are perceived by many civil society organisations to constitute a challenge to the protection of core human rights and the realization of human security - a stated ambition of some Southeast Asian countries (see Box 1). The misuse of small arms by a range of different actors leads to profound impacts on civilians in ways that are not commonly understood or appreciated.

Country	Homicide per 100,000
Indonesia	1.03 (2001)
Burma/Myanmar	1.18 (1999)
Cambodia	4.89 (2000)
Philippines	7.85 (2000)
Thailand	8.06 (2001)

This study represents a radical departure from more conventional reports on security and arms control. The majority of empirical studies on arms control and the effects of firearms focus on “objective” indicators of armed violence - drawing on a rich and growing vein of epidemiological surveillance data and prioritizing deaths, injuries and crime.⁴ But there is surprisingly little research on how small arms availability and misuse is “subjectively” experienced - particularly in relation to people’s own personal security. What precisely makes people insecure, how is insecurity understood, and what are local responses to redressing their situation? As a result, many impacts go unrecorded or remain hidden. This is a crucial gap that this study begins to fill.

A people-centred analysis of small arms availability and misuse is a first step to democratizing the security agenda. Even where gun violence is a daily reality, many policymakers, bureaucrats and analysts fail to recognize precisely how people are affected, the multiplier effects of insecurity on the wider community or how individuals develop local solutions to their problems.

This is because they often lack the means (or desire) to document the vast range of quantitative and qualitative impacts of small arms-related violence. But these are vital questions and strike at the core of human security.

This collection of participatory assessments of small arms availability and misuse represent a first attempt to empirically measure their indirect effects in a range of different contexts and societies in Southeast Asia. It builds on a previous set of studies under taken by the Small Arms Survey and the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) in Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.⁵ This study confirms that participatory research methods usefully introduce a human-centred approach to research on armed violence by providing a forum for people to explore their own situations, to elaborate their own criteria of risks and their own ideas about what appropriate violence reduction interventions

Box 1. HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Human security is a human rather than state-based approach to security, which prioritises the freedom from want and freedom from fear as pre-conditions for development. Where small arms availability and misuse constitute a threat to human security, then they also threaten the foundations of development. Understanding how, where and why people are affected, then, becomes central to the task of any intervention. Appropriate policy responses to gauge human insecurity must, therefore, be determined by asking people precisely what makes them “feel” insecure.

Human security is a concept only slowly taking root in ASEAN countries. ASEAN has traditionally been a bastion of ‘national security states’, more pre-occupied with military response to internal threats to power than external threats to their territory. This has resulted in an overly powerful security sector in most ASEAN countries; stronger than, and sometimes even independent of, central authority. Military officers have been the central governing authorities in seven out of ten of the ASEAN countries within the past decade.

The concept of human security challenges many accepted practices and traditional approaches by ASEAN authorities. Transfer of power to civilian organizations, civilian oversight of the security sector, transparency and responsible governance will be key changes that will help build human security within the region.

might look like. In other words, participatory research is both demand-based and change-oriented.

This report has several objectives:

- ⌘ To *privilege people's voices* in defining their security needs - and therefore introduce a democratic approach to ensuring security;
- ⌘ To *contribute to the growing evidence base on the multi-dimensional impacts* of small arms availability and misuse; and
- ⌘ To *test the utility of participatory research* in relation to understanding small arms related violence in Southeast Asia.

The bulk of the report is devoted to achieving the first two objectives. As far as the third objective is concerned, the experience of the four researchers reveals a compelling case for expanding participatory research into the study of security and disarmament. Their experiences should also sound a note of caution - particularly with respect to the very real risks associated with carrying out research on small arms issues in violence-affected areas. Nevertheless, their pioneering work has laid out a pragmatic agenda for action and reinforced the call for the increased use of participatory techniques in monitoring and evaluating violence reduction programmes, weapons collection and destruction initiatives and most importantly, security sector reform.

Reflection on Participatory Methods

Conventional social science research is dominated by so-called “experts” - usually outsiders and foreigners - who gather qualitative and quantitative information about a people, a community or a situation. Very often, the research “subjects” are left out of the process. The approach is generally one-sided and extractive, while the process is static and the direct feedback to those participating in the research is limited. Participatory research, on the other hand, goes “two-ways”, is an open process and direct feedback to participants is central to the process. It reverses the role of the researcher and she becomes a listener and a facilitator and the “subject” becomes the “expert”.

There is no single approach to participatory research, or a single cluster of tools and methods. Instead, they are evolving and changing.⁶ The core principles of participatory research emphasize the building of local people's skills to analyse their own problems, the use of findings in an applied and constructive fashion, the transparency of all information generated, the use of multiple methods and the prioritization of “non-expert” knowledge. They represent a cluster of tools rooted in rapid rural appraisal (RRA).⁷

The roots of participatory approaches themselves are found in social anthropology and social movement theory, particularly in Latin America and Southeast Asia, in the 1970s, and Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in the 1980s. Unlike more conventional research approaches, the actual methods and tools evolved in the South and were later transferred and adopted by multilateral institutions, development agencies and academic institutes in the North. They are increasingly used by development and humanitarian agencies because of a growing recognition that information gathering and data collection are essential to ensuring that assistance and interventions meet the needs and priorities of poor, marginalized and rural communities. Such methods, however, have very rarely been used in the analysis of armed violence, much less security related issues.⁸

The following sections consider the findings from four to six month participatory research studies carried out throughout Southeast Asia. For comparative purposes, each case study includes a selected list of national indicators, which relate to either contributing or remedial factors in armed violence. These include: the national homicide rate; the relative ease of acquiring a firearm by ordinary people; types of population displacement; perceptions of corruption within the country; the presence of a UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) focal point, and the presence of a national human rights commission.⁹ It should be emphasized, however, that comparative aggregate data is extremely unreliable in Southeast Asia - a primary reason why this participatory study was undertaken in the first place.



Researcher Chutimas Suksai practices skills of Participatory Research methodology with IDPs in northern Sri Lanka during Small Arms Survey training programme.

Case Study 1: Philippines



Fraternity Violence and Small Arms: Impacts on Student Security in Five Manila Universities

By **Raymund Narag**

Homicide per 100,000	7.85
Law Regulating Firearms Ownership	Ownership Permitted
Cause of Population Displacement within Country	Armed Conflict and Development
Corruption Perception Index (0 Corrupt/ 10 Transparent)	2.6
UN Program of Action focal point established?	Yes
Human Rights Commission Established?	Yes

Selected Country Indicators (See more in Appendix)

An urgent and rapidly escalating crisis facing urban and rural Philippines - as well as other areas of Southeast Asia - is the spread of armed violence among youth, especially in the secondary and tertiary education systems. Though little studied to date, the gravity of student violence is reflected in the popular media's regular accounts of inter-student conflicts involving weapons. The upsurge of violence has both short and long-term costs. First, it is costing schools additional resources in preventive measures, such as security guards, security cordons, closed-circuit television, surveillance and metal detectors. Second, it is accruing costs in relation to faltering student enrolment and school ratings and undermining the quality and quantity of education itself.

This participatory research project sought to explore one aspect of this phenomenon. Its specific focus was on the role of armed violence in "fraternity" systems in five universities in Metropolitan Manila. It aimed to explore the

“fraternity” systems in five universities in Metropolitan Manila. It aimed to explore the types of fraternity violence most common to the area, the dynamics of fraternity member relationships, their attitudes towards small arms, and the impacts of firearms on student security more generally. The overall objective was to put in context university violence and small arms misuse.

This study is groundbreaking in both its thematic and methodological approach. It represents a radical departure from more conventional small arms research in the Philippines, such as that in the conflict-affected regions of Mindanao.¹⁰ In addition to being the first study on small arms use in civilian areas of the Philippines¹¹, it is also the first study of its kind on fraternity violence in Southeast Asia. In so doing, it moves the issue of fraternity violence from the emotive to the empirical arena and represents a highly relevant contribution to literature on small arms use in human society.

Background

The participatory research project was carried out over a six-month period (between May-November, 2002) in Metro Manila among the city’s five principal universities.¹² These included the University of the Philippines (UP), the Technological Institute of the Philippines, the FEATI University, the Far Eastern University and the University of Santo Tomas in Espana.

Though some elements of coercion and force have always featured in fraternity rituals and induction ceremonies, it has become more prolific in recent years. The militarisation of fraternities and their “Brods”, or fraternity members, can themselves be seen as an outcome of a specific period of militarisation of Filipino society. While small arms misuse is now a common problem in all universities in Manila, and the presence of security guards and prevention measures is ubiquitous, many schools are reluctant to recognize the seriousness of the problem. School administrators often seem to prefer to see the current armed violence in their schools as a ‘phase’ or, more worryingly, a normal feature of university-life. Their view does not take into account the political history of violence in the Philippines on the fraternity system.

The Filipino fraternity system itself emerged during US occupation at the beginning of the 1910s. The first fraternity, Upsalong Sigma Phi, was established in 1918, which counts military strongman Ferdinand Marcos was a former member. Fraternities, like other progressive student organisations, strove for academic excellence, the pursuit and vigorous support of nationalism and community development. In many ways, the fraternity system pursued common ideals of nation building and mirrored political developments in the country.

During the politically repressive years of the 1960s, student organizations, including fraternities, were banned. In spite of the introduction of martial law in 1970, however, fraternities persisted, and transformed into mechanisms for student activism and resistance. When the Marcos regime sought to penetrate fraternities with informants, the response from fraternities was to develop ever more elaborate sets of rituals to filter out government operatives from genuine members. Hazing, a feature of all fraternities, took increasingly extreme approaches to “cleansing” prospective entrants.¹³ At the same time, the political rhetoric underpinning fraternities as activist institutions took on a new, more militant, logic.



Fraternity students list the types of arms they hold, their numbers and sources for obtaining them.

Today, there is estimated to be at least one fraternity member for every ten male students. Though the participatory research did reveal some of the more positive aspects of fraternities -such as their support for local candidates for council elections, their social networks which help provide members with future employment, their capacity to mobilize medical students among others - they are, on the whole, more destructive than other student organisations. There is a considerable irony that fraternities designed in the 1920s to inculcate leadership, to promote civility, and to forward student’s rights have served to undermine leaders, sustain violence and tarnish the name of students. But despite the long and frequently violent legacy of fraternities in the Philippines, small arms have only recently surfaced in fraternity violence.

The relationships between fraternities and universities are complex. Fraternities are today, as they were five decades ago, feudal and hierarchical. They have regulated systems of command and control and up to ten per cent of any given fraternity are “officers”. Despite a high turn over of core members -as high as 30 per cent per annum in some schools - they sustain strong links with alumni and outsiders. Different universities have adopted different policies with respect to fraternities. The University of the Philippines, for example, allows fraternities to exist.¹⁴ Other schools have banned fraternities and expel students found to be members. Fraternities fund themselves by membership fees, campus fundraising activities, and through alumni associations and local politicians.

Rationale and Methods

Use of small arms in fraternities, much less fraternity violence in the Philippines, have been little researched. The only study to date on fraternities was administered by Zarko (1995, 2000), and his research focused almost exclusively on the fraternity system at the University of the Philippines. Moreover, his research methodology has been considered compromised because, as a non-member of the fraternity, his key informants were reluctant to support his objectives. On the other hand, research on “small arms” has focused almost exclusively on the conflict in Mindanao and the use of weapons among MILF fighters and the military. There is little evidence of any substantive research on firearms use in non-conflict affected areas.

The principal researcher in this study was himself a former victim of fraternity violence in the Philippines: accused of a murder he did not commit, he was set free after seven years in prison on 6 February 2002. The immediate rationale for this study, then, was to reduce any future possibilities of false imprisonment. But the long-term justification for the study is that fraternity violence is a growing problem - affecting major universities both in and outside Manila. Though limited concrete and systematic evidence exists to back up the claim, there are purported to be approximately five to ten ‘rumbles’, or violent group encounters, per six-month semester at each university under investigation. Though still dismissed by school administrators and policy makers as a low priority issue- the research presented in this report suggests a convincing counter-argument.

The researcher carried out several interviews and focus group discussions with approximately 60 fraternity members at each university. Because of the inherent difficulties of identifying fraternity members, the primary method used to identify and interview members was snowball (interval) sampling. Also interviewed were the Deans of Student Affairs, Vice Chancellors of Student Activities, School Principals and Security Guards of each university. The five universities were chosen because they represented the largest concentration of fraternity populations relative to the overall student population. According to preliminary research, there are between 10-31 fraternities per university with approximately 60-150 members each. The total possible fraternity population was difficult to establish because of the opaque nature of fraternities. Nevertheless, the total estimated pool of “Bros” is 2-3,000.

Findings at a Glance

The progressive militarization of fraternities can be seen as a reflection of the militarization of Filipino society since the 1970s. The language used in frater-

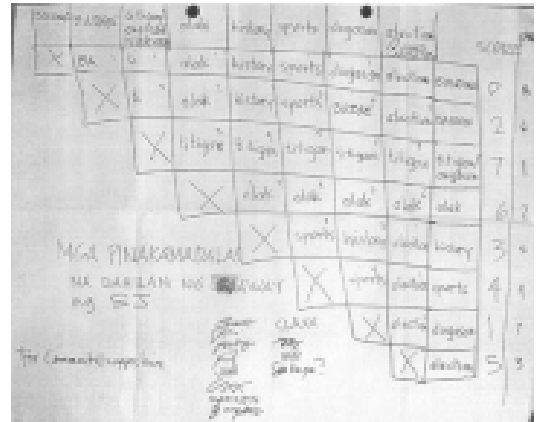
nities reflects a military discourse (e.g. “lost commands”, “rumbles”, “riots”, etc.) just as grenades and firearms are replacing clubs and sticks in their inter-factional conflicts.

Fraternity violence should be understood as a heterogeneous phenomenon. Armed violence can be (i) intra-fraternity - including hazing and initiation; (ii) inter-fraternity - such as conflicts between fraternities; and (iii) between fraternity members and non-fraternity members. Fraternity violence also differs according to universities. Furthermore, fraternity members are themselves differentiated (e.g. “intellectuals” on the one side and “asintado” or hitmen on the other).

Ownership and use of firearms is according to strict hierarchical norms. It is important to recognize the hierarchical system of organisation in relation to small arms possession and misuse. For example, some fraternities assign a single individual custody of guns, grenades, pill-boxes and ‘tubos’ or lead pipes. Others have a more decentralized command and control. In most cases, the headman and individuals in charge of initiation ceremonies exerts considerable influence. Though still not substantiated, there also appears to be widespread belief that sorority girls also smuggle weapons into schools.

The research revealed a number of causes of fraternity violence. During participatory workshops, it was noted that fraternity members bring instruments of war to schools to protect themselves from ‘enemies’. Weapons brought can be used to threaten enemies (deterrence), and as a confidence building measure. When asked why they fight, respondents listed, ranked and prioritized their reasons. These included: “bonding” (as part of fraternity initiation); ‘babae-agawan’ (the defence of women who are accosted); ‘titgan/angasawa’ (the exchange of harsh stare) ‘alak’; (consumption of alcohol); a history or unsettled score (which is mythologized by fraternities); recreation; ‘dugasan’ (theft); and during election-related violence (poster destroying and vandalism). The most common motive for rumbles included titgan and alak, though it is recognized that the sources of violence are frequently multi-causal and mutually reinforcing.

Also revealed were a wide ranging assortment of weapons used in fraternity violence. Types of weapons ranged from baseball bats and switchblade knives to grenades, ‘pillboxes’ (improvised explosives - originating from anti-Marcos activists), belts, knives and ice picks. Though less commonly used, handguns were also widely available, with the most popular models including the Seniorita (.22), the Sumpac (.36, .45) and the Colt (.357).



Fraternity students rank the chief reasons they become involved in fights with others.

The primary source of firearms was identified as the police (including, but not exclusive to, former alumni of the fraternities), and from military compounds during a fraternity member's military service. Also weapons can be bought in the market place, and obtained from security guards. Police and security guards provide fraternity members with weapons (a combination of seized guns and illegally marketed weapons) in return for patronage and resources.

Challenges and Next Steps

The researcher faced a number of obstacles, including the intransigence of teaching and university officials who did not see the value in (or resisted) research on student violence. Paradoxically, in one particular university, research activities were blocked precisely because officials were sensitive to fraternity violence: enrolment had already dropped by almost 20 per cent and earned the institution a reputation as a "hotbed" for violence. As a result, education budgets are being re-appropriated/diverted, and significant numbers of students are refusing to attend schools. Other challenges in undertaking this research were related to the physical dangers associated with contacting closed and violent organizations.

The case study research could be usefully expanded beyond the Metropolitan Manila district to other areas affected by fraternity violence. Additional research is required in rural colleges, vocational and secondary schools. It is believed that a comparative study might demonstrate that the relative influence of parental control in non-urban areas may correspond with diminishing levels of violence.

	TRAUMA	LOSS OF SELF-ESTEEM	LOSS OF FAMILY	LOSS OF LIFE	RANK
1 Academics	10	7	10	6	33
2 Security	5	0	5	6	16
3 Image	0	3	5	2	10
4 Wasting of Productive Energy	0	3	0	0	3
5 Physical Injuries	15	10	15	6	46
6 Deaths	40	40	30	40	150
7 Damage to Properties	5	0	2	3	10
8 Criminal Case	25	30	20	20	95
9 Animosity towards other Frats	0	0	3	0	3
10 No Time For Lovelife	0	0	3	0	3
11 Conflict in the Family	0	7	1	8	16
12 Financial Losses	0	0	5	6	11
13 Spiritual Conflict	0	0	1	3	4

Fraternity students rank the impact of violence on their lives.

Another research area that requires specific attention is the relationship between fraternity systems and secondary and elementary schools. There is some concern that recruitment starts at a young age and that the youth, particularly young girls, are vulnerable to "hirap sarap."¹⁵ Another area of profitable research could also relate to the nexus between fraternity and squat communities - and their evolution into organized criminal gangs. This would also allow for a more profitable exploration of the relationship between guns and drugs in the university system - as fraternities appear to constitute the ideal structure for distribution.

Case Study 2:

Thailand

State-led violence in
Mae Moon Mun Yeun
Village at the
Pak Moon Dam

Researcher: Chutimas Suksai



Homicide per 100,000	8.07
Law Regulating Firearms Ownership	Ownership Permitted
Cause of Population Displacement within Country	Development and Refoulement
Corruption Perception Index (0 Corrupt/ 10 Transparent)	3.2
UN Program of Action focal point established?	Yes
Human Rights Commission Established?	Yes

Selected Country Indicators (See more in Appendix)

A common problem facing much of South and Southeast Asia - including Thailand - is the tradeoffs entailed in large-scale development and infrastructure projects. Dams, the quintessential macro-development project, have winners and losers. Those who benefit have access to increased (and lower cost) hydro-electricity production, up-stream irrigation and aquaculture and possibly water consumption. There is also a sizeable population who are often rendered more impoverished, becoming displaced, involuntarily resettled and deprived of their livelihood and cultural assets. In most cases they are forcibly relocated to a new site. There are always subtle and direct forms of resistance.¹⁶ Most studies on development-induced displacement and resettlement explore the social and economic impacts of dams on people, with some discussion devoted to “resistance”. But no research studies have yet systematically documented the effects of armed violence in relation to civil society movements and dam-affected populations.

This research project explores the case of a unique community, some of



Mae Moon Mun Yeun village gate.

This research project explores the case of a unique community, some of whose members came through displacement during the early flooding caused by the construction of the dam, while others came voluntarily to build a protest village, and their exposure to armed threats by state and non-state actors. It does not ask the usual questions in displacement and resettlement research, such as the numbers of people displaced or forms of compensation, but instead explores the insidious role of small arms in conditioning the relationship between state and civil society. It finds that as elsewhere, violence is often

used in the interests of promoting development. Caught at the intersection of past and present, this research explores the types of threats - both explicit and hidden - a displaced community is exposed to in the face of state force. In so doing, it also appraises the indirect influence of small arms on legitimate societal resistance.

Background

Initial consultations for the Pak Moon Dam first began in 1989, and construction started very soon thereafter. Despite the fact that there was considerable resistance on the part of the local community, the dam was constructed by 1994 under the auspices of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), a state enterprise. Little in the way of compensation was

provided to involuntarily resettled communities. The displaced community itself was fractured in the course of the opposition to the dam. An anti-dam coalition developed to lobby EGAT, while other factions in the community argued in favour of the dam¹⁷, claiming that it might boost irrigation and productivity and even fish production. Many communities were displaced within five to ten kilometres of their original homes and have described government offers of financial compensation as inadequate.

"EGAT people stayed behind the cement block with policemen, volunteer defence officers and border patrol police. Behind them there was a mob of people, local villagers hired by EGAT ... They had 'fishing rifles' [sic], real rifles shooting many times towards the sky as a threat, hammers and clubs. One person ... was shot by fish shooting rifle at his rib cage. He was not dead but he was taken to the hospital in town ... Thousands of people fled away to a wooden bridge back to Hua Hew and there are only 170 Pak Moon demonstrators left. Many people from our side were injured from severe beating."

Mae Sompong, local resident

Many residents of villages affected by the Pak Moon Dam, however, have moved to the EGAT dam-site, occupying nearby land without permission where they have constructed a protest village by the name of Mae Moon

Mun Yeun (literally: Long Live Moon River). The relocated community is distinct from other involuntary settlements in its acutely political nature. It consists exclusively of residents who have settled there in opposition to the EGAT Dam. The community is primarily composed of elders, as the younger generations are working elsewhere since losing their occupation of fishing due to the construction of the dam. The younger generation now works and lives away from the camp, mostly in the cities, to financially support the elders who stay at the protest site. At least 15 per cent of the community was absent at the time of the visit and were said to be working together with another community similarly affected with displacement by a power plant in the south of the country. It is against a backdrop of considerable internal and external conflict, then, that this research appraised the role of small arms.

Rationale and Methods

The government of Thailand actively promotes itself as a safe destination for tourists, and small arms would not generally be recognized outside the country as severe a problem as other nearby countries emerging from, or affected by, war such as Cambodia, Indonesia (Aceh) or Burma/Myanmar. However, gun possession by civilians is legal, and almost four million have been registered over the past 40 years.¹⁸ The total number in circulation is unknown, but it has been estimated at twice the number legally registered.¹⁹ Access to weapons of all types is relatively easy, and assassination a commonly reported crime. Thailand has the highest reported *per capita* homicide rate in the region (see Appendix).

This level of social violence goes largely unrecognized. To the ordinary tourist and uninformed international visitor, it appears that Thailand is less affected by firearm-related violence than its neighbours or other countries of similar economic and demographic size.²⁰ That assumption is wrong. The case of the population protesting the Pak Moon Dam reveals distinct indirect effects of weapons misuse, in state and commercially sanctioned armed violence. Though not the most acutely affected area, the findings nevertheless challenge a superficial reading of the “effects” of small arms, reminding us of the more qualitative aspects of arms-related coercion.

Carried out between September and October 2002, the participatory research drew on a purposive sample of households in Mae Moon Mun Yeun

“I was in Bangkok but came back on the next day, the temple and schools were also burned. They [EGAT] hired people from our village or near by to burn our village at 200-300 baht per day the leaders got 500 baht per day. They [EGAT] had rifles and some villagers had guns but not everybody.”

Phor Charlem, male

village, a settlement of 200 households in total.²¹ Working with the support of a local civil society coalition, the Assembly of the Poor, the researcher reviewed some of the history of the Pak Moon Dam and the growth of opposition and resistance and the particular role of small arms in this context.

Findings at a Glance

At first glance, Mae Moon Mun Yeun village appears to be a relatively peaceful, albeit politically charged, community. Prior to carrying out participatory research, the researcher assumed that firearm misuse and injuries were prevalent in the community. It was believed that NGO activists; community leaders; and civil society actors were under constant threat. The evidence suggested otherwise. In fact, there had only been a single reported firearm injury during the previous decade. The victim of that particular incident still walked about the village with the bullet embedded in his body. Nevertheless, primary qualitative research captured some of the more subtle and indirect effects of firearms in relation to community activism, resistance and the basic right to political expression and the redress of grievances.

Mae Moon Mun Yeun villagers make chart of attacks which took place over the time of their protest, weapons used and perpetrators.

When asked what made them feel “insecure”, community members cited a diverse array of threats- from the absence of cultivatable land to armed intimidation. Participatory research revealed a number of indirect effects that participants associated with small arms, such as psychosocial trauma (and the costs of paying for medical treatment) following repeat attacks. These indirect effects also included the intentional destruction of community property (through arson and forced dismantling), including schools and cultural markers. Not only did this impede education and the provision of medical services, but it also led to the departure of clergy from the temple built within the community.

Firearms themselves were also widely viewed as playing a significant role in promoting insecurity and, even when unfired, were regarded as tools of coercion, intimidation and as facilitating a range of abusive behaviour. The tables below (Tables 2 and 3) summarizes the perceived impacts of firearms - and were collated through listing and ranking exercises by the community.

TABLE 2. FIREARMS DISCHARGED IN THE COMMUNITY

Firearm Used	Target	Holder of the Firearm	Intention	Result
Rifles Short guns, Air pistol (rifles with bullets made of barbwire)	Aim at sky.	Kamnan, Heads of villages, Worker supervisors	Threaten and discourage the mobilization of the demonstration.	Some people in the group flee.
			Occurs very often.	Confusion and an insecure feeling.
			Create turmoil and an insecure environment before gaining access to burning or attacking Mae Moon Mun Yeun village.	Some people, especially elder people become frightened.
	Aim indirectly at horizontal level but not directly aim at the crowd.		Threat in order to dissolve mobilization and demonstration. Discourage people to continue the movement. Occurs often	More people flee. Causes dismay in the movement.
	Aim directly at the crowd's direction but not specifically at an individual.		Dissolve and make people in demonstration group fear and flee away.	One injury from a rifle and other minor injuries from barbwire bullets.
	Aim and shot at a vehicle of a pro Pak Moon Dam movement supporter.		Discourage involvement of others in the groups activities, and incur insecurity and fear.	The person never engaged in any activity again.

TABLE 3. FIREARMS DISPLAYED, BUT UNFIRED IN THE COMMUNITY

Firearm Used	Targets	Firearm Holders	Intention	Result
Rifles, Short guns Air pistol (with bullets made of short barbwire) Authorities hand guns.	No firing occurs.	Policemen, Military personnel, Kamnan, Heads of villages, Worker supervisors	Threat and discourage the mobilization of the demonstration, Make possible other violent means to dissolve the demonstration, Threaten activists or individual to discontinue participation.	Some people in the group flee. Confusion and an insecure feeling. People are more vulnerable to other kind of non firearms related attacks.

Table 2 and 3 were assembled from 4 charts compiled by the villagers of how they experienced weapons used against them, one of which is on page 20.

According to some of the participants, the presence of small arms among state security agents affected their capacity to protest, to assemble, to participate in non-violent demonstrations and many facets of their daily lives. They felt intimidated and menaced by those who possessed weapons and were often subject to abusive treatment by local political authorities who frequently



Pak Moon villagers take their protest to Bangkok.

came armed. These perceptions, while varying by degree and according to the age and gender of respondents, were widespread.

Weapons, then, are viewed as playing an important role in perpetuating power imbalances or asymmetries between owners and non-owners. Indeed, the presence of firearms can discourage and dissolve demonstrations and the peaceful assembly of people in public spaces. Firearms, uniforms, clubs and other symbols of violence were regarded as “legitimizing” authority and being directly or indirectly responsible for dispersing peaceful assembly.

Challenges and Next Steps

A number of challenges emerged in the course of the research, particularly the “survey” fatigue of prospective participants and the level of trust between the researcher and the relocated community members. At first, the community appeared to have been surveyed extensively in the past, and felt their concerns had not been adequately represented. This presented an initial hurdle for the researcher, particularly given her own time constraints and the particular nature of the research. Second, there were difficulties getting out of the “yes”/“no” format of semi-structured interviews and focus group meetings. In many cases, the researcher had to reshape her questions and approaches. Nevertheless, it was felt that participatory methods “opened-up” the research process, and empowered and convinced respondents of the merits of the research.

“Every time we go out for demonstration, we always worried about the elders who stayed at the villages and our shelters because they took advantage of lacking of people and security guards to attack us. They keep an eye on us. When we left for Bangkok, they attacked and burned it. Many people got injured from bruise and concussion and burns. We had no shelters. What you currently see were rebuilt and we moved away from the fence.”

**Phor Somyuu, Phor Bunmee, male,
villagers displaced from Sirindhon Dam**

In terms of new research, there is considerable scope for additional studies on civil society resistance, peaceful demonstrations and the role of small arms in repression. Little empirical research exists on the role of small arms violations in relation to electoral violence, community mobilization, and NGO activities in non-urban areas of Thailand. It would also be important to explore the explicit and implicit policies of states to address these kinds of civil society movements.

Case Study 3:

Cambodia



Rural livelihoods and Small Arms: Impacts on the lives of rural villagers dependent on forest products

By **Keng Menglang**

Homicide per 100,000	4.89
Law Regulating Firearms Ownership	Ownership Restricted
Cause of Population Displacement within Country	Development and Refoulement
Corruption Perception Index (0 Corrupt/ 10 Transparent)	N/A
UN Program of Action focal point established?	Yes
Human Rights Commission Established?	No

Selected Country Indicators (See more in Appendix)

In Cambodia today, ownership of land and access to fisheries and forests remain contentious and volatile issues in the aftermath of almost two decades of warfare. With 500,000 - 1 million war weapons believed to be circulating in the country, the management of modern and customary property rights must be handled sensitively in order not to return to the 'policies and practices of the past'. As a result of the legacy of conflict, Cambodians have in large part been socially conditioned to settle disputes by resort to weapons. As a result, small arms and light weapons are now being used by those with the greatest access to them, to settle or claim resources as their own. This, in spite of repeated efforts on the part of the government and multilaterals to disarm the population.²²

This participatory research project sought to explore two aspects of this phenomenon: (i) perceptions of insecurity caused by presence of small arms in the hands of logging company agents and (ii) the types of violations suffered by villagers in the area as a result. The research aimed to determine what the people in the villages saw as solutions to the problem. In this way, this case study adds to a growing body of knowledge being generated by other groups in the country, such as the Working Group on Weapons Reduction and the Working Group on Active Nonviolence which seek to bring a halt to weapons abuse and weapons based claims to ownership in Cambodia (see Box 2).²³

Background

Competing claims of ownership over land and resources within the country is one of the legacies of the war and the multiple systems of governance that preceded and accompanied the war years. Radically different systems of land ownership were recognized under: absolute, and then constitutional monarchy; which was followed by a radical form of communism; which was followed by a scramble for land during its period as a UN protectorate; until the current parliamentary system was implemented. Each government applied their own laws and regulations, and each issued conflicting deeds, promises, titles or entitlements.²⁴

Cambodian society is today convulsed by two contradictory forces. On the one side is a strong norm condoning the use of arms for self-interest and appropriation. On the other is a set of efforts to re-establish the rule of law and ensure justice.²⁵ The collision of these two forces has resulted in a scramble by some parties to attempt to appropriate land assets and common property resources before new laws are institutionalized and enforced.

Hundreds of communities have been affected, and several have joined in programs of non-violent resistance to attempts by powerful interests to seize community forests, community fisheries (both inland and coastal), and land.²⁶ A national coalition of communities under threat from loss of community resources was violently suppressed in December of 2002 when they under-

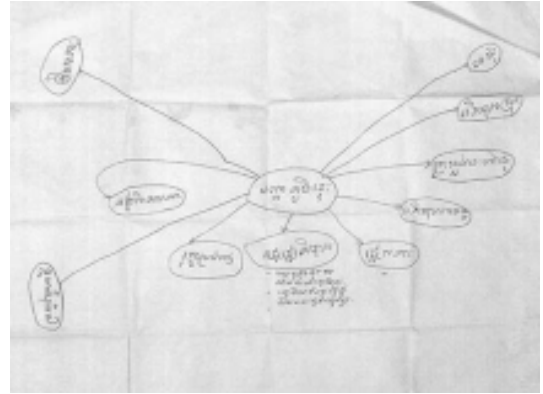
took a mass demonstration at the National Assembly building in Phnom Penh.²⁷

“Local authorities always visited the village ... heavily armed with rifles and munitions jackets with lots of bullets looking like they were ready to go to battle.”

Ronteah villager

This participatory research project was carried out over a three month period (between June-August, 2002) in Ronteah Village, Tumring Commune of Sandan District of Kampong Thom

Province in Central Cambodia.²⁸ This particular site was chosen due to the perceived pressures these villagers felt on their traditional, and largely-forest dependent, livelihoods. The threat to their livelihoods came from logging concessions granted to the Colexim, GAT and Mieng Ly Heang companies, all of whom have connections to high-ranking central government officials, and the Tumring Rubber Plantation which has a close connection to the Tumring Communal Administrative Police.



Venn diagram made by villagers of authorities whom they could approach about their problems.

Rationale and Methods

The use of small arms in the appropriation of natural resources has been widely reported in the popular Cambodian media, but remains little researched. Some studies have explored the impact of weapons on women and children generally and public perceptions of the problem, as well as the Cambodian government's and the EU's weapons collection programmes.²⁹ This case study, however, is the first to use a participatory methodology which so closely looks in detail at a specific area of abuse. It serves to enhance the existing general research in both understanding and development of, and advocacy for, solutions to small arms based violence in Cambodia.

The deployment of soldiers and police in the appropriation of common property resources had been mentioned in the newspapers and it is commonly assumed such personnel are armed. This research study, however, represents the first effort to systematically examine how this process is experienced by affected communities. In addition to understanding how villagers perceived their security to be threatened and develop a typology of violations - the research also aimed to generate locally desired solutions to the current situation.

The principal researcher in this study was first trained in research by Non-violence International, which undertook a traditional research survey of Phnom Penh District in early 2002 on perceptions of small arms based insecurity among the capital population.³⁰ The principal researcher then organized and trained a team of three supporting assistant researchers. After a preliminary visit to the village, the entire team went to live in the village for a period of two weeks to carry out the research. Most organized activities took place after daily work was finished, in the evenings, when the greatest number of villagers were free to participate in the research activities. Runteah village is comprised of 80 families or 315 individuals.

The results of this study will support the advocacy activities of the Working Group on Weapons Reduction which is committed to reducing the possession, and use, of weapons in post-war Cambodia (see Box 2). The Working Group on Active Nonviolence had already started training villagers in most provinces around the country in methods of Direct Nonviolent Action to bring about concerted and organized local opposition to the seizure of natural resources, with some spectacular results.³¹

Findings at a Glance

The research detected a range of overlapping claims among different actors in Runteah village that have subsequently led to increased insecurity. In 2000, the Prime Minister issued a decree that led to the establishment of a 5000-hectare rubber plantation within Tumring Commune where Runteah village is located. This rubber plantation began with 300 hectares, but as it continued to expand, it encroached on the villages' swindden land. The villagers repeatedly petitioned authorities and were met with armed repression after the sixth petition. A ranking and scoring exercise revealed that the rubber plantation was perceived to be a primary source of insecurity by a representative sample of villagers (see Table 4).

BOX 2. ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: THE WORKING GROUP FOR WEAPONS REDUCTION

In late 1998 the Cambodian government initiated a civilian disarmament campaign. The Working Group for Weapons Reduction in Cambodia (WGWR), originally a coalition of local and international NGOs, is now an independent organization in its own right. WGWR is dedicated to work at all levels of society and from multiple perspectives to remedy this situation. WGWR is also committed to find Cambodian solutions for Cambodian issues while recognizing that the global dimensions of this problem call for globally coordinated responses.

Program Aims

- ⌘ *Transform the culture of violence, where the use of weapons to solve problems prevails, to one where problems are solved peacefully.*
- ⌘ *Ensure that Cambodian civil society has an accepted and recognized role in local small arms and light weapons reduction work.*
- ⌘ *Ensure the Cambodian government demonstrates a strong commitment to implement a strategic plan to reduce and manage small arms and light weapons.*

According to most participants, this violent appropriation of land has had direct implications on their livelihoods, particularly the loss of access to and availability of forest products. As forest and large tree species (resin) began to disappear, so did the means of feeding the communities. In addition, subsistence agricultural production also began to decline as the quality and availability of land was reduced. Reduced access to forest products has resulted in a proportional loss of income. As forest and large tree species began to disappear, so did the secondary income, which supplemented non-consumed sections of produce sold from field agriculture.

TABLE 4. RANKING ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE SEEN AS GENERATING MOST INSECURITY

Participant/ Problem	Pann	Cheang	Horn	Chhung	Thy	Khorn	Men	Muth	Score	Rank
Rubber Plantation	9	10	8	11	9	6	7	8	68	1
Colexim	6	3	3	4	6	3	6	7	38	3
Mieng Ly Heng	4	5	2	2	1	3	1	5	23	6
GAT	7	6	7	7	2	1	2	5	37	4
Local Authority	2	1	5	5	7	9	10	2	41	2
Forest Ranger	2	5	5	1	5	8	4	3	33	5

Results of ranking exercise by 8 villagers of top source of insecurity for the village

Though the research focused on the role of small arms in relation to livelihood shortfalls, participants also signalled increasing deficits in health care and education. These were caused primarily by the remote nature of the village. Nevertheless, many participants did observe the benefits of the logging companies, as the only road to the village has been built by the logging concessionaires.

Pervasive sentiments among participants, following ranking, mapping and timeline exercises, was increasing feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. The villages are surrounded by competing logging concessions, and to be seen anywhere near the boundaries of these concessions was believed to be dangerous. The villagers believed that the concessions saw them as ‘enemies’ and that their guards would shoot at them and accuse them of theft if they were to be seen anywhere near these concessions.

Much of this insecurity was attributed to local ‘authorities’ who appeared to be working cooperatively with the concessionaires. These authorities regularly informed the population to never oppose the concessionaires, and warned them never to inform outside parties or NGO ‘agents’ of the situation within the village. These local authorities always visited the village “heavily armed with rifles and munitions jackets with lots of bullets looking like they were ready to go to battle.”

Challenges and New Research Agenda

Participatory research on small arms issues carries a number of risks, many of which were highlighted in Cambodia. After carrying on their research with active participation from the village, the research team was confronted by the chief of police from the commune, who arrived unannounced and

very heavily armed. He inquired as to the nature of work of the researchers, and asked why they had not asked for permission from the authorities to conduct it and where their letter of authorization was. He brought out a copy of what he termed the 'NGO Law' which he stated gave him authorization to arrest them for illegal activities and detain them for as long as he liked. Although the researchers were determined to stay in the village, they were ultimately forced to leave by the police the following day. Official hostility to research into the abuse of arms by state agents is clearly a major obstacle to further research of this kind.

This research could be usefully expanded to other areas of resource exploitation in Cambodia (e.g. tropical woods, minerals, etc.) to gain a clearer picture of the pattern of official exploitation of society. In addition, participatory research methods could usefully contribute to examining how the European Union-funded program of weapons collection is assuring that there is no 'armed opposition' to official exploitation.



The harvesting of forest products (bamboo shoots).

Case Study 4:

Aceh-Indonesia

Counter-insurgency
and Small Arms:
Displacement and
insecurity

By Daraaceh



Homicide per 100,000	4.89
Law Regulating Firearms Ownership	Ownership Restricted
Cause of Population Displacement within Country	Development and Refoulement
Corruption Perception Index (0 Corrupt/ 10 Transparent)	N/A
UN Program of Action focal point established?	Yes
Human Rights Commission Established?	No

Selected Country Indicators (See more in Appendix)

For the past decade, counter-insurgency warfare has been escalating against an armed secessionist movement in the former independent kingdom of Aceh, located at the northern tip of Sumatra island of Indonesia. A Cessation of Hostilities agreement, signed in December 2002, ruptured five months later. Oil, in addition to concerns over sovereignty, plays a key cause in this armed conflict. Both the military and the police are paid directly to provide security to ExxonMobile³², and provide them with facilities from which human rights violations are alleged to have taken place.³³ Some analysts believe the income, which the military receives, is now necessary for its survival and that it has no interest in lessening the 'security threat'.³⁴



Site of a house burned to the ground in a rural village, family has become internally displaced.

This participatory research project explored the social impacts of small arms, with a particular focus on internally displaced women. Although a number of reports have focused on dormant and active conflicts in the Indonesian archipelago, this is the first study to focus specifically on the impact of small arms on conflicts. As it was carried out prior to the renewed outbreak of war, it can be assumed that impacts reported here have only grown worse. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that this study is inherently subjective and findings cannot be applied to other parts of Indonesia or Sumatra.

Background

The Acehenese are one of dozens of unique ethnic groups that make up the diverse archipelago of Indonesia. Since the weakening of central Jakarta authority following the downfall of Suharto, and the rise of pro-democracy and other movements throughout Indonesia, some ethnic groups have reasserted a claim for autonomy or even independence from the Indonesian republic. The successful, but violent, withdrawal of East Timor from the rest of Indonesia fuelled separatist sentiments. Although no other group can demonstrate the historic claim which East Timor had, this technicality has not been persuasive, and they reason “if East Timor, why not us”?

To bolster their claim, Acehnese separatist groups, as is frequently the case in ethnic minority conflicts, trace their struggle back to historic times. However, the current armed conflict dates back to the founding of the Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front, also known as the Free Aceh Movement, in 1976. This movement was pursuing its goals through political propa-

ganda, although there was a small section that was pursuing armed struggle. Political repression is not the only cause for resentment. Resource expropriation by the centre - for which the Acehnese do not feel they have seen their share of the benefits - provided an added cause for bitterness. Natural gas in offshore oilfields provides revenues, which as people of Aceh are quick to point out also buys weapons used to stifle their aspirations.

Question: “What is your reaction to the violence committed against you?” **Answer:** “We report to *keuchik* and *ureung tuha gampong*. Then, the leaders of the village go to the post to negotiate. If the victim has already been killed, the village leaders will ask for the dead body; if the victim is still alive, they will negotiate with authorities to release him or her.”

IDP, Banda Aceh

The armed movement came to the fore with the return of Acehnese who had been trained in Libya. In response to increasing armed resistance in Aceh, the Indonesian government launched a counter-insurgency military operation over the entire state from 1989 until 1998 called DOM (Dareh Operasi Militer). According to the Indonesian Human Rights Commission, this resulted in 781 persons killed at the hands of the military, 163 disappearances, 368 cases of torture, 3000 women widowed and up to 20,000 children orphaned.³⁵ Independent sources and human rights groups, however, believe the numbers of victims are far higher.



IDP camp in university campus deliberately burned by unknown perpetrators.

Rationale and Methods

This participatory project was carried out over a period of four months from June to September of 2002, and was conducted by means of direct visits to villages and internally displaced (IDP) camps within Aceh. It also relied on key informants and semi-structured interviews conducted with Acehnese who had fled armed conflict and resided in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Bangkok, Thailand while seeking asylum abroad. Secondary data was obtained from NGOs that document some of the effects of small arm violence on civilian non-combatants. Near the end of the research period, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of Indonesia (GoI) entered into an NGO-brokered Cessation of Hostilities agreement³⁶, which raised great hopes to bring an end of the conflict.

The research was conducted during repeat visits to encampments of internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Aceh, and with villagers in Aceh Timur, Aceh Barat, Aceh Besar and Banda Aceh as well as Acehnese who are seeking refuge in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Bangkok, Thailand. Data from respondents in IDP camps were obtained by participatory appraisal techniques, in which respondents played an active role and were given space to list their feelings about the use of arms in the conflict. Pair-wise ranking methodology was also applied to assess the level of threats that respondents felt. Traditional research tools such as a standard questionnaire were also used.

“One day, the militias attacked our village and burned it down. Villagers had no choice but to move to other safer places, after some villagers were killed by the militias and others were threatened. Together with other villagers, I flew in the deep forests and it took us more than twenty days to reach a village. We got very tired and we suffered a lot from the lack of food and shelter. Several among us also became sick.”

IDP from Central Aceh

TABLE 5. LISTING AND RANKING KEY CONCERNS FOR WOMEN IN GREATER ACEH									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sum	Rank
Rape	x	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1
Torture	x	x	2	2	5	2	2	4	3
Terror	x	x	x	4	5	3	3	2	5
Kidnapping	x	x	x	x	5	4	4	3	4
Sexual harassment	x	x	x	x	x	5	5	5	2
Sweeping	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	0	7
Armed contacts	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	6

50 women aged 25-65 years old and 30 women aged 16-25 years old

Findings at a Glance

Even before the peace-process was abandoned in May 2003, participants registered an overwhelming fear of further violence among the general population of Aceh and a deeply embedded yearning for peace. Key human security concerns listed and ranked by the researcher included fear of death, abduction, torture and rape. Secondary fears, or those ranked lower, included loss of family members, deprivation, loss of property and livelihoods and loss of friends.

The sequence and ordering of insecurity varied according to gender and age. In general, the internally displaced women in the parts of Aceh interviewed registered “rape” as their chief fear. By contrast, men in the same places generally stated that abduction/forced disappearance was their chief fear, followed by torture. Fear is also differentiated among women by age - old women (kidnapping) and young women (rape). See, for example, the table 5 above.

Insecurity also varied according to the “professional occupation” and relative “livelihoods” of respondents. For example, professional drivers spoke of their great fear of checkpoints. Checkpoints are set up by armed men. It is difficult to know if they are official or not. The experience at checkpoints causes fear of threats, bribery, loss or breaking of the goods they are transporting, loss of vehicle, or arrest, abduction or rape of their passengers.

The participants indicated that they only seldom reported incidents involving violence or abuse to the public security sector. When abuse occurs, there is confusion over whom to report the abuse to, since frequently it is agents of the state who are believed, or known, to be the perpetrators. Respondents

claimed that if they reported, it was likely to be to student organizations, village elders or officials, Ulamas (clergy) non-combatant members of the GAM, and in some cases to local officials. As in many other parts of Southeast Asia, civilians very rarely report violence to police and only occasionally to the army. Respondents in this research did note that they sometimes reported to the armed opposition to the state, as they stated that the GAM group would pass it on to the international community, and possibly exact “revenge” on their behalf.



IDP's list sources of fear.

The participants also indicated that civilians become numb and resistant to the effects of the terror of the conflict after long periods of exposure, leading to abnormal social behaviours and the breakdown of cultural norms. Families of persons abducted experienced the disappearances as a severe emotional distress, since it is believed in Aceh that their spirit will suffer if the dead are not buried within the shortest possible time.

Challenges and Next Steps

Carrying out action research within a war zone is tremendously difficult. A central challenge is mobility itself. In this research project, the researcher felt a need to hide from authorities and never carry incriminating material at any time. Many of the physical outputs of the participatory exercises were recorded on film, and copies of all documents were sent out of the country for assembly into the final report.

At the end of the research period, a car with tinted windows (i.e. of the kind commonly mentioned in abductions by participants themselves) was seen by the house of the researcher. Personal information and the researcher's whereabouts were requested by the police. The researcher has since fled Aceh and is seeking asylum in a third country. Indeed, it comes as little surprise that officials have initiated a ban on the presence of foreigners in Aceh at the time this publication went to press.

“Eyewitnesses stated that the soldiers killed 10 civilians, including two 12-year-old boys, from three villages - Matang Mayang, Alu Gleumpang and Pulo Naleund - of Peusangan sub-district of Aceh's eastern Bireun reGENCY. The victims were shot in the head.”

Deutsche Presse-Agentur, May 20, 2003

Case Study 5:

Burma/Myanmar



Survival in the
'Liberated Area':
Impacts of small arms
and light weapons on
villagers in Karen State

By Chutimas Suksai

Homicide per 100,000	1.18
Law Regulating Firearms Ownership	Ownership Restricted
Cause of Population Displacement within Country	Armed Conflict and Development
Corruption Perception Index (0 Corrupt/ 10 Transparent)	N/A
UN Program of Action focal point established?	No
Human Rights Commission Established?	No

Selected Country Indicators (See more in Appendix)

Since the departure of British rule, Burma/Myanma has been governed almost exclusively by military regimes. Currently a council of three generals rule by decree. Health expenditures rate next to the bottom of international rankings according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Formal expenditures on other social services are nominal: universities and schools are frequently closed due to the fear of student-inspired violence. Burma/Myanma is also officially home to 135 different ethnic nationalities. The dominant Burmans, from whom the ruling generals themselves come, are viewed with suspicion by other nationalities. Minority groups perceive the internal war as a “race war” in which they may be culturally exterminated. This perception fuelled decades of civil conflict and precipitated the flight of almost a million refugees to neighbouring India, Bangladesh, Thailand and China, while close to another million have been internally displaced.

Gho Kay village was forcibly relocated because of its exposure to military contest. Villagers of Gho Kay are ethnically Karen, and currently live under the administration of the Karen National Union (KNU), a 'liberated' area of Karen State of Burma/Myanmar. At the time of the participatory research, the village was in its third location, having been repeatedly forced to move to avoid the armed conflict. Hardships experienced among the villagers of Gho Kay are similar to those experienced by a growing number of IDPs in Burma/Myanmar, who have moved with their neighbours to flee armed conflict.

This participatory research sought to explore the aspects in which the presence and misuse of small arms directly or indirectly affected the lives and livelihoods of the villagers of Gho Kay. This study is believed to be a first of its kind: no previous participatory studies of Burmese IDPs are known to the author. This is in part due to the extremely precarious nature of life for IDPs - they are literally hunted people. To live among them for a period of time required some level of shared risk on the part of the researcher.

Background

Burma (Myanmar) has been divided by civil war since its independence. It has suffered from a near permanent crisis of governance and economic ruin which force of arms has failed to resolve. Today the country is ruled by a military clique calling itself the State Peace and Development Council. (SPDC) The military junta seized power by coup d'etat in 1988. A diversity of ethnic heritages has been at the root of the conflict³⁷, and a lack of trust or experience in shared power has exacerbated it.³⁸

Burmans are numerically the largest group within the country, with the Karen as one of the next most numerically large ethnicities within Burma³⁹ and neighbouring areas of Thailand. The Karen community in Thailand has served as a refuge to which persecuted Karen leaders from Burma could always flee in the past. Thai history portrays the Burman kings as enemies. This has brought about a condition where Thailand has been predisposed for historical reasons to allow or tolerate Karen opposition leaders seeking a safe haven from the central ruling authorities in Burma/Myanmar to use Thailand as a refuge.

The Karen National Union, with its Karen National Liberation Army

Unofficial estimates place the current number of IDPs in Myanmar at from 600,000 to 1 million persons, with around 300,000 in north-eastern Shan State, 100,000-200,000 in Kayah State, 70,000-80,000 in Kayah State, 60,000-70,000 in Mon State and about 100,000 in northern Rakhine State.

**UN Commission on Human Rights,
10 January 2002, para100**



Gho Kay village.

(KNLA), is one of the largest and most powerful of the ethnic armed opposition groups. It is also a leader of the National Democratic Front (NDF), an ethnic military alliance aligned against the ruling authorities in Burma/Myanmar. The leadership of the Burmese Army, known by its acronym the Tatmadaw, has always been dominated by ethnic Burmans, and is perceived by others as exclusively a force for Burman national aspirations. Since the mid-1980s it has adopted a counter-insurgency programme known as the “4 Cuts”.

This intervention aims to eliminate ethnic insurgency by denying its ability to acquire food, information, financial support or fresh recruits from the population.

A set of armistices were introduced in the early 1990’s in which armed groups were asked to call for a cessation of hostilities with the Burmese Army. Nevertheless, a small number of groups were allowed to keep their arms, a reduced armed force, and a degree of territorial control.⁴⁰ Several key members of the NDF joined these armistices, a move that led to even greater control by the Burma’s ruling authorities over the country’s territory. This was combined with a campaign of ‘strategic hamleting’- forcing people to move to specific areas designated by the ruling authorities and reducing their former areas of livelihood to “free-fire zones”. The new settlements faced a paucity of land for agriculture and onerous requirements for forced labour. As a result, many relocatees chose instead to live as permanently mobile internally displaced communities, estimated to include between 600,000 and 1 million people in different parts of Burma/Myanmar.⁴¹

Burma/Myanmar today is awash in small arms, light weapons and combatants. The country has the highest ratio of soldiers to civilians of any country in the world⁴², and at least 30 different armed political organizations exist within the country (including the ruling authorities).⁴³

Rationale and Methods

The key contact group was the Karen Women’s Organization (KWO), who helped introduce the researcher to the community, and facilitated her travel to the village. They also provided an interpreter during her stay in the village. The researcher carried out her participatory activities by conducting purposive key informant interviews using SSI, mapping and listing with the village head, the chief officer of the KWO in that area, as well as the KNU chief of security responsible for that area and security guards.

She continued with a purposive and representative set of interviews and mapping activities. This was accomplished through the selection of three households in the area where schools are located before conducting community wide activities. The participation in a focus group was voluntary. There were 30 heads of households/representatives out of 37 households in the accessible area that attended, with a gender ratio of 23 males: 7 females. This group completed a listing of fears and worries of male and female participants, occupational changes, landmine mapping and social mapping of causes and consequences of armed violence.

Consultations with the Mae Tao Backpack Health Worker Team revealed various aspects of the frequency, types of treatment required and medical costs associated with small arms injuries. The researcher facilitated listing and matrix ranking exercised with two separate groups of medics to better appraise the overall impact of small arms.

Findings at a Glance

Small arms are used both as direct life-threatening devices and coercively in IDP areas (Table 6 below). IDP villages and other areas used or occupied by civilians are contaminated with landmines laid by both parties of the conflict, the SPDC and the KNU. KNU officers maintain that they are “forced” to use landmines as a defensive or deterrent strategy.

Participants noted a strong relationship between small arms availability and premature and preventable death. Premature death can be directly caused by small arms and life threatening devices - leading to fatal injury. But small arms availability can also contribute to premature death when used to coerce populations into life threatening activity, such as military portering. Prema-

TABLE 6. TYPES OF WEAPONS ENCOUNTERED BY PEOPLE OF GHO KAY VILLAGE

Type of Small Arms	Shooting range (yards)	Can cross the river? ⁴⁴	Availability for SPD an troop	Seen or encountered?
Machine guns ⁴⁵	Slightly ±200	Yes	Every combatant personnel	Civilian: Yes Combatant: Yes
Hand grenade	10	No	Every combatant personnel	Civilian: No Combatant: Yes
Mortar launcher (M 79)	200+	Yes	Normal military unit (8-15 soldiers)	Civilian: No Combatant: Yes
Artillery	300+	Yes	Large unit (20+ soldiers) might carry one or two	Civilian: No Combatant: Yes

Chart assembled during Participatory Research session with militia in the village

ture death of IDPs can also result from landmines laid either by SPDC or by KNU to fence-in IDP villages and keep them from being attacked.

Also noted by participants was the relationship between small arms misuse and increased levels of stress and psychosocial trauma. The researcher found that life in wartime is associated with a range of insecure feelings, fear, pain and the loss of relatives or family members. The situation of children, and those injured, maimed or abused by the Tatmadaw or other armed groups are considered to be particularly egregious.

TABLE 7. RANKING OF COMMON INJURIES SUFFERED BY VILLAGERS OF AREA NEAR AND AROUND GHO KAY VILLAGE (type, frequency and difficulty of treatment)

Injuries		Score		Frequency		Difficulty of treatment		Expense in treatment per person	
		Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2
1. Sharp injury	1. Mine Injury	1	2	1	5	1	5		
2. Bum injury	2. Bullet wound	3	3	3	4	2	2		
3. Mine injury	3. Crush Wound	2	1	3	2	4	1		
4. Gun shot injury	4. Fracture	3	2	2	2	3	4		
5. Accident	5. Penetrating wounds	3	1	2	2	2	2		
6. Wound injury	6. Incision wound	1	4	2	1	1	2		
7. Insert wound injury	7. Abrasion wound	1	5	2	1	2	1		
8. Crush wound	8. Burn and scald	1	3	2	1	3	1		
9. Fracture	9. Sun burn	2	1	2	1	3	1		
10. Animal Bites	10. Frost bite ⁴⁶	1	1	1	1	1	1		
11. Falling injury	11. Drowning	1	1	1	1	1	1		

Note: Ranking exercise results of participatory research session with 16 Backpack Health Worker Team medics. 5 denote highest degree, 1 denote lowest degree.

“Sometimes SPDC came and people can sometimes get gunshots. Gunshots are also dangerous because you can’t get medication at the same time you are wounded. The wounded area will be very little but later [there is] infection. They can get gangrene and a leg must be cut ... [s]ometimes shrapnel hit patients. They shot at a tree not directly at the patient and the shrapnel hit patients. One piece is same as one grenade.”

Mae Tao Backpacker Medic Team

Another consequence of small arms availability and misuse is related to food deprivation. Armed conflicts block access to food and food production resources. Food stocks and livestock are destroyed or stolen after a village has been attacked. People are forced by armed soldiers to “donate” their animals or rice to the army (on either side). Paddy fields, roads to paddy fields, riverbanks and forests where villagers can acquire foods or firewood are contaminated with landmines.

Both premature death and food insecurity related to an overall degeneration of health and education. According to participants, poor health is tied to food shortages and malnutrition after an armed battalion ravages a village, illness from evacuation to avoid confrontation with passing Tatmadaw units, and limited or difficult to access health facilities. Schools are regularly destroyed after a rampage. Furthermore, education has to be suspended during the escape to seek temporary asylum near the Thai border.



Map drawn by Gho Kay villagers of their village and security concerns (mined areas are in red on original).

All of these impacts result in increased risk and vulnerability to poverty. Because property and homes are physically destroyed by military action some families are forced to pay cash, or provide in-kind resources such as rice and other mobile assets (e.g. cattle, cooking utensils, carts, etc.) to Tatmadaw soldiers.

Challenges and Next Steps

Research in zones of conflict with at-risk populations is tremendously difficult. Frequently, as was the case in Gho Kay village, these people are considered illegal entities or are branded terrorists by the ruling authorities. Simply making contact with them can be an illegal activity. Needless to say, there is a lack of robust empirical research in this area, so any new research of this kind is groundbreaking and provides us with priceless insights into situations that rarely reach the headlines. This particular site was a ‘showcase’ village. Nobody spoke of abuses by the other parties to the conflict and this method cannot prevent selective discrimination of experience.

“In 2002 they [SPDC soldiers] came to my village and burned my houses, destroyed things and took my pigs and hens. At that time they caught my husband and I for three days. They asked us to carry things - heavy [weighed] 30 kgs. After three days they let us come back home.”

Htoo Lay, age 36

Reviewing Common Themes

A range of common themes emerged from the five case studies. These included crosscutting trends such as misuse of weapons by armed guards working on behalf of the state and commercial entities to the methodological difficulties associated with carrying out participatory research in arms-affected regions. A number of these are worth exploring in more detail - including the abuse of weapons by the security sector, the role of coercion in development, and the militarizing implications of weapons availability on civil society. This section also quickly revisits a few methodological challenges common to each of the case studies.

A regular feature of each of the studies is the over-use and abuse of power by the “security sector” (both public and private) whose aim is ostensibly to protect civilians. It is particularly distressing that this behaviour appears to be directly sanctioned by regional and local public authorities. In each case security forces abused their positions of authority. For example, the security guards and police provided weapons to fraternity members in the Philippines, and the authorities passed on weapons to pro-Dam supporters in Thailand, the police and armed civilians in Cambodia and the Indonesian (military) authorities in Aceh. In each scenario, small arms figured prominently, were brandished openly, and frequently used coercively.

Related to this is the fact that formal and informal security forces are themselves on sale to the highest bidder and appear corruptible. The police were complicit in supporting various forms of repressive policies in almost each case - from the oil interests in Aceh to rubber plantation expansion in Cambodia. As revealed in the previous participatory research undertaken in South Asia⁴⁷ by the Small Arms Survey and the RCSS, the police are frequently perceived by ordinary people in most parts of Asia as an impediment, predatory even, as opposed to a source of security.

Another feature, more prominent in the cases of Cambodia and Thailand, and to a lesser extent in the Philippines and Aceh, is the role of armed violence in development initiatives. Development projects, organized by public and private sector interests, often proved to be a source of insecurity in rural areas. The rubber plantation in Cambodia, oil and coffee production in Aceh and electricity generation in Thailand are very much in the interests of a small cadre of urban elite, rather than in the rural populations they claim to be serving, much less those they are displacing. Legal or authorised small arms play a prominent role in furthering (and sustaining) inequitable development and silencing opposition. There appears to be a pattern emerging from the case studies, wherein development is a contested concept, involving armed violence and coercion.

Related to this is the role of small arms popular resistance and opposition. Though resistance to perceived injustice can be pursued via formal judicial processes and informal negotiation, it quickly adopts a radical edge where such systems are perceived to be dysfunctional or where armed violence is threatened. Where small arms are used coercively, and institutions of redress are perceived as weak, ineffective or complicit, resistance can become militant. This is because the symbols of coercive authority - from small arms to batons - intensify asymmetries and imbalances of power and regularly lead to a combination of violent confrontation and widespread fear.

Methodologically, all the researchers faced a range of security threats in the process of carrying out participatory research. This raises issues concerning the challenges of local and non-local researchers, but also for the research subject itself. Obtaining and securing the trust and confidence of communities is not easy in the best of times, less so when they are traumatized by conflict, displacement, predatory authorities or daily factional violence. But carrying out research on small arms misuse is potentially challenging because the topic itself is often a security interest, because the physical environment is often insecure (e.g. landmines in Burma and Cambodia, insecurity in Aceh, inter-fraternity violence in the Philippines, etc.), and because local authorities are often wary of all forms of research in their jurisdiction.

Policy Relevance of Participatory Research in Southeast Asia

Officials entrusted with policy creation and implementation, from university authorities in Manila to the Police Chief in a Cambodian commune, actively blocked attempts to understand a situation as experienced by ordinary people. Their denial, dismissiveness, repression and ignorance are unlikely to strengthen, much less improve policies. What is more, if individual rights to development are regularly violated and avenues of resistance are ignored or met with violence, violent response can be expected. As Southeast Asia, not unlike many other parts of the world, succumbs to an increasingly militarized atmosphere in which arms are readily available, armed violence is likely to ensue. Given the current global concerns with terrorism, policy makers would do well to reflect on how the design and application of today's policies can lead to tomorrow's armed resistance.

One of the key findings of this participatory research study is the need for immediate security sector reform⁴⁸ - particularly the institutions of the army and the police. Though many of the trademarks of the security sector in Southeast Asia are embedded in national institutional cultures, it is clear that considerable efforts must be directed at improving training in human rights, strengthening their (democratic) accountability to civilian populations, and improving their conditions of work.

The reform of the security sector does not necessarily require the development of new approaches, laws or norms. As a starting point, governments in the region should be strongly encouraged to adhere to the *Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials* passed by the United Nations General Assembly, and the *Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials* adopted by the United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.⁴⁹ The vast majority of

predatory and illegal behaviours by the security sector, especially those documented in this study, would be minimized by strict adherence to the practices and obligations enshrined in these documents. In some countries this may need to be accompanied with judicial reform to ensure that a culture of impunity does not thrive. Ultimately, if authorities are not made accountable for their abuses of power, these abuses - including the misuse of small arms - are likely to persist.

Another area identified by the participatory research is the impacts of small arms in enabling the violation of human rights. There is a clear need for strong, empowered and independent human rights commissions at the national level throughout the region to provide a check on the power of the security sector, with the power not only to investigate, but to prosecute. Currently no human rights institution in the region has this power, although the Indonesian Human Rights Commission can set up tribunals. These institutions would also assure that regional governments implement key human rights conventions. The application of these conventions and declarations would go far to providing protection for individuals from many of the abuses observed in each of the cases.

A belief persists within ASEAN that the principles of human rights protection are at odds with the understanding of sovereignty enshrined in the ASEAN charter. All ASEAN states are members of the United Nations, which requires them to take “joint and separate action to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights.”⁵⁰ Nonetheless, ASEAN members have concluded a gentlemen’s agreement not to comment on unacceptable behaviour so long as it takes place behind the closed door of each country’s borders, at the expense of this UN requirement. At the time of publication of this document, a search of the ASEAN Secretariat’s website on terrorism brings up statements of the current month, while a similar keyword search for human rights brings up no entries.

The security of a state must not be prioritized over the security of the state’s people. At a time when the ordinary person’s rights are being eroded due to some country’s activities in the ‘war on terror’, human rights must remain central to a pursuit of human security in the region. Given the growing militarization of states and societies in Southeast Asia, governments must begin to experiment with new ways and means of removing small arms from circulation. One cluster of methods for doing so is enshrined in the Arms Trade Treaty. This new international instrument still in development calls for immediate strict human rights conditionality on any transfers of military and police arms, and a moratorium of further sales to any area where there are ongoing violations of human rights or where a civil war is taking place. The Arms Trade Treaty codifies the principles enshrined in the Nobel Peace Laureates Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers, and would protect the peace by placing prohibitions on the trade in arms to any nation

whose expenditure on military and policing combined exceeds their expenditures on health and education.⁵¹

Governments in the region must also begin to seriously address the root causes of terrorism, not merely its symptoms. There is substantive evidence to suggest that social, cultural, economic and political exclusion and associated displacement must be addressed as energetically as the ‘war on terrorism.’



Sign outside a rural protest site in Thailand “EGAT! We don’t fear your dark assassins” (addressed to the state power generating authority).

Appendix

Selected Country Indicators

Each case study includes a “snapshot” profile, that indicate:

- (i) the national homicide rate (per 100,000);
- (ii) the ease of acquiring a firearm by ordinary people;
- (iii) perceptions of corruption within a country;
- (iv) sources driving the displacement of the population;
- (v) the presence of a human rights commission; and
- (vi) the presence of a UN programme of Action (UNPoA) focal point.

Each of these variables is intrinsically related to the availability, misuse and ultimately the regulation of small arms and armed violence in society. A number of these variables also emerged during discussions with participants in each of the case sites.

Homicides, legal controls on civilian arms and perceptions of corruption appear to be intertwined and are at the intersection of much of the current research on small arms. In general, high levels of corruption accompany a lack of faith in official institutions, particularly the security sector. This can, in some situations, inform the decision by civilians to acquire arms. While easy access to firearms and a high level of homicides may be clearly connected, there is a lack of empirical data to establish a clear causal relationship. Clearly, more research is required. Forced population displacement virtually always requires the presence, threat and sometimes the misuse of firearms. In Southeast Asia, such weapons are in the hands of ‘authorized’ state agents, as well as insurgent and criminal actors. The last two indicators show the commitment of Southeast Asian nations to contain small arms availability and misuse. The establishment of human rights institutions and the implementation of the UNPOA are a first step to redressing human insecurity. These variables are given in more detail, with their sources, below.

Homicide Rates in Southeast Asia

Country	Homicides per 100,000
Burma/Myanmar	12 (1999)
Cambodia	49 (1999)
Indonesia	10 (2000)
Philippines	78.5 (2000)
Thailand	80.6 (2001)

Homicide rates provide an imperfect proxy for societal militarization. The homicide figures included in this study are those reported by national police bodies to Interpol - though it is unclear whether war casualties from the Philippines, Indonesia or Burma/Myanmar are included. There is no breakdown of homicide by weapon type, but epidemiological surveillance

projects are currently being established to disaggregate intentional violence. It should be emphasized, however, that at this time, there is no conclusive evidence that states with the highest homicide rates are also those states that have less restrictions on civilian firearm ownership legislation.

Sources of More Information on Homicide
 Interpol: www.interpol.int/Public/Statistics/ICS
 The Small Arms Survey: www.smallarmssurvey.org
 The World Health Organization: www.who.org

Legal status of civilian possession of firearms

Cambodia	No civilian possession excepting upper-level civil servants and members of the military and police who have reached the rank of General
Indonesia	Only available to people who have reached a 'high level' in their occupation whether civilian, civil service or military.
Burma/Myanmar	Must prove to authorities that there is a justifiable threat in order to get self-protection license.
Philippines	Must be 21 years of age.
Thailand	Permits can be applied for the purpose of personal defence, hunting, collection and sport shooting, must be 20 years of age.
Cambodia, Indonesia, Burma/Myanmar and Thailand all refuse permits to non-citizens.	

This indicator reveals the ease or difficulty by which civilians can acquire or be refused permits to possess a firearm. Civilian weapons possession is legal in all 5 of the countries in this report, but highly restricted, almost to the point of not being legally available in 3 of the 5. In those 2 states in

which civilians may possess weapons, the additional licence to carry guns about is restricted. Types of weapons which may be lawfully possessed in each country are specified. Many more types are legally available in Thailand and the Philippines, the two countries which have the least restrictions.

Sources of More Information on Civilian Possession
 Small Arms Survey: "Legal Controls on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Southeast Asia", Small Arms Survey and Nonviolence International 2001
www.smallarmssurvey.org/OPapers/OPaper3.pdf

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

Country	Corruption Index (10 low, 0 high)
Burma/Myanmar	NA
Cambodia	NA
Indonesia	1.9
Philippines	2.6
Thailand	3.2

Transparency International (TI) undertakes an annual survey of corruption. The Index is based on the perceptions of business people and risk analysts and their opinions are recorded using a rigorous methodology. Cambodia and Burma/Myanmar were not included in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2002. In the TI scale of ranking, 10 is *least* corrupt and 0 is *most* corrupt.

Sources of More Information on Corruption
 Transparency International:
www.transparency.org/pressreleases_archive/2002/2002.08.28.cpi.en.html

Displacement

Country	REFUGEES	IDPs
Burma/Myanmar	250,000 (2003)	600,000-1,000,000 (2002)
Cambodia	16,000 (2003)	NA
Indonesia	29,000 (2003)	700,000 (2002)
Philippines	57,000 (2003)	130,000-150,000 (2001)
Thailand	NA	NA

Population displacement took place in all countries under study and was a critical issue in four of the five cases. Conflict-induced displacement results in cross-border flows (i.e. refugees) and internal displacement (i.e. IDPs). Development-induced displacement is also widespread and often dwarfs conflict-induced flows. Development-induced displacement results from large (and small) scale (public and private) 'development' projects. Refoulement is the forced re-displacement of refugees fleeing a conflict, back across a border or to areas of insecurity. Refoulement is illegal under international refugee law, and refoulement has occurred regularly on the Thai/Burma border, as well as in Cambodia in 2002.

Sources of More Information on Displacement
 UNHCR: www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home?page=statistics
 USCR: www.refugees.org/world/countryindex
 IDP Project: www.idpproject.org
 Displacement Network: www.displacement.net
 Forced Migration Review: www.forcedmigration.org

United Nations Programme of Action

Country	PROGRAMME OF ACTION National Contact Point
Burma/Myanmar	No
Cambodia	Yes
Indonesia	Yes
Philippines	Yes
Thailand	Yes

The United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA) is short for the *Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects at the National, Regional and Global Levels*. It emerged from the UN

2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It represents the primary cluster of activities undertaken by governments to address the spread and use of small arms. The UNPoA is, however, a very limited set of voluntary actions and standards that governments have been asked to implement. One of the first actions requested is the designation of a national point of contact on the UNPoA in every country: four of the five countries in this study have done this.

Sources of More Information on the UNPoA
 UNDDA: <http://disarmament.un.org/cab/docs/list1.pdf>

National Human Rights Commissions

Country	Began work	Power of Subpoena	Power of prosecution
Burma/Myanmar	No	NA	NA
Cambodia	No	NA	NA
Indonesia	1998	Yes	Tribunals
Philippines	1988	Yes	No
Thailand	2001	Yes	No

The presence and relative influence of National Human Rights Commissions represents one indicator of the accountability of governments. An ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, introduced in 1993, has yet to move forward. Even after a decade, the ASEAN website yields no entries for the search term 'human rights'. Only three of the five countries included in this study have National Human Rights Institutions, established and supported by the national constitution. The two that do not, Cambodia and Burma, have appointed human rights entities that lack a legal mandate.⁵²

Sources of More Information on the National Human Rights Commissions in Southeast Asia:

Commission on Human Rights (Philippines):

www.codewan.com.ph/hrnow/chr/body.htm

National Commission on Human Rights (Indonesia): www.komnas.go.id/endex.html

National Human rights Commission of Thailand: www.nhrc.or.th/index_e.html

Glossary

- ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- Brods (Filipino) Fraternity members,
- EGAT Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
- EU European Union
- GAM (Indonesian) acronym for the Free Aceh Movement
- Hazing Induction or initiation rituals usually involving violence
- IANSA International Action Network on Small Arms
- IDP Internally displaced person/people
- Kamnan (Thailand) Sub district leader
- Keuchik (Indonesian) Village Headman
- KNU Karen National Union
- Light weapons heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank and anti-aircraft missile systems and mortars of less than 100 mm calibre.
(see 1997 UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms)
- NDF (Burma) National Democratic Front
- RCSS (Sri Lanka) Regional Centre for Strategic Studies
- Rumbles (Filipino) Group Inter-student conflicts
- Small arms revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns (see 1997 UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms)
- SPDC State Peace & Development Council- official name of the ruling military junta in Burma
- Swindden Land (Cambodia) Area for slash and burn cultivation.
- Tatmadaw (Burmese) acronym used to refer to the national armed forces
- Ulamas (Indonesian) clergy
- UNPoA United Nations Programme of Action
- Ureung Tuha Gampong (Indonesian) village elders council
- WGWR (Cambodia) Working Group for Weapons Reduction
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Notes

- ¹ See Appendix for sources.
- ² Homicides per year are registered with Interpol, but not all countries are current, and some like Lao PDR do not report. ASEAN as a whole does not participate in the United Nations Criminal Justice Information Network or the World Health Organizations Mortality Database.
- ³ The Small Arms Survey is launching a project, together with a public health and epidemiological institute in Brussels, to assess fatal and non-fatal injury rates in four countries of Southeast Asia in 2004.
- ⁴ See, for example, the work of WHO (2002), Krug *et al* (2002), the Small Arms Survey (2001; 2002; and 2003).
- ⁵ See Banerjee and Muggah (2002). The authors of these case studies were Mallika Samaranyake, Anindita Dasgupta, Naheem Ahmed and Sharif Kafi.
- ⁶ As reported by Banerjee and Muggah (2002: 15): "participatory approaches to research and action are evolving" and represent "... a growing family of approaches, methods and behaviours to enable people to share, enhance, and analyse their life and conditions, and to plan, act and monitor and evaluate".
- ⁷ See, for example, Robert Chambers (2000) and Deepa Narayan (2000).
- ⁸ See, for example, the work of Moser and Mcllwaine (2000a, 2000b and 2000c), Banerjee and Muggah (2002), etc.
- ⁹ The sources of data on which the indicator boxes are developed is included in the Appendix.
- ¹⁰ See Oxfam-GB (2001). See also recent articles in the Asia Times.
- ¹¹ According to Garrido (2003), there are well over a million firearms loose in Philippine society. Registered firearms account for 706,148, while those that are unregistered number some 349,782. In Garrido (2003).
- ¹² Working in co-operation with the Office of Student Services in each University, and with support from the Third World Studies Centre and the J. Ortega Peace Institute.
- ¹³ "Hazing" is defined as violent physical initiations, usually involving paddling, before becoming a "Bro". It lasts for between 12 and 72 hours.
- ¹⁴ They are recognised if: (1) an application is submitted with photographs; (2) nature or statutes, list of projects (concerts, debates); (3) schools will interview officers and members; and (4) school officials evaluate and provide recognition - which entitles free venues.
- ¹⁵ Literally 'sacrifices enjoyment', this concept designates coercion of female students into providing sexual services for police and security guards in exchange for arms and privileges for fraternities.
- ¹⁶ See Arundhati Roy (1999) for an eloquent description of mega-dam development projects, and the people whom they displace. This book focuses on the damming of the Narmada river in India, and the globally recognized opposition movement that it spawned.
- ¹⁷ To the local leaders, Kamnan, of the communities displaced by the Dam, have a customary right to own firearms. Though the Kamnan are legally entitled to own weapons, they may not obtain permits to carry them. But some of these leaders - particularly those siding with the pro-Dam camp, are alleged to be provided weapons by state authorities.
- ¹⁸ Bureau of Firearms Registration statistics, Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior 2003.
- ¹⁹ See the Small Arms Survey, 2001, 2002 and 2003 for more details.
- ²⁰ At the time of this writing, the Thai government had undertaken a massive crackdown on crime - particularly suspected narco-traffickers - operating throughout the country. More than 2,000 people are believed to have been killed between February and March of 2003 as a direct result of this campaign, which registered more homicides in a single month than the entire previous year. Many of these deaths are suspected to be extrajudicial executions by the Royal Thai Police. Due to a government directive to departments not to release any further statistics on deaths in the campaign, and the frustration of forensic investigations, totals of people killed by May were unknown.
- ²¹ These households include only one to two members as opposed to the Thai average of five to seven.
- ²² The government weapons collection campaign began with a sub-decree No. 38 issued on April 30, 1999, limiting legal gun ownership to a thin stratum of upper-level civil servants, and police and soldiers on active duty. Weapon sale and use, including shooting clubs, is now forbidden by law. Under the new sub-decree citizens were informed to turn in all weapons with revoked registrations to the local authorities. The government, first through the Municipality of Phnom Penh and later through the Ministry of Interior, announced its intention to collect weapons. As of October 1999, 64,088 weapons were collected from citizens, police, and military warehouses in 22 provinces. As of December 1999, 27,244

collected weapons were destroyed in six public destruction ceremonies. Currently the government is attempting to draft a new gun-control law, replacing Decree No. II dated 2 July 1992.

²³ See, for example, www.wgwr.org.

²⁴ See, for example, Boreak (2000) at www.cdri.org.kh/webdata/workpap/wp16-abs.htm

²⁵ See, for example, the new Land Law which was passed by Cambodia's National Assembly on July 20, 2001 at www.adb.org/Documents/News/CARM/2001/carm200101.asp

²⁶ See, for example, Working Group for Active Nonviolence (2002).

²⁷ A confrontation between forest villagers from around Cambodia, and the Department of Forestry on 5 December 2002 led to accusations between an international monitoring organization on forestry issues, and the Cambodian Government. Since then police and Forestry officials have been investigating villagers and NGOs involved in forestry work which has led to intimidation and a lower level of activity by NGO activists.

²⁸ In consultation with the Working Group on Active Nonviolence which had already been active with the villagers in this area.

²⁹ See, for example, www.wgwr.org/txt/reading.htm and www.bicc.de/weapons/events/unconf/workshop_texts/workshop_sinthay.html.

³⁰ Lin and Villaveces household victimization survey study to be released by Nonviolence International in late 2003.

³¹ See Working Group for Active Nonviolence (2002). "Why didn't they just shoot?" p:43.

³² 'Small budget does not justify TNI mercenary activities' quoting TNI spokesman Maj. Gen. Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, Jakarta Post, 18 March, 2003.

³³ "ExxonMobil-Sponsored Terrorism?" The Nation 14 June 2002, article quotes evidence in case in which "These troops, picked up one of the plaintiffs, held him at a structure at a Mobil plant, and for three months tortured him. Before they released him, the soldiers showed him a large pile of human heads. Another plaintiff claims he, too, was tortured by Indonesian soldiers at a building inside the company's compound. The other plaintiffs offer similar accounts of abuse."

³⁴ "Mediators Push to End Indonesia Conflict", 6 December 2002 6, Associated Press, quoting an Indonesian specialist at the University of Twente who expressed concerns the military could provoke the rebels to try to ruin the [Cessation of Hostilities Agreement] deal. "Aceh is an important source of revenues and business for the army, which would be jeopardized if the province is demilitarized"

³⁵ See, for example, the Indonesian Human Rights Commission (KOMNAS HAM) report.

³⁶ The Henry Dunant Center (HDC), a Geneva-based group, brokered the December 12 'peace' deal.

³⁷ See, for example, Smith (1999) pp:27-39.

³⁸ Guinard and Moser-Puangsuwan (2002).

³⁹ There are no reliable statistics on the actual demographics of the population. The last census was taken in 1931 and its ethnicity figures are highly controversial and challenged. See, for example, Smith (1999).

⁴⁰ See Guinard and Moser-Puangsuwan (2002).

⁴¹ Global Database on Internally Displaced People at: <http://www.db.idproject.org/>.

⁴² Since 1988 the junta has more than doubled the size of the armed forces, from about 175,000 to more than 400,000 men and has increased the Government's military presence throughout the country, especially in ethnic minority areas. (US Department of State, February 2001).

⁴³ Nonviolence International (2003) pp:63-64.

⁴⁴ Gho Kay village is located near the Salween River water border with Thailand, which is considered a safe haven for flight from attack. While Burmese troops rarely cross the river into Thailand, they will fire across the border.

⁴⁵ From an SSI interview, interviewees mentioned about machine guns but not assault rifles, which could be either wording or interpretation mistakes. SPDC units will have machine guns, but most soldiers carry assault rifles. The PRA researcher observed that assault rifles were kept wedged in ceiling beams of a hut visited in Gho Kay village in August 2002, and an officer with grenade launcher proceeded an official appearance of KNU leader.

⁴⁶ The temperature of the area covered by Mae Tao backpacker medic is in tropical climate, there will not be real frost or snow. It likely refers to gangrene from other cases.

⁴⁷ See the edited volume by Muggah and Banerjee (2002) on participatory research and small arms misuse in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

⁴⁸ See NISAT (www.nisat.org/security%20sector/security.htm), International Alert (www.international-alert.org/policy/security/ssr.htm), GTZ (www.gtz.de/security-sector/english/projects.htm), or the UNDP (www.undp.org/erd/jssr/) for more on security sector reform.

⁴⁹ See, for example, www.unchr.ch

⁵⁰ See, for example, Article 1(3), 55 and 56 of the UN Charter.

⁵¹ The Arms Trade Treaty is based on the Nobel Peace Laureates Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers. It is endorsed by the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and is promoted by a growing number of non-governmental organizations concerned about armed violence, including Nonviolence International. See, for example, www.armslaw.org.

⁵² Cambodia has two human rights commissions, one established by each body of parliament, and a committee set-up under the Prime Ministers office. These are bodies appointed by these entities, have no enshrined legal basis, and are ineffective. The military junta in Burma has appointed a human rights committee under its Home Affairs ministry to study the needs their country may have of such an entity.

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Nonviolence International

Nonviolence International was founded in 1989 with the intent of providing assistance to individuals, organizations and governments seeking nonviolent means to bring about social and political change. We envision strengthening people's ability to use the power of nonviolence as a means to bring about changes that reflect the truth, justice and the desire for human development on the personal, social, economic and political levels. We believe that every cultural and religious tradition in the world contains the seeds of truth through nonviolence, and we encourage activists of different traditions to seek nonviolent solutions that respect their cultural identities. In order to act on this philosophy, Nonviolence International provides general educational materials on nonviolence, undertakes action oriented research, and conducts strategy sessions and training programs for activists and organizers through the coordination of a pool of international resources and expertise.



Small Arms Survey

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and by contributions from the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It collaborates with research institutes and non-governmental organisations in many countries including Brazil, Canada, Georgia, Germany, India, Israel, Norway, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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Whose Security Counts reveals both real and perceived impacts of small arms misuse on the lives of ordinary people in five communities in *Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Aceh-Indonesia and the Philippines*. It considers the role of small arms availability and misuse in a wide spectrum of contexts – from student fraternity violence to resource exploitation and dam-related development to state and insurgency-directed bloodshed. This report collates the key findings of these localized studies and highlights, to the extent possible, the voice of the affected populations.

The five case studies reveal surprisingly *common patterns of small arms misuse* that undermine human security. Though each community is distinct, and the findings within this volume cannot be generalised to the region as a whole, there are a number of crosscutting trends that are relevant to all five communities. These include:

- * the predatory nature of the security sector actors;
- * the frequently coercive dynamics of development;
- * the forms of resistance taken to counter abusive authority; and
- * the less visible, downstream effects of small arms misuse on livelihoods and civil rights.

These studies highlight the potential of participatory research methods for better understanding the implications of small arms misuse on personal security and its potential for monitoring and evaluating interventions designed to improve human security and reform of the military and police sectors.

