Public Security in the Americas:
Challenges and Opportunities

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Prologue

This report was produced on the occasion of this First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security, convened by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, as a compendium of the current state of knowledge and understanding of the fight against threats to public security. It is based on contributions from academic, political, and social sectors that have helped to identify the principal roots of the problem, its core manifestations, and the most pressing challenges facing public security in the region, as well as the opportunities open to our governments and countries to make headway in dealing with and solving them.

The dire state of public security today constitutes the principal threat to stability, the strengthening of democracy, and the development potential of our region. In general, violence and insecurity pervade the whole of our societies and greatly undermine the quality of life of our citizens, who feel vulnerable, intimidated, and harassed by the constant threat of being victimized. The situation is so bad that, in the case of young people, especially those pertaining to the most vulnerable strata in our societies, it is acquiring the characteristics and scope of systematic extermination. Murders in our region are twice the world average and in some parts, are five times higher. Some countries have the highest homicide rates in the world. Latin America and the Caribbean account for 42% of worldwide homicides committed using firearms and for 66% of all kidnappings, even though the region only has 8% of the world's population.

In addition to interpersonal violence and common crimes, most of our countries are now also plagued by organized crime related to trafficking in drugs, arms, and persons. In fact, most of the violence against people, and homicides in particular, are linked to the consumption and trafficking of drugs and, in general, with organized criminal activities.

This is a problem that not only undermines the security, health, bodily integrity, and lives of hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens; it even poses a direct threat to the very foundations of economic development and the integrity of the State and of democratic institutions in our region.

The adoption of an integrated and comprehensive approach to security challenges, rooted in the principles and priorities established in the Declaration on Security in the Americas adopted in Mexico City in October 2003, meant that in 2005, a few months after I arrived at the OAS, I was able to propose and the member states accepted, the creation of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security. This new area was charged with addressing public security issues and assisting member states in their collective efforts to reduce the production, trafficking, use and misuse of drugs, as well as in preventing, combating and eliminating terrorism, topics that were already emerging as OAS priorities but which had been addressed separately.

Faced with the seriousness of these problems, in September 2007, I called upon the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the OAS Permanent Council to recognize their importance and impact and to look at ways of confronting and overcoming them. On that occasion, I pointed out explicitly that tackling the increase in violence and crime was a challenge that the governments of the Americas were duty-bound to take up, using appropriate and efficient public policies that were well coordinated among all our countries; because all of them, without exception, were suffering or beginning to suffer the consequences.

The OAS Permanent Council responded to that request by convening the First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security. The idea behind this new forum was that it would constitute the technical and political framework for the Hemisphere in all public security-related matters and coordinate actions in the spheres of public policies, information, communication, technology, training, and any others needed to achieve success in our collective task of fighting crime and violence in our region.

This report was submitted for the consideration of the Ministers responsible for public security in the Americas as a contribution by the General Secretariat of the OAS. Their deliberations led to creation of a new political process which will help the region to move decisively forward and overcome the crime and violence crisis that besets us today. We will be contributing, through this mechanism, to the achievement of the security, tranquility, and well-being that all citizens of the Americas need and deserve.

José Miguel Insulza
Secretary General
Organization of American States

CHAPTER 1.

> A Snapshot of Public Security in the Americas

A Snapshot of Public Security in the Americas

The concentration of a considerable number of citizens residing in large cities is a structural feature of modern life that is in large measure positive. For the majority, the urban environment offers freedom of thought, action and movement; access to information through various communications media; and greater availability of a host of goods and services.

Yet the emerging realities of urbanization bring with them new and complex problems. One of these is the wave of crime and violence that the world's cities are now experiencing to varying degrees. Public insecurity is not only a central threat to a civilized and peaceful society, but also a challenge for consolidating democracy and the rule of law.

Criminals have also taken advantage of the tools and features of modern life. They have adapted technology, improved their organizational skills, and in many cases increased the levels of violence used to commit crimes.

The Western Hemisphere has the second highest homicide rate of any region in the world. If deaths from political conflicts were not counted, the Americas would have the highest homicide rate in the world. Many of the region's larger cities have homicide rates of between 40 and 120 per 100,000 inhabitants, and various sources place the Latin American average at between 20 and 30.[1]

The region faces not only extreme violence through homicide, caused in large measure by other criminal acts, principally drug trafficking, but also suffers from many other daily acts of common crime such as robbery, kidnapping, sexual abuse, criminal juvenile gangs, and domestic violence.

This problem requires immediate and effective responses that must be consistent with the great progress made by the countries of the region in recent decades toward democracy and respect for human rights. The Organization of American States has accepted this challenge and is convinced of the need to build a coalition of governments, multilateral institutions and civil society that can successfully deal with this scourge.

Characterizing crime and violence in the Americas is an enormously complex task, primarily because victimization and insecurity vary so greatly in their magnitude and in the manner in which they manifest themselves in each subregion and country and even within individual cities.[2] Subregional differences should be kept in mind when distinguishing between Latin America and the Caribbean, on the one hand, and North America (the United States and Canada, in particular) on the other. Yet despite this differentiation, there are strong linkages between the regions in terms of violence and crime. The best example of this is drug trafficking and related offenses. Another example can be found in the repercussions of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which demonstrated the need to update security structures as they relate to the transport of passengers and goods.

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1 The phenomenon of concern here is essentially an urban one. There is rural crime as well (in Colombia, for instance), but its characteristics and intensity differ substantially from what happens in the cities. Throughout this paper, the reference to "rate" refers to incidence per 100,000 inhabitants.
2 Victimization results from antisocial conduct against individuals or groups. In this case, it refers to criminal victimization, which arises when a person is the target (victim) of a crime.

This report deals primarily with the phenomenon of urban crime and the State's response to that problem. This is not to minimize or overlook other forms of violence found in the region's vast rural expanses, or the so-called "white collar", or economic crimes, that are taking a rising toll in most countries of the region.

Organized Crime

Most countries face a phenomenon that is having a profound impact on their security: organized crime, linked primarily to drug trafficking, money laundering, arms trafficking, human trafficking and kidnapping, among other offenses. The situation is so severe that in some countries there are localities where impunity reigns, and where the rule of law is being replaced by the power and influence of organized crime.

This serious problem is not a new phenomenon. In the 1990s, in Colombia, there was a serious confrontation between the government and the drug cartels. The phenomenon has now reached similar dimensions in Guatemala and Mexico. Trafficking in weapons and persons has increased and veritable crime industries have emerged, with networks in several countries. The relentless growth of transnational organized crime also impacts the quality of people's lives through other forms of violence, the privatization of security, the militarization of the police, and the corruption it generates. It also has an impact on certain economic sectors, for example the tourism sector, which is the largest source of income for many countries, especially in the Caribbean.

Some of the factors that explain the growing presence of organized crime in the region include rising drug consumption, the ready availability of firearms, modern communication and banking systems used for criminal purposes, porous borders, institutional weaknesses in the criminal justice system, and high levels of corruption.[3]

Drug trafficking is the driving force behind crime and violence in the Hemisphere. Chart 1 shows the volume of coca leaf and cocaine seizures, as well as of other psychotropic substances. As shown in the chart, coca leaf and cocaine, which are mainly produced in the Andean region, rank first in global drug seizures (the analysis does not include marijuana). Charts 2 and 3 show seizures of cocaine and cannabis in the Americas.

3 Manrique, L. Un poder paralelo: el crimen organizado en América Latina. Real Instituto Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégico www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/1017.asp

Chart 1: *Global drug seizures (excluding cannabis): 2005-2006*
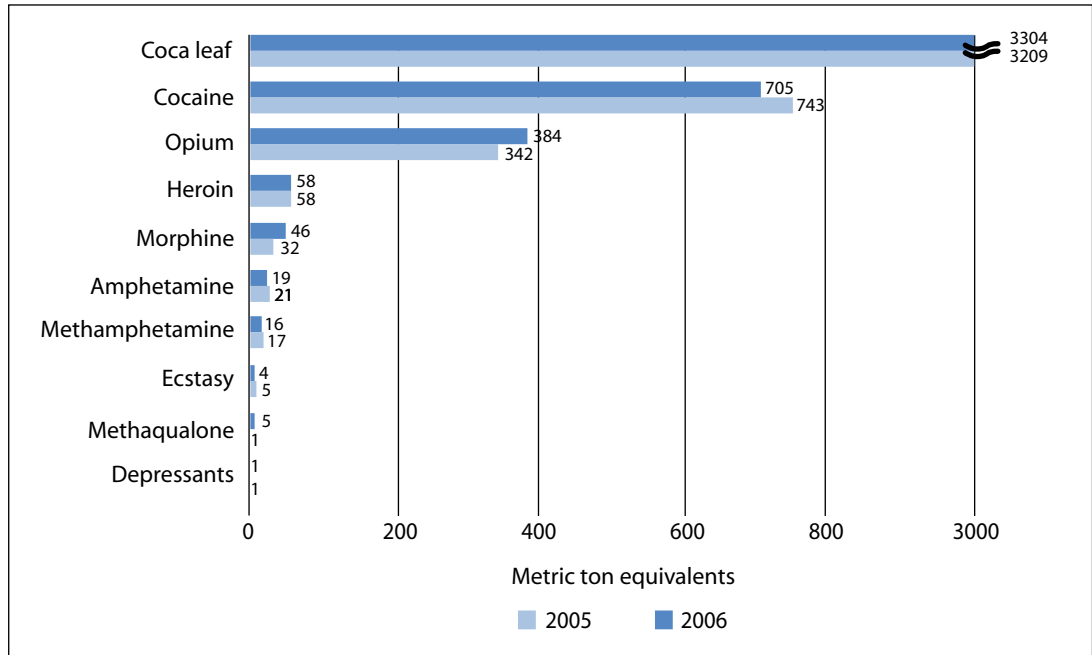
Source: World Drug Report, 2008, UNODC

Chart 2: *Seizures of cocaine in the Americas*
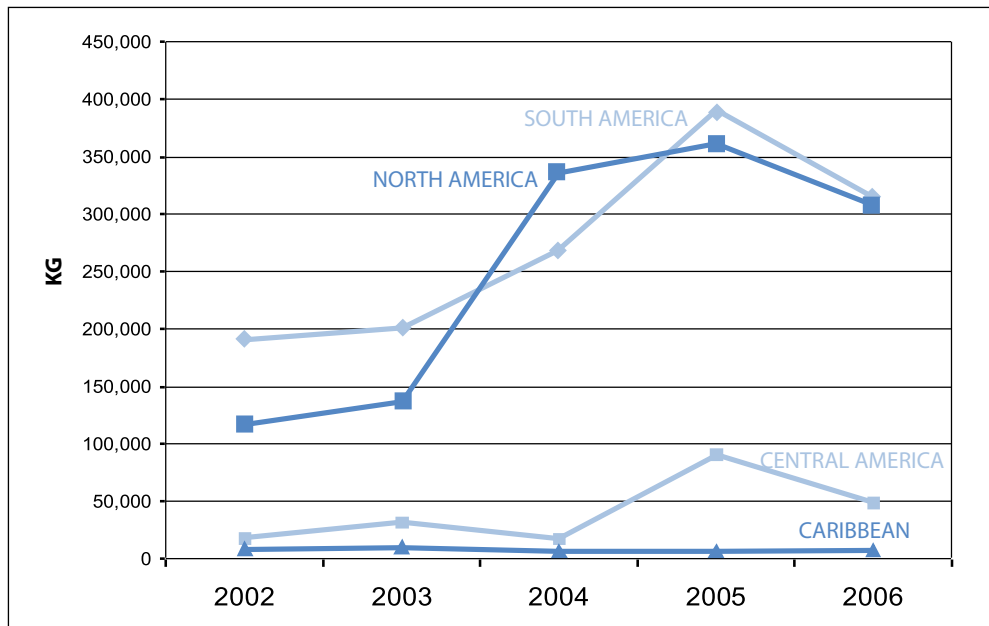
Source: Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, 4th Evaluation Round, Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, OAS General Secretariat, May 2008.

Chart 3: *Seizures of cannabis in the Americas*
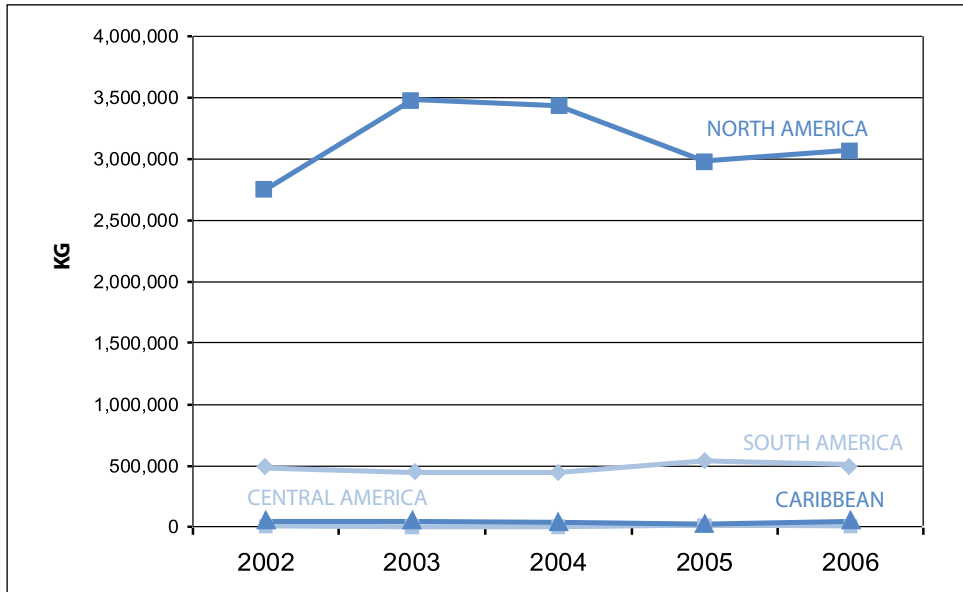
Source: World Drug Report, 2008, UNODC

Note: Cocaine production estimates for 2004 and later are not directly comparable with previous years.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the "cocaine market is concentrated in the Americas, although increases in both distribution and use continue to occur in Western Europe and West Africa. "4 As illustrated in Chart [4], although the number of hectares of coca leaf cultivation is smaller than in 1990, cocaine production is greater due to increased quality and yields.

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4 World Drug Report 2008, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Chart 4: *Global cocaine production by region: 1990-2007*
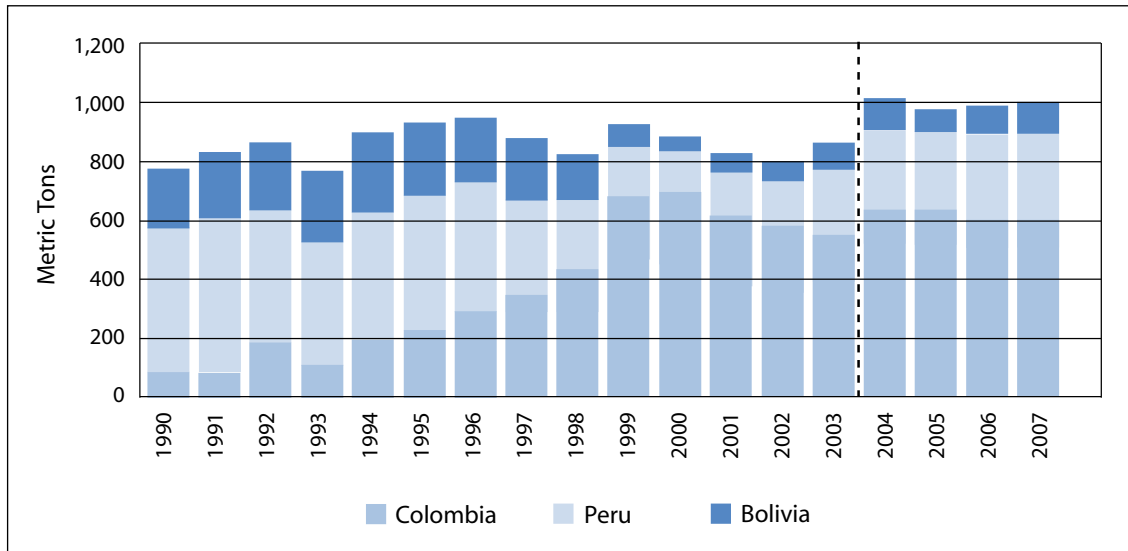
Source: World Drug Report, 2008, UNODC
Note: Cocaine production estimates for 2004 and later are not directly comparable with previous years.

The challenges that organized crime poses for governments can best be appreciated by the enormous profits it reaps. For example, the majority of the illicit drugs that are trafficked worldwide are grown and processed in the Andean countries. The Andean subregion—Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, in particular—produces about 90% of the global supply of coca leaf and cocaine, while Colombia and Mexico are significant producers of heroin.[5] Every year some 900 tons of cocaine are produced, with a market value of $60 billion according to a 2005 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). According to the same report, drug trafficking generates income of around $320 billion a year, a figure that exceeds the GDP of many Western Hemisphere countries.[6] Because of the huge revenue it generates, organized crime plays a major role in the corruption of persons and institutions.

Drug trafficking is clearly a transnational problem involving numerous activities and actors linked to drug production, marketing, and consumption, but it is also a trigger for activities associated with organized crime. Drug production and marketing degenerate into local consumption problems, which entail retail drug sales or micro-trafficking, and individuals carrying out these activities are often paid "in kind" for selling at the local level. This has secondary implications of a different type, such as ties to criminal gangs, prostitution, arms trafficking and other criminal acts.

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5 Tickner, Arlene B., Latin America and the Caribbean: Domestic and Transnational Insecurity, International Peace Academy Working Paper Series, IPA, February, 2007, p. 4.
6 World Drug Report, 2005, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

According to the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), in 2008, despite progress in the area, only 25 of the 34 OAS member states have observatories or specialized offices to compile and analyze data on drugs. There are serious data collection and analysis difficulties on both the drug supply side and demand side. In that report, 19 countries said that they did not have adequate budgets to disseminate information on drugs. Even though the issue is critical, many countries are still in a very weak position to tackle it intelligently.[7]

Yet drug trafficking is not the only criminal activity that has prospered. According to the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), human trafficking generates annual revenues of $9.5 million around the world. That money feeds other criminal activities such as document fraud, which poses a whole new set of problems, especially in a world concerned by terrorism following the events of September 11, 2001.[8]

It is also apparent through the MEM that the capacity of countries to control the movement of firearms and ammunition is quite weak. Of the 34 member states, 25 have arms import registers, 19 have arms export registers, and only 20 register the movement of firearms. The figures are similar for explosives control. The report mentioned above states that "illegal firearms trafficking remains one of the most serious problems confronting the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere."

Another problem that needs to be analyzed is the impact of kidnapping and related criminal acts. It is difficult to define this crime, which ranges from the abduction of minors by one of their parents to kidnapping for extortion and "express" kidnapping, as well as obtain regional data. Furthermore, not all kidnappings are reported, as this is frequently part of the demands of the perpetrators, and this makes it all the more difficult to understand the real magnitude of the problem.

The criminal gangs that affect many of the countries of the region are not a new phenomenon. Their membership includes children as young as eight-years-old, but their hard-core segment is made up of adults older than 21 and up to 40 or 50 years of age. Their modus operandi aligns them with organized crime and they commit all types of crimes, from small-scale drug trafficking to kidnapping. In Central America, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras suffer greatly from the problem. Gangs are also present in the United States and Mexico, and to varying degrees in Caribbean countries and in some South American countries.

One of the greatest challenges facing many governments in the region in their efforts to combat organized crime is the shortage of qualified personnel to investigate and prosecute what are often very complex criminal cases. It is often difficult to assemble evidence to corroborate an accusation and try suspects.

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7 Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, Hemispheric Report, 2008, OAS.
8 Trafficking in Persons Report, Department of State, United States of America, 2005.

This is due, in part, to the economic power of the people involved in organized crime, but also to the difficulties in putting a stop to their illegal activities, the lack of scientific capabilities and specialized (forensic) technology, the lack of resources available to the police and the law enforcement authorities for gathering useful and legitimate evidence, and the reluctance of victims and witnesses to testify.

Murder: An Everyday Event

Homicides are considered the best indicator of the level of violence in any country. They result from various criminal acts, including killings perpetrated by organized crime, from domestic violence, and from common crimes, as will be discussed below.

Homicide rates are good indicators because legal definitions of homicide are fairly similar and remain stable over time, thereby allowing direct comparisons within and between countries. In addition, the underreporting rate is low, considering that many institutions record homicides (police, health services, forensic institutes, prosecution offices).

The World Report on Violence prepared by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2002, found that the region is the second most violent in the world, with homicide rates that, at 22.9, are twice the world average and place it only behind sub-Saharan Africa.[9] The outlook for a reduction in the homicide rate is not encouraging. On the contrary, while some countries have shown steady rates of reported murders, and others, such as Colombia, have seen this number drop sharply, information from various countries shows a general upswing in the rate of homicides, as demonstrated in Table 1.[10]

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9 WHO (2002), World Report on Violence and Health, Geneva. In all cases, rates refer to incidents per 100,000 inhabitants.
10 These indicators do not necessarily reflect a real decline in the homicide rate. Changes in these indicators may in fact reflect a drop in the "black number" [unreported killings] or a change in classification parameters.

Table 1: *Homicide rates in the Americas 2000-2006*

Country	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Argentina	7,2	8,4	9,3	7,9	6,2	5,8	5,3
Brazil	26,7	27,8	28,5	29,1	27,0	22,0	--
Canada	--	--	1,9	1,7	2,0	2,1	1,9
Chile	2,6	1,9	1,9	1,8	1,7	1,9	1,9
Colombia	62,7	64,6	65,7	52,7	44,1	39,3	37.3
Ecuador	6,4	10,3	14,8	15,0	15,0	15,0	15,0
El Salvador	37,3	34,6	31,1	32,7	41,0	54,9	55,3
United States	5,5	5,6	5,6	5,7	5,5	5,6	5,7
Guatemala	25,8	25,2	30,7	35,0	36,3	42,0	45,2
Guyana	10,0	10,6	18,9	27,4	17,4	16,6	21,4
Honduras	49,9	53,7	55,9	33,6	31,9	35,0	42,9
Jamaica	44,0	40,0	36,0	54,0	58,0	49,0	49,1
Mexico	32,0	31,0	28,0	27,0	25,0	24,0	25,0
Nicaragua	9,0	10,0	10,0	12,0	12,0	13,0	12,4
Peru	2,4	11,5	10,3	5,0	5,12	11,4	--
Trinidad y Tobago	--	11,8	13,4	17,8	20,1	29,6	28,4
Uruguay	5,2	4,9	5,3	4,5	4,4	4,5	4,3
Venezuela*	33,0	35,0	42,0	49,0	42,0	37,0	--

*Ministry of Planning and Development, Government of Venezuela
http://fegs.msinfo.info/fegs/archivos/Image/DCP/serie%202_seguridad/xls.
Source: Official country data,[11] also see IDB (2008) and SEGIB (2008).[12]

This serious problem is not confined to big countries. Table 2 shows that in several Caribbean countries, where the population does not exceed 500,000, the number of homicides has varied but overall remains higher today than at the beginning of the decade. The information contained in Table 2 is official data--presented either annually or semiannually--and represents actual numbers of homicides, not homicide rates.

11 The following sources were used: Argentina, Dirección Nacional de Política Criminal, Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos; Brazil, Ministry of Health (DATASUS) and Ministry of Justice; Canada, Statistics Canada; Chile, Ministerio del Interior, Subsecretaria Interior de Seguridad Ciudadana; Colombia, Observatorio de Derechos Humanos; Ecuador, datos Policía Judicial Ecuador/Flacso Ecuador; El Salvador, Policía Nacional Civil; Estados Unidos, Department of Justice; Guatemala, Policía Nacional Civil; Guyana, Ministry of Home Affairs; Honduras, número de víctimas y tasas de homicidios en Honduras (1999-2006), OCAVI (2007); Jamaica, Jamaica Constabulary Force; Mexico, Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios sobre la Inseguridad a.c (ICESI); Nicaragua, Policía Nacional de Nicaragua y el Instituto Nacional de Estadística; Panama, datos de OCAVI (2007); Peru, Policía Nacional del Perú/CONASEC; Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of National Security; Uruguay, Observatorio Nacional de Violencia y Criminalidad, Ministerio del Interior.
12 Dammert, L.; Alda, E.; Ruz, F. (2008). Desafíos de la seguridad ciudadana en Iberoamérica. FLACSO-Chile. Secretaría General Iberoamericana (SEGIB), II Foro Iberoamericano sobre Seguridad Ciudadana, Violencia y Políticas Públicas en el ámbito local, Barcelona, 17-18 julio

Table 2: *Homicides in the Caribbean*

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total population
Barbados (Jan-June)	--	--	--	--	9	13	17	11	9	273,000
Grenada (annual)	--	--	--	--	6	11	12	11	14	104,490
Saint Lucia (annual)	23	34	42	36	38	38	43	27	--	162,434
St. Kitts and Nevis (Jan-June)	--	--	--	--	--	--	8	7	11	47,318
St. Vincent and the Grenadines (Jan-June) a/	--	--	--	--	--	--	8	18	15	102,631

a/ In this case the data refers to reported homicides
Source: The Royal Barbados Police Force; Granada Commissioner of Police Office; The Royal Saint Lucia Police Force; The Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force, Federation Comparative Crime Statistics; Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force. Population data: CARICOM.

This information is persuasive, but difficulties remain in establishing registries with uniform and comparable data, explained in part by the diverse sources of information (including police, forensic service and the public ministry) and their limited transparency.

According to WHO estimates, the worldwide homicide rate for men is 10 times higher that for women. In Latin America, the gap is narrower: the homicide rate for men is four times that for women.[13] This demonstrates that most murder victims are male, but the high levels of female homicide victims compared with the rest of the world are alarming.

With regard to the age of victims, available data from various sources show that juveniles are especially vulnerable. For example, as shown in Table 3 prepared by the IDB (2008)[14] and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (Secretaría General Iberoamericana) (SEGIB) (2008), this group has a very high homicide rate in comparison to the total population.[15] In Brazil, juveniles represented nearly 40% of all homicide victims in 2004. A similar situation prevails in Chile and in Costa Rica and, while these two countries have among the lowest homicide rates in the region, killings are concentrated among juveniles: 29% in Chile (15-24 years) and 38.1% in Costa Rica (15-29 years).

13 WHO/PAHO (2003). World Report on Violence and Health, Washington, DC.
14 Inter-American Development Bank (2008). Propuesta iniciativa de Seguridad y Convivencia Ciudadana. Sector de Capacidad Institucional. Documento preliminar. Además Lamas, J.; Cuesta, J.; Alda, E. et al (2008). Seguridad Ciudadana: marco conceptual, mimeo.
15 For operational purposes, the juvenile age bracket is defined as persons between 15 and 29 years of age, but the limitations of official information have required some flexibility in this parameter.

Table 3: *Juvenile murders as a proportion of total murders*

Country	Age bracket	Percentage of total murders	Year
Brazil	15 – 29	39.7	2004
Chile	15 - 24	29.0	2005
Colombia	15 - 24	29.0	2006
Costa Rica	15 - 29	38.1	2004
United States a/	18- 24	14.9	2005
Honduras b/	15 - 24	25.6	2007

Source: Official data, Segib (2008) and IDB (2008).[16]
a/ January-June only
b/ Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

At the regional level, the problem affects primarily young men, among whom there are 83.2 deaths for every 100,000 inhabitants (between 15 and 29 years), with this rate rising to more than 100 in the middle and lower socioeconomic brackets.

A 2003 study in Jamaica found that 68% of persons interviewed declared they knew someone who had been murdered, and 36% said they had a relative who had been killed.[17] Much of the increased lethality of violent acts can be attributed to the widespread availability of (largely illegal) weapons. The rate of homicide using firearms is alarmingly high in many countries of the region, as Table 4 shows.

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16 The following information sources were used: Brazil, Ministry of Health (DATASUS); Chile. División de Seguridad Pública, Ministerio del Interior 2006; Colombia, Crime Report, 2006; Costa Rica, Poder judicial 2004; Spain Anuario estadístico, Ministerio del Interior, 2006 and Honduras, DGIC/ Observatorio de la violencia, 2007.
17 Meeks Gardner, Millard, Thomas y Powell (2003). Perceptions and experiences of violence among secondary school students in urban Jamaica, Pan-American Journal of Public Health Vol. 14, N°2, August.

Table 4: *Firearms and homicides*[18]

Country	Total civilian guns (millions)	Annual gun homicides	Gun homicides per 100,000 people
Ecuador	0.2-0.5	1,321	10.16
Colombia	4.2-10.2	21,898	49.54
Venezuela	1.2-6.0	5,408	21.04
Brazil	20-30	25,603	14.35
Mexico	3.5-16.5	5,452	5.27
Argentina	4.1- 5.6	942	2.45
Peru	0.5-1.0	161	0.59
Uruguay	0.9-1.6	104	3.05
Chile	1.4-2.0	82	0.52
Jamaica	0.08-0.2	450	16.97
United States	243-281	10,31	3.45
Canada	7.9	170	0.54

Source: Small Arms Survey 2002.

The growing number of people wounded as a result of criminal acts is a cause for serious concern. Information from various national sources demonstrates this increase: in Chile, for example, the injury rate per 100,000 inhabitants rose from 417 in 2001 to 537 in 2005.[19] In Argentina, it went from 300 to 392 between 2000 and 2005, while available information from Colombia shows a jump from 79 to 206 injuries in the period 1996-2003.[20]

18 www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/sas/publications/yearb2002.html and From Chaos to Coherence: Global Firearm Stockpiles. www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/sas/publications/year_b_pdf/2004/2004SASCh2_summary_sp.pdf Note: the data come from different base years. Firearms statistics are for 2002-3, gun homicide data are from the most recent year available, usually 1998-2001, except for Jamaica, which is 1995. Figures for guns/gun homicide and gun homicide/100,000 guns have been rounded.
19 Ministerio del Interior. Cifras de denuncias por delitos de mayor connotación social
20 Argentina. Dirección Nacional de Política Criminal. wwwpolcrim.jus.gov.ar.
Colombia. Instituto Nacional del Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. http://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/. Fundación Seguridad y Democracia. http://www.seguridadydemocracia.org/allSeguridadUrbana.asp

Civic Dysfunction and Domestic Violence

Violence has taken root in the region as a way of resolving day-to-day conflicts of all kinds. It appears in many forms, not only in public places but in the homes of a significant portion of the population.

Thus, family or domestic violence is one of the principal problems facing the region. An assessment prepared by the IDB found that sexual assault and domestic violence are significant causes of disability and death among women of childbearing age, in developed countries and in developing countries alike.[21] In Latin America, domestic violence affects between 25% and 50% of women, depending on the definition used.[22] This figure should serve as a warning to a hemisphere marked by brutal murders of women by their next of kin, spouses and partners. A Mexican study (2003) showed that nearly 50% of women over 15 years of age living with a partner had suffered at least one incident of violence at the partner's hands. Those incidents involved physical assault for more than 1,813,370 women, and sexual assault for more than 1,527,209, and levels of emotional and economic violence were considerably greater.[23]

Table 5: *Percentage of women ages 15 to 49 years who have suffered physical, sexual or emotional violence at the hands of a present or former partner*

Country	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Bolivia 2003	53.8	52.3	15.2
Colombia 2005	65.7	39.0	11.5
Mexico 2003	38.4	9.3	7.8
Peru 2004	68.2	42.3	9.8
Dominican Republic 2002	67.5	21.7	6.4

Source: http://www.eclac.cl/mujer/proyectos/perfiles/documentos/violencia_8.xls

Data for Costa Rica show that nearly 6 in 10 women have suffered some form of serious physical or sexual assault by the age of 16, and a quarter of that group has been victimized repeatedly.[24] In addition, they suffer various forms of psychological mistreatment, limitations on their freedom, and emotional abuse. In 2003, 19% of all police reports involved domestic violence. If to these cases we add reports of sexual offenses, the total is equal to the number of reported violations of the narcotics law, and it exceeds reported property crimes.[25]

21 Morrison, A. and M.L. Biehl (1999) Too close to home: Domestic Violence in the Americas. IDB, Washington DC. Sagot, M. (2000) Ruta crítica de las mujeres afectadas por la violencia intrafamiliar en América Latina. PAHO, Washington DC. Moser, C. and C. McIwaine (2004) Encounters with violence in Latin America. Routledge, London.
22 Ending Violence Against Women, Heise, PAHO-WHO, 1999
23 Dammert, L. and Arias, P. (2007) El desafío de la delincuencia en América Latina: Diagnóstico y respuesta de política. Serie estudios socioeconómicos Nº 40, CIEPLAN. www.cieplan.cl/inicio/codigo.php?documento=CIEPLAN%2040.pdf&PHPSESSID=50f70db85607b64300d71d36b9293b46
24 Alméras D., Bravo R., et al, Violencia contra la mujer en relación de pareja: América Latina y el Caribe. Un propuesta para medir su magnitud y evolución. Serie, Mujer y desarrollo 40. Santiago, Chile, ECLAC, 2002
25 Dammert, L. and Arias, P. (2007) El desafío de la delincuencia en América Latina: Diagnóstico y respuesta de política. Serie estudios socioeconómicos Nº 40, CIEPLAN. www.cieplan.cl/inicio/codigo.php?documento=CIEPLAN%2040.pdf&PHPSESSID=50f70db85607b64300d71d36b9293b46

In Argentina, according to data from the National Criminal Policy Directorate data of the Ministry of Justice, the rate of sexual crimes against women in 2002 was 22.75 (complaints) per 100,000 inhabitants.[26] In Bolivia, the most commonly reported crimes are rape and statutory rape. Figures for these crimes show that there were 2,210 complaints in 2003, 1,076 in 2005, and 1,725 in 2006 (preliminary figures).[27]

In Nicaragua, according to information from the national police, 3% of crimes are sexual in nature. Complaints filed at police stations with special facilities for helping women show that in 2005 there were 2,504 complaints of sexual violence, and this number rose to 3,386 in 2006. In 2006 there were 1,524 rapes reported, and 1,757 in 2007.[28] In Honduras, of all complaints of violence received in the Women's Special Public Prosecutor's Office in 2004, 9,000 were cases of domestic violence and 1,168 were sexual offenses.[29]

Criminal statistics from the Comité Nacional de Análisis de Estadísticas Criminales (CONADEC) of Panama, and information supplied by the police (Policía Nacional Preventiva and Policía Técnica Judicial), reveal that there has been a sustained increase in the number of reported cases of rapes for the period 2005-2007 , rising from 771 cases to 830 cases.

Finally, official data for 2005 show a sexual assault rate of 50 per 100,000 in the United States, while the figure for Canada in 2007 was 65.[30] Information from various Caribbean countries confirms that sexual offenses must be considered in the context of comprehensive security policies.

Table 6: *Sexual offenses in the Caribbean*

Country	2006	2007	2008
Barbados crimes of sexual connotation, January-June (includes rape, assault with intent to rape, and others)	111	101	81
St. Kitts and Nevis: rape and indecent assault, January-June.	20	21	22
St. Vincent and the Grenadines: reported rapes, January-June	27	30	23

Source of data: The Royal Barbados Police Force; The Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force, Federation Comparative Crime Statistics; Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force.

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26 Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2005.
27 Instituto Nacional de Estadística. www.ine.gov.bo
28 Policía Nacional de Nicaragua. Anuario estadístico 2006.
29 Office of the Attorney General (Ministerio Público), Report of the Women's Special Public Prosecutor's Office, Tegucigalpa, 2004.
30 Bureau of Justice Statistics. http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict.htm; and Statistics Canada. http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/legal02.htm

Violent crime is a daily occurrence not only in the home but also at school and at work. In school, it involves violence among students and also between students and teachers.[31] Although this is a major problem, there is little available information. Of the few studies conducted, it is worth underscoring one conducted in 14 state capitals of Brazil, which found that 45% of students said they could not concentrate on their studies because of violence. The same study found that 32% of students were nervous because of the violent atmosphere, and 31% had lost interest in attending school for this reason.[32] In Chile the situation is similar. In a 2003 study, half the students interviewed declared that something had been stolen from them at school during the previous 12 months, and around a third reported that a group had bullied them individually or that another student had picked a fight with them. In another study, 44.7% of students interviewed said they had been assaulted in school during 2007. About a fifth of the youngsters said that they had been attacked in a group by another group, and one in 10 reported physical assault by a group of students.[33] Half of the boys and girls interviewed for a similar study in Jamaica said they had suffered violence, aggression and punishment at school, a situation to which the faculty responded with more punishment.[34]

Although, as noted earlier, few countries have conducted studies on this serious problem, information gleaned from the media and experts on the matter stress that violence is found in schools throughout the hemisphere.

Property Crime

One of the public's main concerns is the loss of personal belongings. In addition to the violence involved, symbolic and material losses can leave profound effects and cast a pall over daily life. It is difficult to understand the scale and magnitude of this type of crime, as criminal information systems vary from country to country in how the crimes are defined and how frequently the information is updated.

Moreover, levels of reported crimes depend on variables that are difficult to control over time. For example, levels of reporting, and hence criminal statistics themselves, may be influenced by the degree of confidence in the police, the perception of impunity, the gradual acceptance of certain kinds of behavior that lose their criminal connotation, and even the perception that data are used for political purposes.

31 Abramovay, M. (2005) Violencia en las escuelas un gran desafío. Revista Iberoamericana de Educación. N.º 38: 53-66. See also www.rieoei.org/rie38a03.pdf   Savenije, W. and M. Beltrán, M. (2005) Compitiendo en Bravuras. Violencia Estudiantil en el Área Metropolitana de San Salvador. FLACSO.

32 Abramovay, M., and Rua, M. das G. (2002): Violence in Schools, Brasilia. UNESCO, STD/AIDS Coordination Office of the Ministry of Health, Secretary of State for Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice, CNPF, Instituto Ayrtón Senna, UNAIDS, World Bank, USAID, Fundación Foro, COSED, UNIDME.

33 Mertz, Catalina (2006) Prevención de la violencia en las escuelas. Fundación Paz Ciudadana, Chile.   www.pazciudadana.cl/documentos/prevencionviolenciaescuelas.pdf

34 Presentation by Julie Meeks at OAS, 2006. citing Fernald and Meeks Gardner, 2003.

Despite these problems, trends in the reporting of property crimes in several countries show significant inter-country variations. In general, however, we can say that, in most countries of the region, the levels of reported crimes have risen in recent years. While some of that increase may reflect a higher reporting rate, there is no clear evidence to back up that assumption. In fact, as will be seen below, confidence levels have declined in the region, and this may reflect rising criminality in the countries examined.

Table 7: *Property crimes 2000-2006 (per 100,000 population)*

Country	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Argentina	2013.5	2159.0	2584.0	2363.0	2187.0	2039.0	1607.0
Brazil	--	1377.3	1491.1	1685.1	1729.1	1682.5	--
Canada	-	--	--	4120.6	3969.3	3735.8	3596.0
Chile	1083.3	1268.4	1440.6	1547.6	1636.0	1648.7	1609.8
Colombia	79.0	121.0	140.0	139.0	122.0	151.0	--
Ecuador	--	--	501.8	485.4	483.3	568.8	527.7
El Salvador	168.9	120.8	81.8	69.0	77.7	84.7	83.5
United States	3618.3	3658.1	3630.6	3591.2	3514.1	3429.8	3334.5
Guatemala	165.9	159.9	153.7	158.1	151.5	136.2	114.3
Guyana	108.9	135.0	215.6	133.6	146.4	178.6	--
Mexico	507.0	527.0	497.0	494.0	484.0	485.0	501.0
Nicaragua	606.6	676.8	682.0	685.6	684.1	389.9	455.8
Peru	--	--	387.6	415.9	415.9	387.7	373.6
Trinidad and Tobago	--	337.0	366.0	358.0	300.0	371.0	429.0
Uruguay	2040.7	2266.4	2533.2	2925.3	3192.5	3426	3345.4
Venezuela	412.0	357.0	326.0	348.0	361.0	295.0	267.0

Source: SEGIB (2008) and IDB (2008).

Table 8: *Property crimes in the Caribbean*

Country	2006	2007	2008
Barbados serious property crimes, January-June	1.311	1.081	1.188
St. Kitts and Nevis: house breaking and larceny, January-June.	310	272	283
St. Vincent and the Grenadines: property crimes, including burglary and damage to property, January-June	976	920	--

Source: The Royal Barbados Police Force; The Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force, Federation Comparative Crime Statistics; Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force.

Victimization surveys are the most reliable tools available to understand the situation in greater detail. However, the high cost of conducting regular and rigorous surveys puts them beyond the reach of many countries. One source of international comparisons is the United Nations International Crime and Justice Research Institute's (UNICRI) International Survey, but it covers only some countries in the region, and is confined to urban samples that are not very representative of the country as a whole.[35] So while a regional comparison is not possible, partial results for individual countries can be analyzed. Several opinion surveys have included questions about victimization (e.g. Latinobarómetro), but those sources have unfortunately not maintained the same structure and format over time, which is a crucial element for identifying trends.[36] Another regional survey, Americas Barometer, on the other hand, has used the same questionnaire consistently, which allows for the formulation of certain conclusions (see Chart 5).

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35 UNICRI conducted this survey in 1989, 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2005 (in Europe only); Latin American coverage includes Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Peru. For more details see: UNICRI (2008). International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS). http://www.unicri.it/wwd/analysis/icvs/index.php.
36 Moreover, opinion polls and victimization surveys both have limited databases

Chart 5: *Victims of a criminal act in the Americas over a 12-month period*
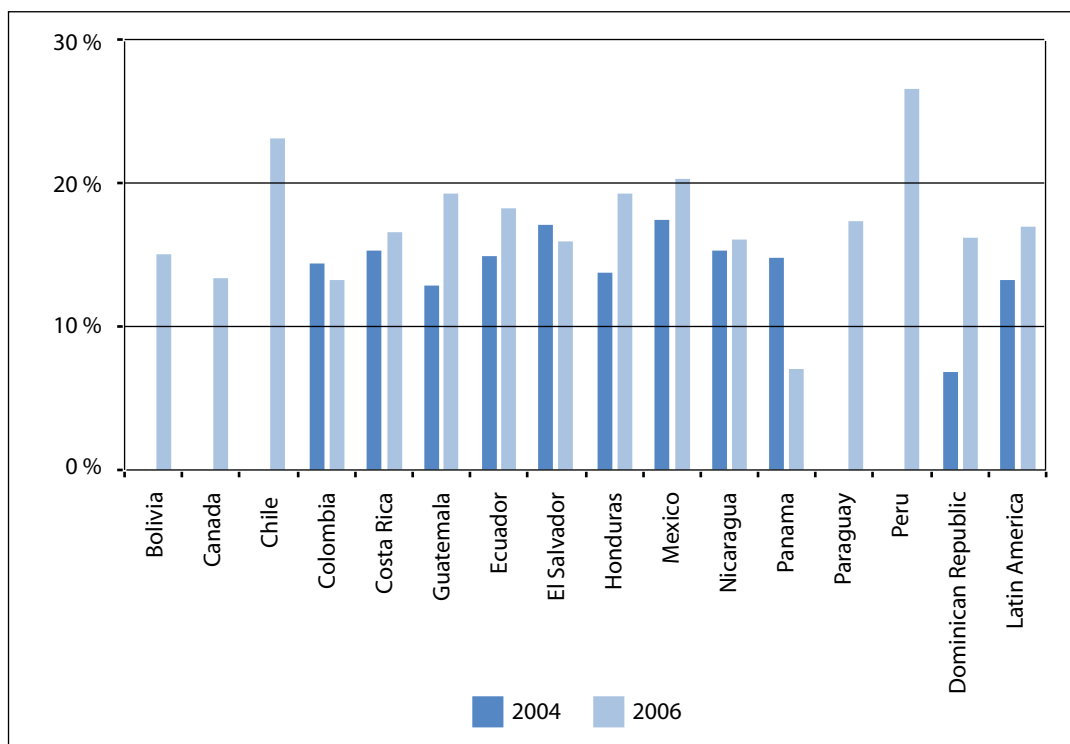
Source: Americas Barometer, 2004 and 2006

Crime as the Leading Public Concern

The information presented up to this point demonstrates the importance that citizen security and insecurity must have on the region's agenda. The magnitude of the problem, its sustained growth, and the sensation that the government's response is insufficient, are some of the factors that have placed this issue at the center of public concern.[37]

In some countries, insecurity is superseded only by poverty or unemployment as the leading public concern. Information provided by Latinobarómetro showed that this concern doubled between 2003 and 2007. It is especially important to note that these levels of concern appear in many contexts, including those where violence is relatively rare. For example, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Chile, with the lowest reported crime and victimization rates, betray high percentages of public concern. In the United States, while crime is not the principal concern of citizens at a national level, fear at the local level is an increasingly important item on the public agenda.

37 For further details on this point see: Arriagada, I. and Godoy, L. (1999). Seguridad Ciudadana y Violencia en América Latina. Diagnostico y políticas en los años noventa. Social Development Division, ECLAC, Santiago, Chile; Fajnzylber, P. and Lederman, D (2002). Crime in Latin America in: Levinson, D. (ed.) Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/ CrimeandPunishment.pdf; Dammert, L. and Arias, P. (2007). El desafío de la delincuencia en América Latina: diagnóstico y respuesta de política, Serie estudios/socioeconómicos, Nº40, CIEPLAN; among others.

Fear of Crime

The perception of insecurity and the feeling of being under threat are phenomena that in many ways are independent of the actual crime situation.[38] There are various reasons for this, including heavy media coverage of security issues, the wide reporting of unusually violent incidents, and the emergence of communications media dedicated specifically to such issues.[39] Yet the main factor behind the rising wave of public fear is previous victimization, either direct or indirect.[40]

A decrease in the rate of crime does not affect public perception of crime. In some contexts a lower level of victimization will not necessarily reduce fear. As noted earlier, reporting rates are not a direct reflection of the actual crime situation: in Chile and Argentina, for example, when crime reporting rates slow there is no accompanying change in people's feelings of insecurity. This suggests a certain "fear inertia," meaning that it takes longer for fear to diminish, and that consequently policies to reduce victimization rates must be sustained over time.

When asked by Latinobarómetro in 2007 about insecurity levels and trends in their country, the majority (63%) of persons interviewed declared their country to be "very unsafe," with a negative outlook for the future. The same survey found that people's principal concern was that they would be the victim of a violent crime: 73% of Latin Americans said they were constantly afraid.

Chart 6: *Is life in your country increasingly safe, just as safe, or very unsafe?*
Latin America, 2007
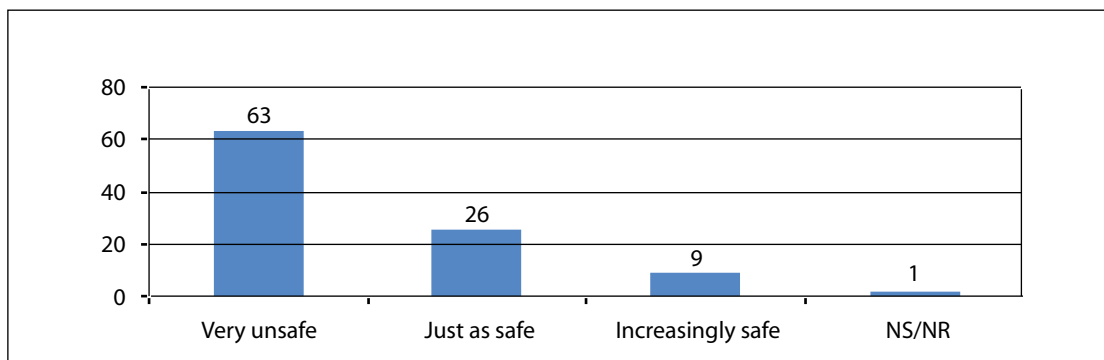
Source: Latinobarómetro, 2007

38 Dammert, L., R. Karmy and L. Manzano (2006) El impacto del temor sobre la ciudadanía en Chile. Centro de Estudios en Seguridad Ciudadana. Universidad de Chile, Santiago.
39 Garofalo, J. 1981. "Crime and Mass Media: A selective review of research", Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency. 18. pp. 319-350. Huesmann, L. and Moise, J. Media violence: A demonstrated public health threat to children, The Harvard Mental Health Letter, June 1996. Barbero, M. 2002. "La ciudad que median los medios". In: Moraña, M. (edit). Espacio urbano, comunicación y violencia en América Latina. Pittsburgh: International Institute of Ibero-American Literature. Cose, E. 1990. "Turning victims into saints: Journalists cannot resist recasting crime into a shopworm morality tale".
40 Dammert, L. and A. Lunecke (2002) Violencia y Temor: Análisis teórico-empírico en doce comunas del país (2002). Serie Estudios, Centro de Estudios de Seguridad Ciudadana, Universidad de Chile.

Chart 7: *Are you afraid all or most of the time that you will be victim of a violent crime? Latin America 2007*
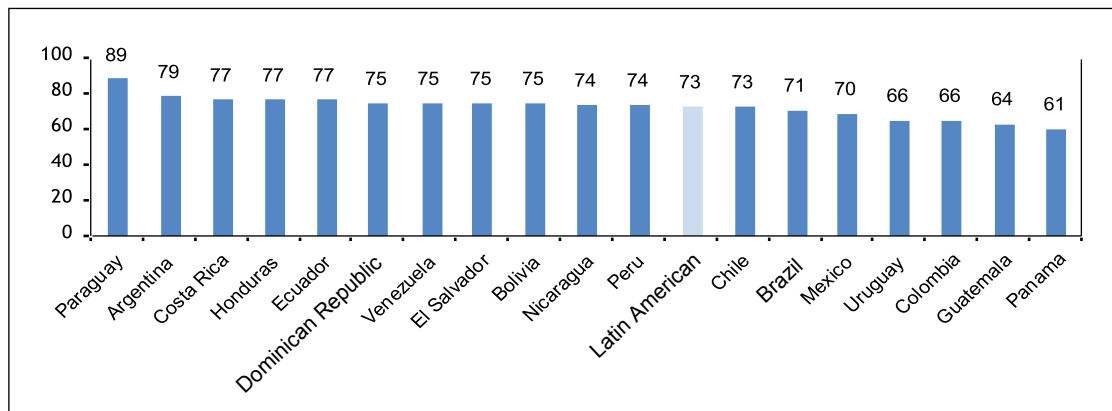
Source: Latinobarómetro, 2007

Victimization and fear bring with them other consequences, for they have a direct impact on the quality of mutual trust within the community. Chart 8 demonstrates that individuals who have been victims of crime (i.e. those who answer "yes" in the Chart) have less confidence in their fellow citizens.

Chart 8: *Level of trust in the community, victims and non-victims Latin America 2006*
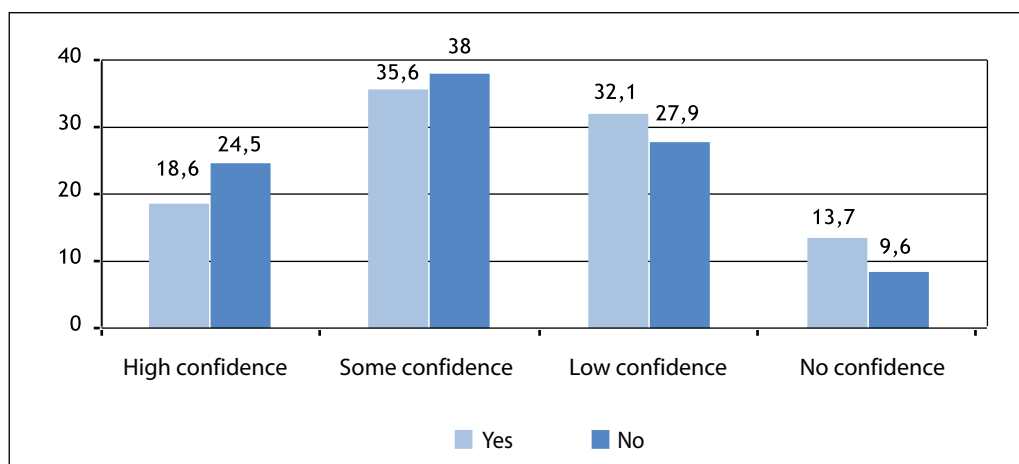
Source: Americas Barometer, 2006

Trust in Institutions

Public mistrust of the institutions responsible for controlling and preventing crime is closely linked to the feeling of insecurity described above. The origins of that perception are difficult to assess, but it can be linked to three phenomena. The first is the abuse of force by government institutions, especially the police.[41] The second is that the penetration of corruption into the day-to-day workings of various parts of the criminal justice system has an impact on the general public, which is aware of and may even be the victim of such corruption. Finally, the slow-moving pace of the criminal justice system and the low case-solution rate leave people discouraged with government's capacity to address the problem effectively.[42]

Data for 2005-2006 from the Jamaica Constabulary Force reveal a wide variance in the murder solution rate, ranging from zero in drug trafficking cases to 83% in the case of "other criminal acts".[43] According to a 2003 study in Colombia, 20.9% of cases result in charges, which means that for every person charged there are 4.9 who are acquitted.[44] According to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study, in Guatemala, fewer than 2% of homicides result in a conviction.[45]

According to 2005 data from the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) (see Table 9), in some countries the clearance rate of cases before the courts is so low that at the end of the year there are as many as four times as many cases pending as were filed during the year.

Table 9: *Court cases filed/cases pending resolution*

Country	Number of cases filed with the courts	Number of cases pending at year's end	Pending cases / cases filed
Argentina (1)	1,002,296	2,954,710	2.95
Brazil (2)	6,769,890	11,587,788	1.71
Costa Rica	553,798	461,138	0.83
Ecuador	241,727	1,023,377	4.23
Mexico (3)	247,808	48,191	0.19

(1) Federal courts
(2) Federal and labor courts
(3) Federal courts
Source: prepared on the basis of data from the Justice Studies Center of the Americas

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41 Birbeck, C. and Gabaldon, G. (2002) La disposición de agentes policiales de usar fuerza contra el ciudadano. In: Briceño León, R. (edit). Violencia, sociedad y justicia en América Latina. CLACSO, Argentina. www.hrw.org (Human Rights Watch)
42 This mistrust can also be seen in the indices measuring public satisfaction with their functioning. The Americas Barometer. 2006 reveals moderate satisfaction with the three institutions named (public prosecution, the justice system, and the police). In fact, there are no significant differences among them in terms of the degree of satisfaction. Thus, the percentage of individuals who say they are very satisfied with the functioning of these institutions does not exceed 14%, which is lower than the average level of people who are highly dissatisfied.
43 Crime, Violence and Development, Trends Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and World Bank, March 2007, p. 115.
44 William Dau, Datos Estadísticos sobre la Impunidad Judicial en Cartagena, Colombia, Revista Probidad, Edición 24, September 2003.
45 Arturo Matute Rodríguez and Iván García Santiago, Informe Estadístico de la Violencia en Guatemala, United Nations Development Program-Guatemala, 2007.

According to Latinobarómetro, since 2003 trust in the police has increased, but confidence in the judicial system has maintained a plateau of 37% since 2004 (see Chart 9).

Chart 9: *Level of trust in the police and the courts. Latin America (2003-2006)*
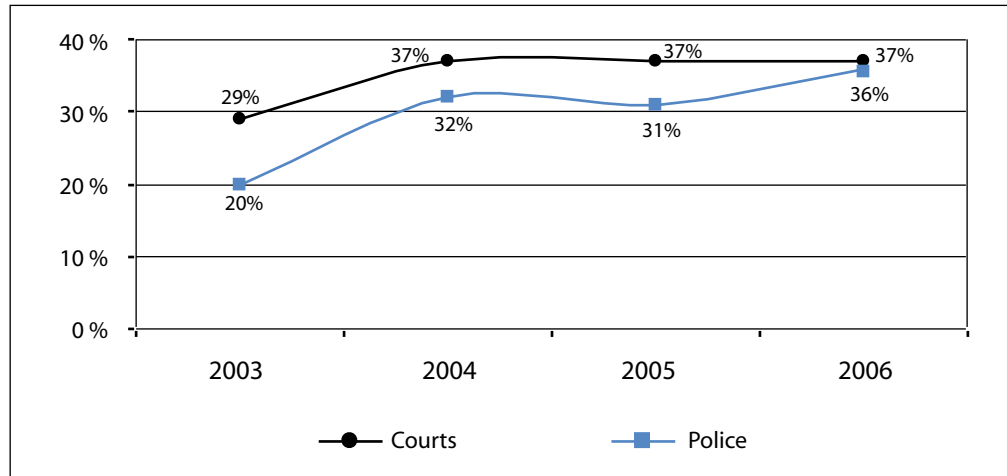
Source: Latinobarómetro (2003 -2006)

In general, it may be concluded that in recent years there has been a marked deterioration with regard to security issues. This is reflected in the growth of organized crime, the increased rates for homicides and other forms of violence, and higher property crime rates, among other manifestations of crime. Surveys of the public's perceptions clearly indicate that insecurity is one of the principal concerns of the citizens of the Hemisphere and that it is a growing concern in most of the countries.

CHAPTER 2.

> An Institutional Overview of Security

An Institutional Overview of Security

Governmental response to security problems has changed since the early 1990s. Since then, a new generation of reforms has begun to transform the security paradigm from protection of the State towards public or citizen security (depending on the national context), which has come to include prevention policies crafted with citizen participation and stronger emphasis on police-community relations.

This chapter analyzes the current institutional landscape of the region, focusing on two specific aspects: the political institutions responsible for security (ministries and departments) and the police institutions.

Ministries

The ministries responsible for security issues (interior, governance, public security or justice) in many cases also have other responsibilities, which is one of the reasons why it is difficult to strengthen effective leadership in regards to public security.[46] Other reasons include a shortage of civilian expertise in security matters, institutional instability, constant changes and redefinitions of policy, high turnover among officers and technical personnel, and lack of facilities for monitoring and evaluating programs and initiatives.

All of the foregoing represent a problem for developing effective policies to control and prevent crime, and for establishing clear technical and political responsibilities for taking decisions on police action. The following paragraphs describe, by way of example, some national cases as they relate to institutional considerations.

There is an important difference between countries with a federal administrative structure and those that are unitary States. In the first, control over security policies as well as institutional coordination and the exercise of effective democratic leadership is much more complex, with different levels of government playing roles that are not necessarily complementary and, in some cases, possibly even contradictory. An example illustrating this challenge is Mexico, where there are more than 1,600 law enforcement institutions at the national, state and local levels and where coordination of security policies is severely hampered.[47]

Beyond the issue of governmental organization, one factor common to the regional ministerial reality is the change in the locus of responsibility for public security issues. In Argentina, institutional responsibility has been shifting constantly in recent years, moving from an office in the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Justice, then back to Interior. It currently lies with the Ministry of Justice, Security and Human Rights, created in 2002. In Chile, national police forces are being transferred from the defense sphere to the Ministry of Interior. In Uruguay, an institutional strengthening project is now being prepared to establish a strictly civilian technical and political staff that will be distinct from the police.

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46 See Reporte del Sector Seguridad en America Latina y el Caribe, FLACSO-Chile, 2007, p 75-76
47 García Luna, G. (2006). Contra el crimen, ¿por qué 1661 corporaciones de policía no bastan? Pasado, presente y futuro de la policía en México.

In January 2007, El Salvador established the Ministry of Public Security and Justice with responsibility for all security-related issues. This move put an end to nearly a decade of institutional to-ing and fro-ing, beginning with the Ministry of the Interior (following signature of the peace treaties in 1992), followed by creation of the Ministry of Public Security in 1994, the merger of Public Security and Justice in 1999, and finally the absorption of Public Security, Justice and Interior into the Ministerio de Gobernación in 2001. In Paraguay, after successive changes, a special working unit for security issues was finally established with the creation of the Vice Ministry of Internal Security in 1999 and the National Public Security Plan, "Paraguay Seguro," in 2005, on the basis of which the Specialized Urban Police was created in 2006.

Another element to be considered is the lack of government policies establishing clear goals and objectives for public security. In some countries where these policies exist (Argentina, Brazil and Dominican Republic, for example), said policies have not been monitored by effective follow up mechanisms or have undergone substantial changes in relatively short periods of time.

Two successful examples are to be found in Colombia and Chile. In the first case, given the special situation facing the country, the police forces are placed under the Defense Ministry. Yet a number of bodies have been created to control and oversee the police, such as the National Police and Public Security Council, created in 2003, and the National Police Commissioner. In addition, in recent years a Democratic Security Policy has been adopted, which has served to bring about changes in the planning and evaluation of police work. In the case of Chile, the Ministry of the Interior, through the Undersecretary of the Interior, is the body responsible for coordinating crime control and prevention policies. These initiatives are organized around the National Public Security Strategy, which sets out the objectives and programs developed by the State. In fact, this is one of the few strategies in the region to establish quantifiable goals for the duration of a government mandate, whereby all governmental efforts are aligned with this definition.

One of the main obstacles to a rigorous and detailed diagnosis of public security problems is the shortage of reliable and uniform information. The reasons for this shaky statistical base are many, starting with the fact that the legal definitions of crimes vary significantly from country to country, making it virtually impossible to compare reported crime rates across the region. Data collection is still an uncertain and unsystematic science in many contexts where insufficient resources are available for investment in information systems, training , maintenance and use.

In contrast to other areas, there are no clear international standards for the public security field which would ensure continuity and uniformity in decision-making. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Bank (BM), the Inter-American Bank (IDB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other agencies have established these types of standards in their respective fields of work. Yet this is not the case regarding information from police records or from the justice system. The result is that in many countries it is impossible, for instance, to calculate the probability of obtaining a conviction, because the data are compiled or delivered late and do not indicate when a judicial process began. In addition, in many countries the same indicator may have different values depending on the source of information, and in many cases governments themselves do not publish complete data for fear that the information may be used for political

ends.[48] Without a proper context and heterogeneous sources of information, it is difficult to make appropriate decisions, whether in terms of designing and implementing policies or generating legal instruments to make the criminal-justice system more effective.

The two basic tools for gathering information on crime are police records and victimization surveys. With regard to the first of these tools, several Latin American countries have begun to develop record systems to generate comprehensive information. For example, Chile has had a National Information System on Crime in place since 1999, in which information on police reports and arrests are compiled and consolidated. Mexico has promoted the "Plataforma México" as a cornerstone of public security initiatives, representing a significant investment in technology, telecommunications and in compiling criminal information. Another case is Ecuador, where the Ministry of the Interior has created a technical unit to implement the National Public Security Plan: within the unit is the "National Observatory on Public Security", which is working to standardize and improve information on crime. It currently uses only data from the national police, but there are plans to integrate the public prosecution offices as well. These are not the only cases, but they serve to demonstrate the many efforts that are being made to build more effective criminal information systems.

48 Buvinic, M., Morrison, A. and M. Shifter (1999), Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: a Framework for Action. Washington DC, IDB. Dammert, L. and Arias, P. (2007). El desafío de la delincuencia en América Latina: Diagnóstico y respuesta de política. Serie estudios socio/económicos Nº40, CIEPLAN. Dammert, L.; Ruz, F. and Salazar, F. (2008). ¿Políticas de Seguridad a Ciegas?: desafíos para la construcción de sistemas de información en América Latina, FLACSO-Chile, Santiago, Chile. Alda, E. and Béliz, G. (Eds.) (2007). What way out? The unfinished agenda of citizen security in Latin America and the Caribbean, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington D.C.

Table 10: *Crime reporting systems in Latin America*

Country	Name of System	Year created	Oversight body
Argentina	National Ciminal Information System(Sistema Nacional de Información Criminal)	1999	Ministry of Justice, Security, and Human Rights
Brasil	National Statistics System on Public Security and Criminal Justice (Sistema Nacional de Estatísticas de Seguridade Pública e Justiça Criminal)	2004	Ministry of Justice
Colombia	Crime Observatory (Observatorio del Delito)	S/I	National Police of Colombia
Chile	National Ciminal Information System (Sistema Nacional de Información Delictual)	1999	Public Security Division, Ministry of Interior
México	Plataforma México	In development	Public Security Secretariat
Perú	Crime and Violence Observatory (Observatorio del Crimen y la Violencia)	In development	National Public Security Council
República Dominicana	Criminal Investigation System (Sistema de Investigación Criminal)	2005	Office of the Prosecutor General
Uruguay	National Observatory on Violence and Crime (Observatorio Nacional de la Violencia y Criminalidad)	2005	Ministry of the Interior

Source: ¿Políticas de Seguridad a Ciegas?: desafíos para la construcción de sistemas de información en América Latina, FLACSO-Chile, Santiago, Chile Dammert, Ruz and Salazar (2008)

All countries in the Americas conduct opinion polls and publish information on the crime situation and the perception of public insecurity. Only some countries, however, provide full and reliable information on victimization to supplement police data and cover offenses that police reports do not address. The best example is the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) which the United States Department of Justice has conducted annually since 1972 and which has become a tool for generating basic information for the different public security agencies.[49] In Canada, complete victimization surveys have been conducted since 1988.[50]

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the situation is quite different in this respect as only a small group of countries have established mechanisms for collecting information on victimization to supplement police reports. One such country is Argentina, where the National Crime Policy Directorate (a unit of the Ministry of Justice, Public Security and Human Rights) used this instrument in the country's major cities from 1997 to 2003, with support from UNICRI. Since 1996, Colombia has instituted a victimization survey conducted jointly by the Chamber of Commerce of Bogotá and the Mayor's office of that city, in order to generate information for the community in general.[51] The Metropolitan District of Quito has also conducted surveys and compiled information on victimization for the years 2003, 2004 and 2008.[52] The National Urban Citizen Security Survey (Encuesta Nacional Urbana de Seguridad Ciudadana) developed by the Chilean Ministry of the Interior and the National Statistics Institute of Chile marks a significant improvement in annual data collection at the national level with an emphasis on urban areas.[53]

49 U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict.htm. The survey has undergone some significant methodological changes over the years.
50 Statistics Canada (2008): Crime and Justice: Victims and Victimization.
51 Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá. Encuesta de Percepción de Seguridad y Victimización. http://camara.ccb.org.co/contenido/contenido.aspx?catID=126&conID=562
52 Distrito Metropolitano de Quito (2004). Observatorio Metropolitano de Seguridad Ciudadana. http://www.observatorioseguridaddmq.net/
53 Ministry of the Interior, Chile: http://www.seguridadpublica.gov.cl/ and http://www.ine.cl/canales/chile_estadistico/home.php; and http://www.seguridadpublica.gov.cl/filesapp/ENUSC%202007_nacional.ppt

Table 11: *Victimization and insecurity surveys in the Americas*

Country	Survey	Responsible agency	Years covered
Argentina	Victimization Survey	National Criminal Policy Bureau (Dirección Nacional de Política Criminal)	1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003
Canada	Victimization Survey	Statistics Canada	1988 1993 1998 2004
Chile	National Urban Survey on Citizen Security	Ministry of the Interior, National Statistics Institute	2003 2005 2006 2007
Colombia	Victimization Survey	National Administrative Department of Statistics (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística) National Planning Department (Departamento Nacional de Planeación)	2003
El Salvador	Victimization and the Perception of Security in El Salvador, 2004	Ministry of Government and University Institute on Public Opinion, University of Central America.	2004
United States	National Crime Victimization Survey	Department of Justice	1973 a 1989 (methodological change) 1990 a 2005 (methodological change) 2006 to present
Mexico	National Insecurity Survey	Citizen Institue for the Study of Insecurity (Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios sobre la Inseguridad)	2002 2003 2004 2005
Peru	2005 Victimization Survey	Ministry of the Interior and UNICRI	2005

Source: Dammert, Ruz and Salazar (2008)

The quality of crime data is directly linked to the capacity to deal with crime effectively. The data collection process is fraught with difficulties: including discrepancies in the figures produced by different institutions, technical and technological weaknesses, budgetary issues, and even obstacles impeding public access to information, all of which tend to discredit "official figures." Even more serious is the lack of available tools to generate knowledge about crime and insecurity, a situation that clearly affects the quality and relevance of public policies.

One final important element related to the institutional perspective is the relationship between police work and the work of the Armed Forces because it affects the development of police operations. In some countries, Argentina and Chile for example, there is a clear distinction, and there is no overlap of missions or functions. Yet this is not the case in most of the countries of the region. Guatemala, for example, approved a law in 2002 authorizing the Armed Forces to involve themselves in crime prevention and control, and allowing them to take part in patrolling the streets, guarding the frontiers, and combating drug traffickers. In other countries, joint patrols are a daily occurrence, such as in Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago. In this context, military involvement in police tasks is justified on various grounds, such as the intrinsic weakness of the police forces or the increased corruption and heightened sense of insecurity among the public.

Police Institutions

In general terms, most police forces have experienced various reforms. Those reforms range from minor changes to the complete overhaul of institutions (particularly in Central America). Examples of the second approach can be found in El Salvador, where the National Civilian Police was created pursuant to the Peace Accords, as an institution that would observe democratic principles and respect human rights.

With a prevailing climate of great public concern about security, and the recognized limitations of the police to respond to rising crime levels, most countries of the region have taken steps to increase police manpower and budgets. In Colombia, the police complement has increased from 43,000 in 1970 to 142,000 currently, and of these more than 106,000 are in uniform. At the end of 2007, Honduras had 12,301 police officers, representing a significant rise over the last two years from 7,500 in 2005. Similarly, Argentina increased its national police force between 1999 and 2007 from 208,000 to 250,000.

Budgets have also been significantly boosted in all countries. For example, El Salvador has raised its police budget from $150 million in 2007 to a planned $166 million for 2008. The situation is similar in Peru, where the budget for the national police stood at around $1.2 billion dollars in 2007. While the main components of public expenditure go to paying salaries, a number of countries are placing special emphasis on the purchase of infrastructure and technology.

Democratization, and in particular justice system reforms of recent years, have led to the creation of civilian institutions devoted to investigation, such as the Federal Investigation Agency of Mexico. Most of these institutions are understaffed in comparison with the enforcement branches.

In Chile, Brazil and Mexico, for example, manpower is insufficient for effective national coverage, and programs are now under way to increase personnel numbers and training.

As will be noted later on in Chapter 4, collaboration with local governments is an important element in improving public security. While in countries like Ecuador there is a tradition of the police working closely with municipal authorities, this is not the case in the majority of countries, where a noticeable increase in cooperation between the police and local governments came about only in the 1990s. Interesting examples of this type of partnership can be found in Bogotá, Quito and Buenos Aires. In Paraguay, introduction of the "Safe Departments and Municipalities Program" sparked greater intervention through preventive programs at the local level. The Directorate of Subnational Governments maintains direct relations between the central and local levels, although there was some discontinuity in the program in 2006.

A common theme in most of the region's police forces is the precarious nature of salaries and social benefits. In many countries, the lower-ranking members of police institutions (that is to say, the bulk of police officers) have very low salaries and inadequate health, education and housing conditions. In fact, case studies have revealed numerous mechanisms that police institutions have developed to supplement their members' income by hiring them out for private functions. In Chile and Colombia there is less resort to such measures, and indeed the benefit systems offered by their police institutions are recognized as a key element of their efficiency and professionalism.

This instability of police work has gone hand-in-hand with minimum requirements for admission into the force (especially for junior officers or those assigned to patrol duty). Progress in developing professional police personnel is hamstrung by low educational requirements for admission, which, in some cases, do not even call for completion of middle or high school. Thus proper incentives do not exist for moving toward increased police specialization. Even more complicated is the fact that police training is far from optimal. In many countries, the urgent need to increase the number of officers dispatched to provide surveillance and security has led to a reduction in the number of hours of police training. This situation, together with the issues described above, creates fertile ground for poor police strategies and increased corruption.

A number of other problems shared by police officers in the region should be addressed in the short term:[54]

- Limited attention is paid to developing a career police force.
- There is a lack of clarity as to the most suitable police model and policing strategies to be followed.
- Internal control mechanisms are deficient.
- There is a lack of external oversight by government and civil society.
- High degrees of institutional autonomy remain and thus there is a lack of checks and balances and controls by police authorities to ensure sound police action.

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54 In this regard, see: Ambos, Kai et al, eds. La Policía en los Estados de Derecho Latinoamericanos. Colombia, Fundación Seguridad y Democracia, 2003; Caruso, Haydée, Muniz, Jacqueline y Carballo, Antonio. Policía, Estado y Sociedad. Prácticas y saberes latinoamericanos. Brasil, Viva Río, 2007, y CED. Los cambios necesarios. Informe de la Comisión Internacional para la Reforma Policial en Democracia. Santiago, Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo, 2003.

- Systematic increases in qualifications for admission to the force are necessary.
- Training systems are being established but there is little evidence to show that they are actually used and implemented.
- Police initiatives are not evaluated or monitored.

Private Security

The explosive growth of the private security industry is evident throughout the region. Business is increasing on a permanent basis, and profits are growing exponentially. This in itself is not a problem, but provisions for regulation, oversight and evaluation of private security are minimal and in some cases nonexistent. As a result, the monopoly that the State should have over security matters and the use of force is being eroded.

The most recent estimates suggest that there are 4 million people working for the private security industry in the region. Fewer than half of these persons have legal contracts that comply with labor legislation or have the clearance and insurance that should be required for personnel engaged in such activities.[55] While the industry consists for the most part of small and medium-sized firms, multinational companies have established an important presence in specialized segments of the market (such as securities transfer, armored cars, and bodyguards for high-profile individuals).

Table 12: *Average growth of the private security industry, by region 2002-2003 (market values)*

Region	Market (US$ 000)	Growth rate (%)
North America	49,200	7 – 8
Europe	37,800	6 – 10
Japan	7,400	7 – 9
Latin America	6,500	9 – 11
Rest of world	16,200	10 – 12
TOTAL	117,100	7 – 8

Source: Frigo, Edgardo (2006). Seguridad Privada en Latinoamérica:
Situación y Perspectivas, http://www.seguridad-la.com/artic/admin2/adm_5226.htm

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55 As mentioned in a number of documents, it is important to compare this figure with the 690,000 security guards registered in Europe.

A report prepared by Edgardo Frigo shows that in 2006, Brazil had 2,538 registered security firms, and more than 5,000 armored cars. In Costa Rica, the number of private security firms rose from 28 in 1994 to 536 in 2001 and 1,134 in 2007. In Venezuela, the ministry responsible for justice and the interior (Ministerio del Poder Popular y Relaciones Interiores y Justicia) recorded 835 private security firms in 2005, and there were 936 registered by June 2006. However, the General Directorate of National Coordination for Private Surveillance and Security Services had only 450 active firms in its registry in 2007. In Bolivia, the process has been slower: the first firm was established in 1982, and in 2002 there were around 40 security firms, organized with their own association and operating in the major cities, under official operating regulations. Ecuador had one private security firm in 1968; by 2006 there were 849.

In many cases, supervision of these private firms is in the hands of the police, who are expected to monitor their activities and (in most cases) to provide training for their security guards. In countries with federal structures there are several levels of regulation, ranging from laws, decrees and contracts to general definitions for the industry. In other countries, such as Ecuador, there is no single entity to regulate their actions: the private security law adopted in 2003 distributed control among several institutions, according to their specific functions. Moreover, no regulations have been issued for implementing that law. In Uruguay, the bulk of private security regulation dates from 1971, and has been amended through decrees and supplementary laws that centralized these tasks in the Ministry of the Interior. The current regulatory entity is the National Registry of Security Firms, created in 1990.

In some cases regulation is recent, as in Costa Rica, where the Private Security Services Law dates from 2004 and the number of private guards in relation to the national police is controlled: the private security complement must not exceed 10% of total membership of the police force. In other cases, such as Honduras, there is no specific regulation in this area. Security firms are governed by the organic law establishing the national police. Under that arrangement, each firm can provide its own security without the need for a license if it has fewer than 100 employees. Nicaragua, likewise, has no law regulating private security services, and the business registry lists 105 firms with 18,000 agents, while the National Police has a target of increasing its manpower to 11,633. Panama has issued two executive decrees regulating the business, and a draft law to this effect is pending approval.

The majority of the Caribbean countries under study in this report have legislation on private security.[56] However, there is a lack of effective follow-up mechanisms to ensure compliance with the provisions of the legislation. In some countries, the law requires that a supervisory council or board be designated to monitor activities in the security industry. Only Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has complied to date.

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56 Seven English-speaking countries were studied for this report: Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In most of the region, training for private security guards is even more precarious. There is no uniformity in the training offered or in the amount of time devoted to training. In many cases, small or medium-sized firms have no clear arrangements for training their staff, among which turnover rates are high. Therefore it is not uncommon to find private security personnel who have a license to carry a gun but have no proper training in its use. Moreover, in countries where the police are strapped for manpower, the work of regulating and training private personnel is often neglected in order to focus resources on crime prevention and control. In many countries of the region police officers are not allowed to work for private security firms, but in some cases have done so on an illegal and informal basis.

CHAPTER 3.

> **Security as the Basis for Democratic Governance and Development**

Security as the Basis for Democratic Governance and Development

The scope and intensity of crime are having a drastic impact on the quality of life of the region's inhabitants and are creating a generalized climate of fear that threatens the foundations of democracy, as well as the prospects for economic and social development.

Crime is plunging countries into a complex and vicious circle in which insecurity deters investment, discourages participation, stokes mistrust and perceptions of impunity, disrupts elections, and drives young people to abandon school, to mention only a few of the many consequences that directly affect a country's development prospects. At the same time, unemployment, occupational instability, migration and the general precariousness of daily life contribute to strengthening insecurity. The complexity of these issues makes it very difficult to identify the steps needed to address them, and at the same time makes increasingly clear the intricate links between security, governance, and development.[57]

The Problem and its Context

Understanding and dealing effectively with a problem of such a magnitude as public insecurity requires better and greater efforts on the part of governments. The starting point is to accept that a phenomenon of this kind can only be explained by casting it in, and drawing feedback from, a much broader context. It is necessary at this point to briefly review the transformations that have taken place in the hemisphere, and to acknowledge the great achievements that have strengthened the region and, in turn, provided the tools necessary for addressing new challenges, always mindful of the important obstacles that must still be overcome.

Latin America has seen great changes in just a few decades. Yet there are three processes that are most relevant to the problem addressed here. First, it can be said with pride that significant steps have been taken towards achieving a Hemisphere at peace. While there are still differences and disagreements among countries, the prospect of armed confrontation has been reduced to a minimum.[58] Internal political divisions and disputes can be resolved without resorting to violence. The great majority of insurgent and terrorist movements have collapsed or have been marginalized in the region, and the only remaining one, in Colombia, shows encouraging signs of subsiding sharply in the near future.

Yet loud echoes still reverberate from the years of political violence in some countries, and these are compounding the problem of public insecurity. The fallout from those conflicts has not been completely overcome, as evidenced by the widespread persistence of a culture of violence in dealing with day-to-day problems. In addition, and more specifically, it is clear that some of the protagonists of past conflicts are today, without any explicit political agenda, among the leading instigators of the new forms of violence of concern in this report. It must also be noted that, beyond the increase in organized crime, the violence of the past explains to a large extent the ease with which firearms can be obtained and used unlawfully in many of the countries of the region.

57 See Security System Reform and Governance, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005.
58 Briones, Sebastián and Álvarez, Rodrigo. ¿Construyendo confianzas? Fronteras, FF.AA y Política en América Latina. Santiago, FLACSO-Chile, 2008.

A second achievement that must be put to use in combating public insecurity is the fact that, after decades of dictatorship all OAS member countries have now made great strides in terms of human rights, and have made those rights a cornerstone of the philosophy governing their action. The region lives in democracy, leaders are elected by the people, there is separation of powers, basic political freedoms are being exercised, and there are laws and institutions to enforce the rules. In this sense, and in contrast to the situation some decades ago, democracy and respect for human rights today constitute the inescapable framework in which public insecurity can and must be addressed.

The nascent democracies of the Americas still face some major problems. Belief in the capacity of institutions and their representatives to resolve concrete problems of concern to the public is still weak. In many cases, public security institutions have yet to become fully subordinated to democratic authority, and they have yet to complete the reforms and modernization required by the new political setting.[59]

From the social viewpoint, many traces of the authoritarian culture of the past persist. There is too little tolerance of diversity, and severe problems of discrimination continue to exist. Segregation, stigmatization, and social fragmentation are deeply rooted and demand attention.

Third, Latin America has also been undergoing great economic change. Countries have made real progress in their productive capacity, they have improved their infrastructure, and they have enhanced the delivery of public services. Yet development is still concentrated in a few hands. Countries of the region have not moved quickly enough to reduce poverty and indigence. There are still broad sectors of the population who are excluded from the benefits of progress, and countries are far from achieving equality of opportunity. In fact, Latin America is one of the most unequal regions of the world, and despite the relative economic boom of recent years, the gap is growing.[60]

The Multiple Causes

As with any matter to be addressed by government, the essential point of departure for determining public policy is the proper diagnosis of the problem to be resolved or alleviated. This is especially true in the case of public insecurity, because without such a diagnosis there is a risk that policies will develop from a misunderstanding of the problem, or will focus only on certain aspects of the problem.

The causes of insecurity are many and they are mutually reinforcing. They form a vicious circle that is hard to interpret and even harder to influence because of an inability to identify the most efficient way of addressing the many elements that interact at different levels.

59 On this point, see Dammert, Lucía, coord., Reporte del Sector Seguridad en América Latina y el Caribe. Santiago, FLACSO-Chile, 2007.
60 See UNDP, Human Development Report, various years.

The causes have to do, first, with organized crime, especially drug trafficking and related offenses, and the corruption that it generates. Many violent acts that occur in the street and that affect residents are related to organized crime. There are significant differences in terms of the power, magnitude and manifestation of organized crime, but no country in the region is immune from it.

A second cause is socioeconomic factors. Poverty is not in itself an explanatory factor, as demonstrated by the simple fact that there is much less crime in extremely poor rural areas than in other, more highly developed ones. But the correlation becomes very clear when poverty interacts with other factors, such as the inequality, marginalization and exclusion in which an important segment of the population lives.

Thirdly, there are many causes linked to massive and uncontrolled urbanization which has created large areas with high levels of marginalization and exclusion. The growth of Latin American and Caribbean cities has, to a large extent, been informal and unplanned. Basic services are inadequate and in some cases are nonexistent. Many urban residents today have no access to education, health, justice, or decent work. These big cities also generate environments of economic, social, and cultural informality, which create physical spaces and mindsets that are beyond the control of the State, its laws and institutions, and are virtually off-limits to them. Informality also goes some way to explaining the ease with which firearms fall illegally into civilian hands.[61] In extreme situations, this informality, can give rise to entire neighborhoods controlled by organized crime.

A fourth aspect relates to attitudes, values and culture. On one hand, the urban lifestyle tends to undermine traditional mechanisms of social cohesion and to question the values associated with the past.[62] On the other hand, individual success in material terms is viewed now, much more than in the past, as a badge of social acceptance. As a place where people can meet and interact and obtain information, the big city thus highlights more starkly the contrast between the options and benefits of modern life and the inability of so many people to gain access to them legally.

It must also be noted that, while cities may in the long run be the natural place to overcome historic prejudices and discrimination on ethnic and racial grounds, those attitudes are still so deeply ingrained that they play an important role in the way crimes and their perpetrators are treated.

A fifth aspect relates to the family situation of many city dwellers. A very high percentage of families face severe problems such as single parent households, teenage parenthood, numerous children, lack of social protection systems for young families, and crowded housing conditions, which undoubtedly induce or intensify the risk of conflict, abuse and violence, particularly among the neediest segments of society.

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61 FLACSO, Secretaría General. Armas pequeñas y livianas. Una amenaza a la Seguridad Hemisférica. San José, Costa Rica, 2007 and UNDP, Armas de fuego y violencia. El Salvador, UNDP, 2003.
62 See Lunecke, Alejandra and Ruiz, Juan Carlos. Capital social y violencia: análisis para la intervención en barrios urbanos críticos. In: Dammert, Lucía and Zúñiga, Liza, eds. Seguridad y violencia: desafíos para la ciudadanía. Santiago, FLACSO-Chile, 2007. pp.227-252.

Harsh living conditions are frequently such that parents have only a limited presence and play little role in the day-to-day life and rearing of their children, and the situation is worse for children being raised by a single parent. The case of teenage mothers is a clear example: in many countries, these girls are forced to drop out of school, which increases their vulnerability and reduces their chances of entering the workforce.

All of these situations are conducive to domestic violence, and indeed are an important factor in explaining such violence and the insecurity that people face on a daily basis. Domestic violence affects women in particular, but it also has a direct or indirect impact on their children.[63] The large numbers of school dropouts, child workers, runaways and street children are further manifestations of this phenomenon.

A sixth factor is the situation of youth. Data shows that 21% of Latin American and Caribbean youth neither study nor work.[64] Furthermore, youth are much more likely to be perpetrators or victims of violence, due primarily to lack of opportunity for education and vocational training, recreation, and a healthy community life. The situation is further compounded by the growing impact of drug and alcohol consumption, even among minors.

These youths are more likely to seek outlets for affirming their individual and collective identity, and these often cross the boundary of acceptability, as is the case with gangs in so many cities. Such behavior sharpens the social stigma attached to these youngsters, and is often met with purely punitive policies that make them feel all the more isolated and rejected by society. This in turn drives many of them, individually or collectively, into openly criminal conduct, often linked to organized crime.[65]

A seventh factor to consider is the widespread lack of respect for the law, and the habit of "settling accounts" through the use of violence. Governments, which frequently lack legitimacy in the eyes of the public, do not have the capacity to channel problems and conflicts via institutional routes. In some cases, this is because the State is virtually absent, while in other cases the manner in which it makes its presence known merely exacerbates the problems.

This situation poses a dual risk. On one hand, it increases the likelihood of distinctly unlawful acts, and on the other hand it drives some of the most affected population groups to take justice into their own hands—even going so far as to lynch suspects, an extreme reaction that must be eradicated immediately.

63 ILANUD. Violencia de género, derechos humanos e intervención policial. Costa Rica, Regional Training Program against Domestic Violence, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2002.
64 Global Employment Trends for Youth, International Labour Organization, First Edition, 2006.
65 Dowdney, Luke. Neither war nor peace. International comparisons of children and youth in organized armed violence, Brazil, COAV/Viva Río/ISER/IANSA, 2005

The eighth consideration is impunity. This is another key issue for understanding the scope of insecurity, for the failure to punish criminal acts provides a perverse incentive to repeat and increase them. In general, the vast majority of petty crimes and many of the more serious offenses go unpunished, heightening the perception of defenselessness and humiliation on the part of victims. In many cases impunity for offenders stems from inadequate legislation, which impedes criminal prosecution by the authorities. Nonetheless, impunity signals the defectiveness of the criminal-justice system as a whole, beginning with the police and extending to public prosecution, the courts, and the penitentiary system.

These problems reflect the shortage of human, technological and economic resources, a lack of professionalism, and widespread corruption. To this must be added, in many cases, a criminal-justice system which is profoundly unequal. For many people, navigating the system leaves them doubly victimized.

A ninth factor is the difficulties facing the police, whose security role is fundamental. As seen in the previous chapter, police forces must to varying degrees labor under unresolved structural problems.[66] These include outdated doctrines and missions; a lack of focus on the essentials and a lack of clarity in their roles and responsibilities; lack of coordination with other institutions that perform public security functions; inadequate and mismanaged resources; deficiencies in training, professionalism, specialization and technological development; and severe problems of internal corruption.

Many police forces have severe internal problems that affect both their members' professional duties and quality of life. These include the lack of proper equipment and infrastructure, tough working conditions, low salaries and weak social safety nets. All these elements are linked to the fact that, in some places more than others, the police are viewed as ineffective and therefore lack public credibility and trust. Among the more vulnerable segments of the population, the police may be contributing to public insecurity through abuse of power or collusion in crime.[67]

The tenth consideration is the prison problem, which deserves special attention. This complicated situation begins with the challenge of classifying and segregating inmates, and is compounded by deteriorating infrastructure and overcrowded prisons.[68] To this must be added the weakness of internal prison control, which allows inmates to keep up their unlawful activities, and even to run criminal networks from behind bars.

With very few exceptions, the prison system in the region has failed to prevent persons from committing crimes while in prison, and has also failed to foster social rehabilitation. The prisons are the weakest link in the criminal-justice system, and they are the scene of the greatest number of human rights violations.

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66 On this point see: Ambos, Kai et al, eds. La Policía en los Estados de Derecho Latinoamericanos. Colombia, Fundación Seguridad y Democracia, 2003; Caruso, Haydée, Muniz, Jacqueline and Carballo, Antonio. Policía, Estado y Sociedad. Prácticas y saberes latinoamericanos. Brasil, Viva Río, 2007, and CED. Los cambios necesarios. Informe de la Comisión Internacional para la Reforma Policial en Democracia. Santiago, Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo, 2003.
67 On this point see: Arias, Patricia and Zúñiga, Liza. Control, disciplina y responsabilidad policial: desafíos doctrinarios e institucionales en América Latina. Santiago, FLACSO-Chile, 2008; and Gabaldón, Gerardo and Birkbeck, Christopher. Policía y Fuerza Física en perspectiva intercultural. Nueva Sociedad, 2003.
68 Dammert, Lucía and Zúñiga, Liza. La cárcel: problemas y desafíos para las Américas. Santiago, FLACSO-Chile, 2008.

Endless legal proceedings, neglect, abuse, frightful living conditions and overcrowding all help to explain why the prison population is so prone to violence and why there are such high indices of drug addiction, epidemics of AIDS and tuberculosis, as well as high suicide rates, among other problems. The situation is such that in many countries of the region the penitentiary systems are viewed not only as places steeped in frustration, intolerance and violence but as veritable crime academies, where inmates acquire the tools and connections for creating a life of crime.

The Costs are Very High

The fact that public insecurity causes great damage to the region is another reason for OAS member states to give priority to this problem. The high costs of insecurity are paid by society as a whole, and in particular by the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society. Those costs can be classified into four broad categories:

The Human Cost

Through crime and violence, the hemisphere loses hundreds of thousands of lives needlessly every year. In the great majority of cases, it is young lives that are being wasted, a fact that demands attention.

This human cost also includes the millions of victims of non-lethal crimes who suffer serious and sustained harm that significantly affects their lives. The pain, humiliation and trauma of victims and their families are much greater in serious crimes such as kidnapping, rape or murder, which are unfortunately becoming frequent.

There are almost 4 million people in prison throughout the region. Most have been incarcerated after having been convicted through the judicial process, but others are caught up in endless court proceedings. Some remain in prison even having fully served their sentences because of the inefficiency of the system. All groups are subjected to the indignity of conditions that openly violate their human rights. This situation adds to the suffering of their next of kin, along with the social stigma attached to having a relative with a criminal record.

The Political Cost

The acute concern over crime and the general perception of the State's inability to deal with it effectively, intensify the crisis of legitimacy and confidence in still-recent and fragile democratic institutions. As noted earlier, in most countries, mistrust in democratic institutions and their leaders is very high, and while there are many causes for it, it is alarming to see how this mistrust keeps growing.

Citizen insecurity significantly delays the institutional reform process. Above all, it hinders democratic reforms and the modernization of the security apparatus, sometimes provoking setbacks and appropriating functions that are ill-suited to mature and consolidated democracies.

Another adverse political effect is that crime tends to put at risk the region's culture of rights and freedoms and produces new threats to human rights. The fear and indignation that citizens feel in the face of crime is of such magnitude that it invokes in many nostalgia for the authoritarian ways that are so deeply rooted in the history of the region.

In a climate of uncertainty and fear, some may be tempted to conclude that rights and freedoms work in favor of criminals and against society. They may also come to believe that regulations on the activity of the security forces are shackles that limit their effectiveness. They may even demand the suppression of fundamental rights, such as the presumption of innocence or the guarantee of due process, on the grounds that they favor criminals. Still worse, in circumstances of extreme poverty and instability, these perceptions may help to explain why people take retribution into their own hands, in ways completely alien to the aspirations for a civilized and harmonious society.

The Social Cost

Public insecurity imposes heavy costs on the manner in which people relate to one another and how they organize their societies. One consequence is to accentuate the social and spatial segregation of people. In many places, primarily the wealthier areas but now, increasingly, in poorer ones as well, it is common for entire neighborhoods to "gate" themselves and bar access to other citizens.

Another important social impact is the spread of prejudice against broad segments of the population, who are stigmatized for reasons of age, race or economic status. This tends to spark mistrust of such people and sometimes results in practices and even laws that violate their rights. The effect can be even more acute in the case of ethnic minorities or immigrants.

A third social effect has to do with the resort to private security measures. The perception of insecurity does not discriminate among social sectors, and while it is generally the poorest segments of society that are most directly affected, those who are better off also have a very high perception of insecurity that leads them to seek additional security beyond that provided by the State.

This has resulted in an enormous expansion of private security services, often operating with little or no government regulation. This amounts to the partial privatization of a function that by its nature should be essentially public and distributed according to need. Insecurity is thus an additional factor which reinforces inequality.

The Economic Cost

Crime—and in particular property crime—has a direct impact on the economy of persons who have to replace the things they have lost. In some cases, those things may be irreplaceable.

Combating crime also imposes a growing fiscal burden to reinforce the criminal justice system, consuming budgetary resources that could otherwise go to other essential needs such as education and health.

But beyond the government's direct outlays to provide security, there are enormous additional costs to businesses and to individuals. At all levels of society, people will feel the need to devote part of their budget to additional security measures, in various forms. It is important to note also the high costs which the healthcare system incurs as it must attend to victims of crime and violence.

The economic costs associated with homicides and injuries directly affect production costs. There are also many indications that security considerations weigh heavily on financial decisions and investment opportunities, to the detriment of the region's development.

In short, there is a close and significant relationship between development and security. Public insecurity makes development more difficult because of the political, social and economic damage it causes.[69] In turn, the persistence of underdevelopment can lead to further insecurity. Breaking this vicious circle is one of the region's great challenges.

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69   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank. Crime, Violence and Development. Trends costs and policy options in the Caribbean. 2007; and Crime, violence and economic development in Brazil. Elements for effective public policy. Report n° 36525-BR., World Bank, 2006.

CHAPTER 4.

> Preventing Insecurity

Preventing Insecurity

Violent acts and criminal offenses were traditionally combated primarily through crime control measures, a process that involved primarily the police, the courts, and ultimately the penitentiary system.

In Canada and the United States, rising crime rates during the 1980s cast doubt on the effectiveness, efficiency and capacity of criminal justice institutions to address these problems on their own. As a result, at the end of the 1980s prevention came to be seen as a key element of security strategies, combining strategic police work with community policing programs.

With the return to democracy in Latin America, and with the results of experiences in the United States, Canada, and in some cases Europe, the time was ripe for prevention to be considered as an alternative approach in Latin America. Prevention programs had in fact been out of favor for many years: they were seen as having little impact, they were caught up in systemic arguments that produced no evident change in the short and medium terms, and they were sidetracked by the proffered justification that criminal behavior was a problem of lack of opportunity. But there then came a significant change of context and with it the opportunity to recognize the multidimensional nature of crime and the limitations of police action for resolving it.

Drawing upon the public health approach, the most widely used concept for understanding and confronting the complexity of prevention as an intervention mechanism is called the "epidemiological focus." This approach sets out to identify and act upon causes and risk factors for crime and violence in order to prevent them. For example, it seeks to reduce the impact of firearm availability and alcohol consumption, which have been identified as factors associated with rising levels of violent crime.

This approach has a long history in Europe, the United States and Canada, and has produced many examples of good practices that can be replicated in other contexts and other countries. Depending on the typology, crime trends and risk factors, there are three levels of intervention:

• Primary prevention: aimed at the general public, with the objective of reducing the probability of violent or criminal conduct and behavior.

• Secondary prevention: targeted at those population groups most prone to aggressive conduct.

• Tertiary prevention: intended to help both the victims and the perpetrators of violent acts. Prevention of this kind is closely related to the criminal justice system, and involves primarily the mechanisms of control, rehabilitation and subsequent reintegration into society.

The evidence, drawn primarily from industrialized countries, is persuasive. It shows that policies and programs that stress prevention are more effective and efficient in reducing and deterring crime and violence over the long term. Prevention also serves to instill and strengthen civic values, particularly when it is implemented early in the key places where socialization occurs: i.e. the family, the school and the community.

In our Hemisphere, the intervention models of public security policy have taken distinct paths. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this new framework of action for dealing with crime has been adopted for various reasons, including the following:

• The high direct and indirect costs that crime and violence impose on the State and on society. There is evidence that in some countries of Latin America the costs of violence vary from 5% to 25% of GDP.[70]

• Evidence from industrialized countries such as Canada, the United States and Great Britain showing the cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of investing in prevention. The empirical evidence from prevention programs in the United States suggests that each dollar invested in prevention produces a savings of between six and seven dollars in crime control programs.[71]

• The promotion of programs of this kind by international agencies, through financing for technical assistance, training and projects.[72]

More than a decade has passed since many governments committed themselves to prevention as a distinct policy issue. Yet despite some successes, progress has been hampered by several obstacles. In many cases, governments attempted to copy interventions that worked well in other countries, but they did not have the flexibility, resources, the continuity or the elements of cross-disciplinary dialogue sufficient to understand and address the problem in their own country. Prevention often amounted to nothing more than crime control programs designed to have short-term media and political impact.

Identifying and learning from successful programs is only one aspect of the security challenge. Achieving consensus among the many stakeholders is a condition sine qua non for program design and monitoring and for avoiding the pitfalls of simplistic solutions. Otherwise, prevention will be much talked about, but there will be significant problems in its implementation.

The above-mentioned difficulties are symptoms of a structural problem in the design of public security policies. A sound design in crime prevention measures is the greatest tool for combating violence. In other words, the preventive focus must be a core component of policy, and not mere window dressing. In many cases, the inclusion of prevention aspects in policy design has been a source of weakness because the interventions were too limited and they were given too little funding for proper evaluation.

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70 For more information: http://www.iadb.org/IDBDocs.cfm?docnum=788002. See also Los Costos Económicos de la Violencia en Centroamérica, Carlos Acevedo, National Council for Public Safety of El Salvador [Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Pública de El Salvador], 2008, http://www.ocavi.com/docs_files/file_538.pdf. Inter-American Coalition for the Prevention of Violence, whose Pro Tempore Secretariat currently resides in the General Secretariat of the OAS, is developing a study on the cost of violence in the Americas, which will be published in 2009.
71 What are the Costs and Benefits. National Crime Prevention Council of Canada (1996).Greenwood, P. (1998) Diverting Children from a Life of Crime. Rand Corporation
72 Notable examples among multilateral agencies include the work of the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, and the UNDP. As well, a number of bilateral cooperation mechanisms have sponsored crime prevention and public security programs.

One of the key elements for the effective formulation and implementation of public security policies lies in strong and active interdisciplinary and interagency coordination. This implies implementing prevention programs that have an enforcement component, within a continuum of actions that are coordinated between the players in this area (the police, the justice system, and the penitentiary system) and those dedicated to prevention initiatives. If these policies are to move beyond lip service and become operational, the effort must be coordinated within the context of a continuous and sustained commitment on the part of government, opinion leaders, political circles, civil society and the media.

Prevention strategies allow programs, projects and specific government activities to be focused intelligently and to complement crime control activities. The purpose of this new conceptual framework for security policies is to rethink intervention as a tactic for deterring crime and to promote prevention as a medium- and long-term strategy so that it can impact policies in other areas as diverse as urban development (public spaces, lighting, placement of stoplights, etc.), economic development (major infrastructure works), housing policies (square meters per person, quality of housing), education policies (dropout rates in primary and secondary grades, aggressive behavior in the schools) and health (psychological and physical violence in the home, consumption of drugs and alcohol among adolescents).

In other words, the idea is to ensure that public policies are integral and therefore capable of matching the multidimensional and ever-changing manifestations of crime. Faced with such a complex problem, requiring a wide range of actions, the big question is how to maximize their impact. International experience and recognized successes in the region have taught us that a core, essential factor in such initiatives is implementation at the local level: a topic addressed in the following section.

Local Government: The Key to Prevention Policies

Local governments are the natural focus for many crime prevention and control actions. Local government is closest to the problem, for it is primarily in the cities that crime and insecurity manifest themselves, and many of the causal factors have deep local roots. This is also where the public conveys its complaints and concerns, and where it outlines and demands solutions. Local government, then, can intervene in the problem more promptly and effectively, as this is the level of government in which multiple players — schools, health services, police forces, businesses and civil society organizations, among others — interact to identify problems and plan and implement solutions, which may be a coordinated combination of short and long-term measures. Moreover, having a detailed local database and a thorough body of knowledge about local security problems allows for the design of comprehensive and innovative initiatives.

Evidence gained from the design and implementation of crime prevention programs by local governments provides a more precise diagnostic assessment of the problem, allows for adjustments to maximize impact, and reduces the use of standardized solutions. It is important, therefore, that local governments have clear responsibilities for combating insecurity. It is also essential to recognize the institutional weakness of local governments for confronting this problem. Local

governments need strengthening if they are to address the problem effectively and make proper use of resources. This entails, for example, providing suitable legal frameworks that allow for changes necessary to facilitate public security work at the local level; police forces that will work with the public to resolve problems; a justice system that is accessible to all citizens; and human resources that understand and respond to the interests of all stakeholders and have the capacity and skill to direct the complex task of formulating and implementing prevention programs.

Similarly, success in the battle against crime requires seamless and flexible collaboration between the central and local governments, in a transparent process of devolution to the municipal level. In many cases, the absence of such flexibility in program design and execution, compounded with poor communication between the two levels, has compromised progress in this area. Traditionally, relations between central and local governments have had their own problems, not least of which was combating crime.

In many cases, the local government lacks the institutional, economic and legal resources to address the issue successfully. Despite society's growing demands for action, local governments do not see security as their responsibility since the regulatory and legal authority lies with national governments or with the states in a federation. The coordination of prevention programs with enforcement programs in security policies tends to reduce the funds earmarked for local governments and divert them to crime control activities performed by institutions that fall directly under the central government. For example, in developed countries, crime prevention programs have favored preventive patrols and the installation of closed circuit television systems to produce measurable and immediate results, often at the expense of social prevention initiatives that could be more cost-efficient over the long run and work better in conjunction with social policies such as education, health and employment. Latin American budgets frequently give priority to upgrading police forces and infrastructure, expansion of penitentiary systems and, in some cases, reforming criminal justice procedures.

Finally, it is important to strive for fairness in transferring security responsibilities to the local level and to avoid disproportionate funding to richer municipalities. Those with stronger institutional capacities should yield their claims in favor of municipalities with fewer resources. This is one way to overcome the entrenched patterns of urban inequality and fragmentation, and generate cooperation and solidarity within our cities. Such mechanisms will bolster not only joint action, but also encourage the exchange of information and working methodologies to make crime control and prevention more efficient and inclusive.

Examples of Successful Policies and Programs in the Hemisphere

Applying the "comprehensiveness" principle for combating crime, Latin America and the Caribbean have already produced a few examples of successful prevention policies and programs. Colombia is a particular case in point—the cities of Bogotá, Cali and Medellín have made substantial inroads in reducing the levels of violent crime, through coordinated and multidisciplinary policies. These have included the construction and use of information systems for the design of interventions, the building of bridges between the police and the community, professional upgrading for the

police forces, improved urban amenities, projects to foster social inclusion and to reduce risk factors among juveniles, programs to improve access to justice, shorter opening hours for bars and taverns, and measures to reduce the number of firearms in circulation.

A key feature of these successful policies is the fact that they were based on good information systems. Having on hand timely and reliable information on the characteristics of crime at the local level allows all stakeholders to analyze and discuss tendencies and to direct resources effectively toward control and prevention programs.

Yet despite their efforts, not all local governments have been able to sustain the progress made. In those cases where the authorities succeeded in reducing crime levels and keeping them down, a key factor has been leadership and political commitment, which ensured continuity in policies and programs under successive municipal governments. Another important factor has been adequate financing, accompanied by close coordination of interventions with the central authorities.[73] The Diadema district of São Paulo provides another example: there, the mayor weighed in decisively to insist on coordinated interventions that reduced levels of crime and insecurity. In this case, available information was used to produce an accurate diagnosis of the situation allowing intervention measures to be adapted to local realities.

Elsewhere in the Hemisphere, Canada has developed prevention policies and programs that could serve as a model around the world, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. The primary focus has been to prevent crime through social development, i.e. to address some of the causal factors of violence, such as substandard housing and low levels of family income and education. It starts from the premise that without an adequate strategy for heading off these factors promptly, the long-term fallout will be negative. Over the long run, therefore, these types of interventions planned within a comprehensive framework of action will be more cost-efficient.

The "problem-oriented policing" programs developed in the United States also deserve special mention. These programs developed out of the disappointing results of preventive patrols. The result was a new approach, one in which the police would identify, research and analyze specific crime problems thoroughly in order to resolve them. It was recognized that community and civil society participation in the design of these strategies was essential.

These are a few examples of successful experiences with policies and programs in the hemisphere, and unfortunately there are not a lot of other successful examples. The intent here is to inspire all security stakeholders—central and local authorities, as well as the general public and civil society—to take the necessary steps to create successful programs and policies for public security. Political will and public backing are two key elements for addressing these problems and for instilling a rights-based perspective in which insecurity is recognized as a problem deeply rooted in the highly complex social, cultural, and economic problems of our Hemisphere.

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73 For example, while Bogotá was able to reduce violent crime rates through policy continuity, Cali could not hold the ground won, because incoming municipal governments failed to stick to the successful policies of their predecessors.

An Approach to Prevention that Looks Beyond "What Works"

Preventing crime and violence is an achievable and realistic objective. The successful examples at hand provide convincing evidence for this assertion. The remaining questions have to do with the great difficulty in implementing prevention policies and understanding why the results of many efforts to date have been so disappointing.

Over the last decade, tremendous resources have been invested in programs, conferences, publications and pilot projects in an attempt to shift the paradigm for dealing with insecurity and promote prevention as the central focus of public policies. While the policy line has indeed changed course, there has been insufficient progress in operational capacities. Generally speaking, the region has shown a tendency to rush into interventions based on measures that worked well enough in developed countries. But this has been done without any careful diagnosis of the context in which prevention measures were to be pursued, without any real interagency coordination, and without any consensus on the types of strategies to be implemented and the objectives to be achieved. This situation has been compounded by a lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of preventive measures, in the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The result is a plethora of little projects, but very few large-scale ones. The continuing success of the experiences mentioned earlier is based not on hasty application of a predetermined solution, but rather on the use of new and innovative mechanisms for identifying problems, designing and managing policies, and establishing clear channels for dialogue and collaboration between the central and municipal governments.

If there is to be a vision that goes beyond short-term results, governments must resist the politically appealing temptation to design simplistic policies and programs. Instead, a prevention strategy that includes the key sectors and stakeholders and promotes participation by the general public must be carefully prepared.

In other words, arduous work is needed to curb crime and violence in order to promote the social, economic, and political development of the region and to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants. To achieve success in reducing crime rates and insecurity, policies have to be devised that include a preventive approach and, at the same time, strike a constant balance with law enforcement policies. That balance in public security policies will work best at the local level, where citizens are the ultimate beneficiaries.

It is not easy to develop policies of this kind, and to date, regrettably, talk has prevailed over action in the region. Strong commitment, leadership and sustained support are needed on the part of government so that public security policies will be transformed into State policies. Experience shows that responses have frequently been hastily cobbled together as copies of other programs, without the benefit of a flexible scheme for identifying and resolving problems, for coordinating action, and for promoting dialogue with the central government, as needed to achieve the objective. For all these reasons, it is critically important to build consensus among governments on the need to finance these initiatives, to develop benchmarks for evaluation, and to institute public support structures and inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

CHAPTER 5.

> Principles of Public Security Policies

Principles of Public Security Policies

The enormous demand by the population for effective action against citizen insecurity is fully warranted. The numerous victims of violence have a right to see their aggressors punished and reparations made for the harm done to both them and to society.

It is essential to foster the notion that security is one of the fundamental rights of individuals and that when it is impaired other fundamental rights, too, cannot be fully exercised. It is important to insist, categorically, on the right of human beings to live a secure life, free from the fear of violence. The State, for its part, is duty-bound to deploy all the resources it can muster to ensure that this right is never violated.

What is needed, then, are public security policies that are both consistent with the democratic rule of law and that serve to help strengthen it. Such policies must be designed to address the complex causes of insecurity, recognize the immediate manifestations of crime and violence, and, at the same time, reduce the likelihood of future recurrence.

Traditionally, the approach taken by international organizations and civil society with regard to State intervention has been compartmentalized; it has emphasized specific issues such as juvenile violence, reform of the justice system, modernization of police methods, or combating human trafficking or the narcotics trade, but without necessarily recognizing the cross-cutting nature of crime. While this approach has allowed for some successful initiatives, it has more often produced piecemeal responses with little real impact.

At first, these issues were pursued independently within the Organization of American States. This experience showed that important issues such as firearms trafficking, human trafficking, criminal gangs, corruption, and combating drugs are closely interrelated in terms of their incidence, magnitude and evolution. It is increasingly difficult, for example, to address firearms trafficking without linking it to trafficking in drugs and in persons. These issues often extend beyond national boundaries and the fragile cooperation systems which exist cannot always successfully prevent and control them.

Consequently, past experience has generated a learning process that enables us now to emphasize the need to embark on integral strategies that lead to State policies addressing not just the symptoms or results of the problem, but its underlying causes, as well.

Security polices, if they are to be effective, must focus on those factors deemed most relevant in a given space and time. Solutions must be responsive and flexible: there is no "one size fits all". Yet at the same time they must observe some general principles in their design and implementation. The conceptual frameworks for security reform that have been developed in several countries have stressed the interrelationship between the various institutions involved. Security is an issue that includes not only the traditional institutions, but also an entire range of other government institutions that must be considered when implementing effective policies for the prevention and control of crime and violence. This means that a system-wide approach is needed.

The following paragraphs identify what the General Secretariat considers to be the key elements of a national public security policy.

Democracy

Policies must be designed and implemented within the law and within a country's institutional framework. They must be democratic in their form and content, and they must guarantee the rights of all people.

They must adhere strictly to democratic principles, international treaties and the national constitution--however severe the measures adopted may be--without impairing the capacity of institutions to take action. Any policy that seeks to achieve security by diminishing individual rights and freedoms will not only be ineffective but will also run counter to the principles that inspire the countries of the Western Hemisphere.

The Role of the Police

The public security function is both specific and specialized. It must be in the hands of properly trained police forces, led by the democratic authority, in order to accomplish essential and specific security policy purposes.

The inroads of organized crime, the levels of police corruption, and the sense of lawlessness prevailing in many of our cities must be countered with clear and forceful policies for strengthening professional police institutions. There is no doubt that differing national contexts will require specific analysis in accordance with the degree of crime, but whatever the circumstances, increasing the level of police response will be an appropriate step in addressing the problem.

The Armed Forces exist to defend a country's territory and sovereignty. Their philosophy, training and equipment are far removed from those required for public security tasks, and any internal security involvement they may be assigned must be subsidiary and temporary.

Led by the Democratically Constituted Authorities

Security policies must be strictly under the control and responsibility of democratically constituted authorities. These authorities should define the contents, direct the activities, and answer to other institutions and the general public with regard to what they do and what they achieve. The police forces must be specialized and they must focus on carrying out their important duties properly. As with any policy, responsibility for decisions and their outcomes lies with those in charge of the government and not with those who have operational tasks.

The police must fulfill their duties and carry out the best strategies for combating and preventing crime, but they have no place in politics. Experience in many countries demonstrates the need to guard against "gray areas" in the definition of security policies, and to avoid political interference by the police.

It is increasingly urgent, then, that security policies make explicit provisions for professional administration and management by the democratically constituted authorities. In many cases, this will be something completely new, and specific plans for training in security management are therefore essential.

It is important that clear and non-overlapping roles, responsibilities, powers and functions be established for each body involved, particularly for the ministries or departments responsible for security. There must also be a specific and appropriate institutional structure to promote and coordinate multisectoral State intervention for security.[74] Congresses, parliaments, and other legislative bodies should have committees which specialize in security matters for legislative and other oversight. This would facilitate the approval of laws and regulations governing public and private security, and allow legislatures to analyze, approve and oversee the budgets for security policies and programs in order to monitor the performance of the security system as a whole.

Public Responsibility

Security is a public good for which the State has primary responsibility. State monopoly over the use of force is one of the key elements for managing conflict and violence. Yet in recent years, however, the growth of the private security industry has cast doubt on this principle. In most countries of the region, private security guards tend to outnumber police. In some cases, they are equipped with weapons more powerful than those used by the police on their daily patrols.

These private security firms need to be regulated. Experience in the region shows that lack of regulation over such a strategic activity can be a risk for democracy. For this reason, the involvement of private security firms and agents must be subject in all its dimensions to State regulation and supervision. Their work must be consistent and compatible with the general objectives of public security policies.

Professionalism

The development of security policies cannot rely exclusively on the inspiration and goodwill of those individuals responsible for directing and executing the policies. The design and implementation of these policies must, instead, be accomplished by experts, who can take into account all the specialized knowledge available, including the latest technological tools to address crime in its various forms.

As with other policies, public security requires the careful design of plans, programs, operations and activities; and all of these must be performed by specialized staff.

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74 For a discussion of the situation in Peru, see Basombrío, Carlos y Costa, Gino. Liderazgo civil en el Ministerio del Interior. Perú, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2004.

Information

A successful security policy requires comprehensive, verifiable, reliable and comparable quantitative data to serve as benchmarks and, subsequently, as indicators of outcomes.

Improving police statistics and making greater use of victimization surveys will require significant efforts coupled with specific plans and sufficient resources. Similarly, thought must be given to the design and implementation of a communications strategy which provides information on the States' plans and commitments, accompanies policy implementation, and which transparently shows the successes and failures of the process.

Information must be public and it must be accessible. In many countries, the lack of information fuels public fears, and isolated or sporadic events can spark a real crisis of insecurity. Thus, the experience of those countries in the Hemisphere that make information available by Internet, allowing citizens to inform themselves, take appropriate decisions, and organize themselves on the basis of their needs, interests, and desires, should be replicated.

Financing

Police budgets must be commensurate with the magnitude of the public security problems with which they have to cope. In turn, decisions on the appropriation of funding for security issues must be made after broad public debate--cast in terms of national priorities.

In light of the foregoing, security budgets must be carefully planned and strictly monitored to ensure that they are managed properly and used transparently. This is particularly true when large budgetary outlays are planned for equipment: they must be closely evaluated and they must be consistent with the needs and priorities set out in the security plans. In this respect, results-based budgeting is an appropriate policy.

Fairness

A public security policy must guarantee equality before the law and it must help to create overall living conditions that offer equal opportunities for all citizens. This means that plans and resources must be directed to the most affected places and vulnerable population groups.

A public security policy must contain general measures of benefit to all, as well as strategically targeted ones, and be able to make the necessary trade-offs between the two. It must also pay special attention to at-risk and vulnerable groups, and include appropriate gender policies that consider how women, in particular, are affected by insecurity.

Sanctions

Security policies must seek to eliminate the impunity that surrounds the majority of crimes and ensure that the perpetrators are suitably punished.

Criminal justice policy must allow for penalties of graduated severity, depending on the nature of the crime and the condition of the perpetrator, and it must avoid the tendency to criminalize minor offenses, which only encourages the commission of greater crimes. At the same time, it must accede to the resounding public demand that those responsible for the most serious crimes should be given the stiffest penalties allowed by law and by international human rights treaties.

Comprehensiveness

A security policy requires simultaneous intervention on various fronts and at different levels, in recognition of the complex causes and effects of insecurity.

At the strategic level, it must combine policies of enforcement and punishment with policies of prevention and rehabilitation. In terms of design and organization, this means making provisions for across-the-board involvement by State institutions with the participation of civil society.

Prevention

Prevention is an essential component of any public security policy, and it should include immediate "situational prevention" measures as well as "social prevention" measures designed to bring about more sustainable changes over the medium and long term.

Generally speaking, prevention covers a number of areas that require participation by a wide variety of players. Notable examples of preventive measures include: addressing domestic violence and child abuse, policies and programs for at-risk youth, controlling access to alcohol and drugs, registration and restriction of firearms, security in transportation and highway administration, urban design, alternative dispute settlement mechanisms, the contents, quality and accessibility of public education, employment creation policies, civic education, and social communication.[75]

Deterrence

Public security policies must dissuade potential offenders and, when necessary, punish criminal acts. A properly functioning criminal justice system guarantees that this State function will be effectively fulfilled and that the rights of citizens will be protected.[76]

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75 This diversity of topics is discussed in Santillán, Alfredo, Pontón Jenny and Pontón, Daniel, comp. Ciudad segura. Debates sobre seguridad ciudadana. Quito, FLACSO-Ecuador, 2007.
76 CELS. Temas para pensar la crisis. Políticas de seguridad ciudadana y justicia penal. Buenos Aires, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, 2004.

A properly functioning criminal justice system requires, on the one hand, ongoing review of criminal legislation that reflects new realities, and on the other hand, institutional reform and modernization, and adequate coordination and synergy among all players, including the prison system.

In particular, efforts to reform and modernize police institutions must include updating doctrine, standards of conduct, training and professionalism, specialization, equipment and technical capacities, dignity and well-being of police personnel, internal control and external oversight, decentralization and de-concentration, coordination among police forces, evaluation by results, and mechanisms for transparency and accountability.

Rehabilitation

A comprehensive security policy also requires suitable programs for rehabilitating offenders and assisting victims.

The victims of domestic violence, in particular women and children, need special programs to repair the physical and psychological damage they have suffered. Conditions also need to be created to avoid a repetition of the abuse. People suffering the ravages of alcoholism or drug addiction also need special attention to restore their health and to keep them from becoming a threat to society.

Penitentiary policies should address the need to restore and upgrade infrastructure, classify and segregate inmates, raise the professional level of personnel who treat drug dependent inmates, and sponsor vocational education and social reintegration programs. In addition, special policies are needed for dealing appropriately with juvenile offenders.

Local Focus

An unmistakable feature of the many successful experiences that have been undertaken to improve public security is that they have had a deliberately local focus.[77] Security policies should encourage the participation of local civilian authorities in both the preventive aspects of security, and also—taking into account variances reflecting local realities--in their relationship to the police forces.

A national public security policy must be formulated to give local stakeholders room for creativity in its final design and discretion in its implementation. The State in general, and national governments in particular, must ensure that local governments have adequate powers and resources to carry out their public security policies.

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77   On this point see: Martin, Gerard and Ceballos, Miguel. Bogotá: Anatomía de una transformación. Políticas de seguridad ciudadana 1995-2003. Colombia, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2004: and Dammert, Lucía and Zúñiga, Liza, eds. Violencia y seguridad: desafíos para la ciudadanía. Santiago, FLACSO-Chile, 2007.

Public Participation

Public security cannot be achieved through government action alone. Society must be allowed and encouraged to play a role, and it must do so with the precautions and the safeguards demanded by the nature of the problem.

The principal responsibility for security lies with the State, and the State cannot abdicate that responsibility by handing it over to the public at large. Participation must be seen as a right of citizenship and not as a concession by the State. It must be autonomous and pluralistic, with no subordination to any public institution, and it must not be targeted at or restricted to individuals of a particular political persuasion. It must be voluntary: it cannot be imposed and there must not be penalties or discrimination for those who cannot participate or do not want to. It must come into play only in issues and at times where people's physical safety can be guaranteed. Finally, it must be strictly confined within the bounds of legality and respect for human rights.

When the community participates in this way, it becomes a powerful ally of State action for it can help to keep information accurate and up-to-date, mobilize additional economic and human resources, deliver social support for prevention policies and expand capacity for oversight of the government's activities. It can also help to diminish the perception of insecurity.

Transparency

Public security policies must be transparent: the information on which they are based and the results they achieve must be publicly available. Their various components and stages must be subject to the same oversight, guarantees and restrictions that apply to other government functions. Security policies must also have formal mechanisms for the regular rendering of accounts to the community.

Exceptions and restrictions on information must be strictly limited, and such exceptions must be clearly justified. Parliamentary committees must have unrestricted access to confidential information as required to perform their functions, in a manner regulated by law.

Effectiveness

None of the foregoing will be meaningful if policies do not produce results and if people do not perceive that the State is truly committed and that the situation is gradually improving.

It is essential, then, for public security policies to strike a balance between the need to produce visible and immediate successes and the need to invest in medium-term policies that take longer to mature and show results. The various types of policies must be compared very carefully on a cost-benefit basis, and both the technical feasibility of the planned measures and the communication and political leadership capacity of their promoters must be assessed.

Sustainability

It is clear from the successful experiences to date that there must be continuity among the people responsible for driving policies, or at least stability in the orientation of those policies. Public security policies must therefore become policies of the State and not only of the government of the day.

Successful local experiences and the outcomes of pilot programs must also be properly systematized to ensure their continuity over time and to be able to project them into broader scenarios.

In summary therefore, the 18 key elements described in this chapter are essential to ensure a public security policy that is modern, efficient, transparent, and democratic, and operates within the rule of law.

CHAPTER 6.

> In Search of Solutions

In Search of Solutions

From the analysis of the public security situation in the Americas, and of the institutional situation described in previous chapters, it is clear that there are many challenges that must be addressed promptly in order to prevent and control crime and violence effectively in the region. Beyond the various issues discussed in this report, priority should be given to the following issues:

- Policies to achieve social harmony and public security should be polices of the State, rather than of government (the administration of the day).
- Existing institutions have yet to make the full transition to the new democratic, transparent, and rule of law perspective of public security.
- There is a glaring lack of reliable and systematic information.
- There is an over-emphasis on policies that control and suppress crime, such as increasing police manpower, reducing the age of criminal responsibility, and expanding the prison population, and too little attention on preventive aspects.
- Inter-agency coordination is inadequate.
- The different levels of government have limited technical capacity to ensure the development of effective leadership in the area of security and thus to strengthen political management of the process.
- Security institutions are influenced by partisan political considerations.
- The Armed Forces are increasingly involved in police work.
- Municipal governments lack the authority and resources to address crime.
- Coordination between the justice system and the police is inadequate.
- Programs for monitoring, assessing and measuring the impact of public security institutions are inadequate.
- The police do not have modern management and transparency policies in place and rely too heavily on a reactive model for their security work.
- The primary missions and functions of the police are not clearly defined.
- The police lack proper infrastructure and equipment.
- Police work is seriously devalued.
- Criminal investigation capacities are inadequate.
- Significant levels of institutional corruption exist.
- Private security needs to be effectively regulated.

The conceptual definition and description of crime and violence in the region confirms the need to address these problems systematically and to find solutions that, using appropriate technology, can be placed at the service of policymakers and the public.

The problems of insecurity facing the citizens of the countries of the region are not isolated issues--neither with regards to criminals nor time, nor territorial boundaries. Governments, academia, civil society and multilateral agencies have traditionally tried to categorize these issues, such as juvenile violence, small arms trafficking, drug trafficking, and prevention. Yet the reality is that crime makes no such divisions; on the contrary it has great capacity to change and become more complex, and many different offenses can be involved in a single criminal activity. This elasticity must be recognized in the design, implementation and promotion of strategies and tactics for reducing violence and crime. In addition to these thematic divisions, the issue of time must be addressed, for in many cases crime and its various manifestations often extend over a

lengthy period, while policy responses tend to be much more sporadic. Moreover, the criminal phenomenon today does not respect borders between countries and regions and makes use of all the advantages they offer, while States seldom define joint strategies to combat and prevent crime.

The search for solutions will only be successful if the various stakeholders understand that this is not an individual or solitary task. The Organization of American States, as a regional political body, is capable of proposing innovative strategies and promoting strategic partnerships with other agencies of the inter-American system and the United Nations system. Joint initiatives of this kind will allow for a better, more effective and more efficient positioning vis-à-vis these challenges. An essential pillar of a common regional agenda must be the recognition of the strengths of each of the participating organizations to contribute to mitigating this serious problem.

The multidimensional roots of crime and violence must be taken into account for this initiative to be successful. Crime and violence must be combated through the establishment of policies that both address its causes and call for the implementation of measures whose results will be reflected over the long term. If this long-term commitment is not made, then states will be condemned to repeat solutions with limited impact.

The Inter-American Development Bank and the Pan American Health Organization have extensive experience, within their respective fields of action, in working on projects relating to these issues in various countries of the region and it is therefore crucial that their working agendas be more closely coordinated. While there have been some steps in this direction, and while the OAS General Secretariat has been an active participant in them, such coordination has yet to realize its full potential. It is therefore necessary to formalize coordination, evaluate the impact of the measures taken, and adopt prompt decisions that will ensure permanent collaboration toward the proposed common objectives. This work will require ongoing input from academic institutions, which have generated debates in each country of the region and have produced empirical studies to interpret the criminal phenomena in greater depth and clarity.

To bring about these changes, various key players participated in the process leading up to the First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas, held in Mexico City on October 7 and 8, 2008, including civil society organizations that met in Guatemala (August 2008), and academics that met in Chile (November 2007) and Jamaica (March 2008). Their participation, together with the private sector, is essential for a broader and deeper approach to the issue, which in the final analysis will give greater guarantees that these processes can be sustainable over time.

In this context, the OAS General Secretariat, with the ongoing support of international agencies, must take action to promote best practices and develop the capacities of those responsible for public security. In addition, public policies should be developed that include active citizen participation as well as a human rights perspective and a local focus, all within the strict framework of the rule of law.

There are a host of problems that call for immediate attention and it is essential to identify and prioritize those that are most urgent and appropriate for each public security institution. The OAS General Secretariat has proposed a plan, in coordination with various national and international agencies, based on six lines of work and three mechanisms for action.

A. LINES OF WORK

1. Offer guidance and advice for the development of legislative proposals, public policies, and institutional reforms

There is a pressing need to develop model legislation and model public policies that deal with security and include all branches of State, i.e. executive, legislative and judicial. It is also important to take into account the perspective of law enforcement officials: prosecutors, public defenders, and prison administrators. Broader governmental participation of this kind should also serve to encourage and strengthen participation by civil society.

These proposals must include:

- Short and long-term consensus strategies, to ensure policy continuity.
- Comprehensive public policies that provide for complementarity between prevention and control.
- Rehabilitation of prisoners and their subsequent reintegration.
- Coordination measures among the different levels of the State.
- Measures to improve working conditions for police officers.
- Mechanisms whereby civil society can take part in these processes.
- The participation of the private sector in corporate social responsibility initiatives.
- The participation of business providing private security services.
- Mechanisms to inform and provide transparency to the implementation of security policies.

2. Provide technical support for the construction of reliable and comparable indicators

Instruments are needed in order to navigate. The only way of truly modernizing public security is to have reliable and up-to-date information systems with data that are comparable and consistent over time. Information systems that meet these conditions must be made available to the citizenry, and mechanisms must be put into place to provide access to them.

These information systems must be capable of:

- Integrating local and national information.
- Making data comparable across the region.
- Ensuring the public availability of information.
- Developing strategies to reduce underreporting of crime.
- Using victimization surveys to evaluate security policies at the local and national levels.

- Recognizing the complementary nature of victimization surveys and global statistical data.
- Ensuring continuity in the use of systems and surveys.

Information must also serve as the basis for action, it must guide policy debates, and it must allow the development of regional strategies to equip member states with the instruments to make the necessary changes.

3. Adopt immediate policies for rehabilitation and social reintegration

Many of the crimes committed in the region are linked directly or indirectly to drug consumption. Young addicts who steal to support their habit, traffic accidents under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and domestic violence are examples of this situation.

OAS efforts through CICAD, have led to progress in the establishment of effective programs for treating and rehabilitating drug addicts in the region, albeit in a limited way.[78] This is a public health problem, one that cannot be resolved solely by increasing the police force or building new prisons.

Public policies are needed, together with sufficient financial resources, to address rehabilitation and social reintegration and that will target specific groups. This is especially important in the case of the prison population, where social reintegration mechanisms are needed to prevent inmates from returning to a life of crime upon release. Work on this issue will be coordinated with the Ministries of Justice of the Americas (REMJA) to develop a common agenda that will give priority to these initiatives, as well as to identify and promote best practices that can be replicated in the region.

4. Improve police training

Analysis shows that police personnel in most of our countries have insufficient training, and this, together with other problems (relating to salaries, social rights and corporate image, among others), conveys a poor image of the work, the importance and the relevance of the police. There is much that countries can and must do in this regard, and the General Secretariat can assist in this effort.

The General Secretariat has for several years been offering training courses for police, as well as for judges and prosecutors. More recently, it has developed the Inter-American Police Training Program for sharing and disseminating successful experiments in police management and encouraging their adoption by other police institutions.

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78. The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission has a useful tool for creating treatment systems for drug addicts (See Practical Guide for the Organization of a Comprehensive Drug Dependence Treatment System, OAS General Secretariat, 2004). CICAD is conducting a human resource training and certification program for persons involved in the treatment of drug addicts, which is being carried out initially in Central American countries and will hopefully be expanded to the rest of the region.

This Program should be strengthened. It is important to revise police selection and promotion mechanisms. The General Secretariat will collaborate in particular in updating the training programs of police institutions in the region. Those programs deserve an in-depth analysis to ensure that they are producing professional police officers equipped to address the new needs of the new times.

Beyond the conventional elements, training must include the following:

- Police accountability and responsibility, and transparency in management;
- Greater use of technology to facilitate police work;
- A gender perspective;
- Ways of managing police relations with youth;
- Human rights as an important focus of the training program.

Studies point to a deficit in the management capacities of persons with political responsibility for security issues. These individuals must be trained to be true public security managers, and this calls for training facilities of a regional nature with technical independence, where senior officials, civilians and police personnel can take intensive management courses. Such initiatives will produce many additional benefits, such as improved understanding and relations between those responsible for managing the police at the national and local levels. In pursuit of this objective, the General Secretariat intends to collaborate with police institutions that have useful experience to share. In addition, the General Secretariat will continue to advocate for the creation of a regional center for advanced studies in public security for police and civilians.

5. Find ways to include the private sector

The importance of the private sector in this area is undeniable. With the rising tide of crime and violence and the weakness of the public sector's response, a private security industry has emerged to fill the void. While regulation, oversight and evaluation are the sole responsibility of the State, public-private synergy should be welcomed, facilitated and reinforced, if only to minimize inequities in the distribution of security in our countries.

6. Strengthen collaboration with the mass media

The media play an active role in publicizing crimes, in shaping public fears, and in reinforcing the perception of impunity and institutional corruption. In their editorial approach the media must exhibit social responsibility and ensure that their coverage includes a serious analysis of the problem.

This calls for rigorous, professional and coordinated efforts on the part of the media, the State and civil society to establish good practices in crime coverage, and mechanisms for sharing information so that the issues can be presented in depth and in their varying national contexts.

B. WORKING MECHANISMS

The General Secretariat will pursue the lines of work described above through the development of three mechanisms described briefly below:

1. Permanent mechanisms for meetings and consultation with governments on security issues

The General Secretariat sponsors ministerial meetings on various issues, including education, science and technology, labor, justice and, recently, social development. Yet despite public concerns over crime and violence, which moreover have transnational roots, no political body had ever existed for dealing specifically with this issue in a professional manner and with the necessary political vision.

The public security problem calls for the highest level political and professional attention to address issues of policies, standards, information and professionalism. The holding of the First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas is an example of the General Secretariat's commitment to establishing a forum for political and technical debate on this problem. This new body will propose permanent mechanisms of support and cooperation among member states, as well as among the diverse fora and inter-American mechanisms that address individual manifestations of crime. In addition, the Meeting of Ministers may establish additional fora for collaboration, such as meetings of police chiefs.

The General Secretariat hopes that, with the decisive support of member states, it can contribute to an ongoing policy dialogue that will achieve the synergy needed to confront crime and violence and the consequences that they generate.

2. Strengthen coordination between international institutions

Given the complexity and horizontal nature of the public security problem, and the number of stakeholders involved, all existing coordination bodies should be utilized in order to optimize the use of resources, share information, and promote successful experiences.

The experience of the Inter-American Coalition for the Prevention of Violence (IACPV), which has been operating for more than eight years in Washington and includes the Inter-American Development Bank, the Pan American Health Organization, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Centers For Disease Control (CDC), and the General Secretariat of the OAS must be seen as a first step in this search for a comprehensive approach. The Coalition's profile makes it an ideal forum for the coordination and articulation of activities between its member agencies. Several of the proposals mentioned in this report could certainly be pursued in this eminently technical setting.

Coordinated agendas and a clear conceptual definition of the problems, will enable the development of a rational and professional approach to the issues and open dialogue in search of better solutions.

3. Maintain permanent consultation mechanisms with civil society and the academic world

Civil society organizations have historically, and especially in the last decades, engaged in determined efforts to promote democracy, governance, the defense of human rights, and the protection of the environment, among others. Their efforts have supported citizen participation at all levels, promoting transparency and responsibility in the handling of public affairs.

The General Secretariat, recognizing the valuable role that these organizations play, has created important opportunities for them to participate in various technical and political bodies. That involvement is all the more valuable when it comes to issues of public security.

Strengthening civil society participation is an important step for ensuring that security policies enjoy citizen support and, consequently, long-term sustainability.

In the same manner, the academic world has a key role to play in the drafting of strategies, particularly by preparing studies that provide empirical support for policy options.

Finally, there are private sector initiatives at the regional level, especially among companies practicing corporate social responsibility. These companies promote activities for the prevention of violence, rehabilitation, and social reintegration. Initiatives of this type should be encouraged to enable greater participation of the private sector in this area. This can be done through soft loans, tax exemption, contributions by the State, and streamlining bureaucratic processes.

In the end, what is needed is a range of solutions that will allow for a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to public security issues that respects human rights and that provides us with new ways of understanding and resolving crime and violence-related problems and their consequences.

The General Secretariat must strive to create spaces where all stakeholders—civil society, universities, political parties, legislators, police, judges and prosecutors, and the executive branch— can engage in informed debate and adopt increasingly professional approaches to what is, as we have seen, the primary concern of each and every country of the inter-American system.
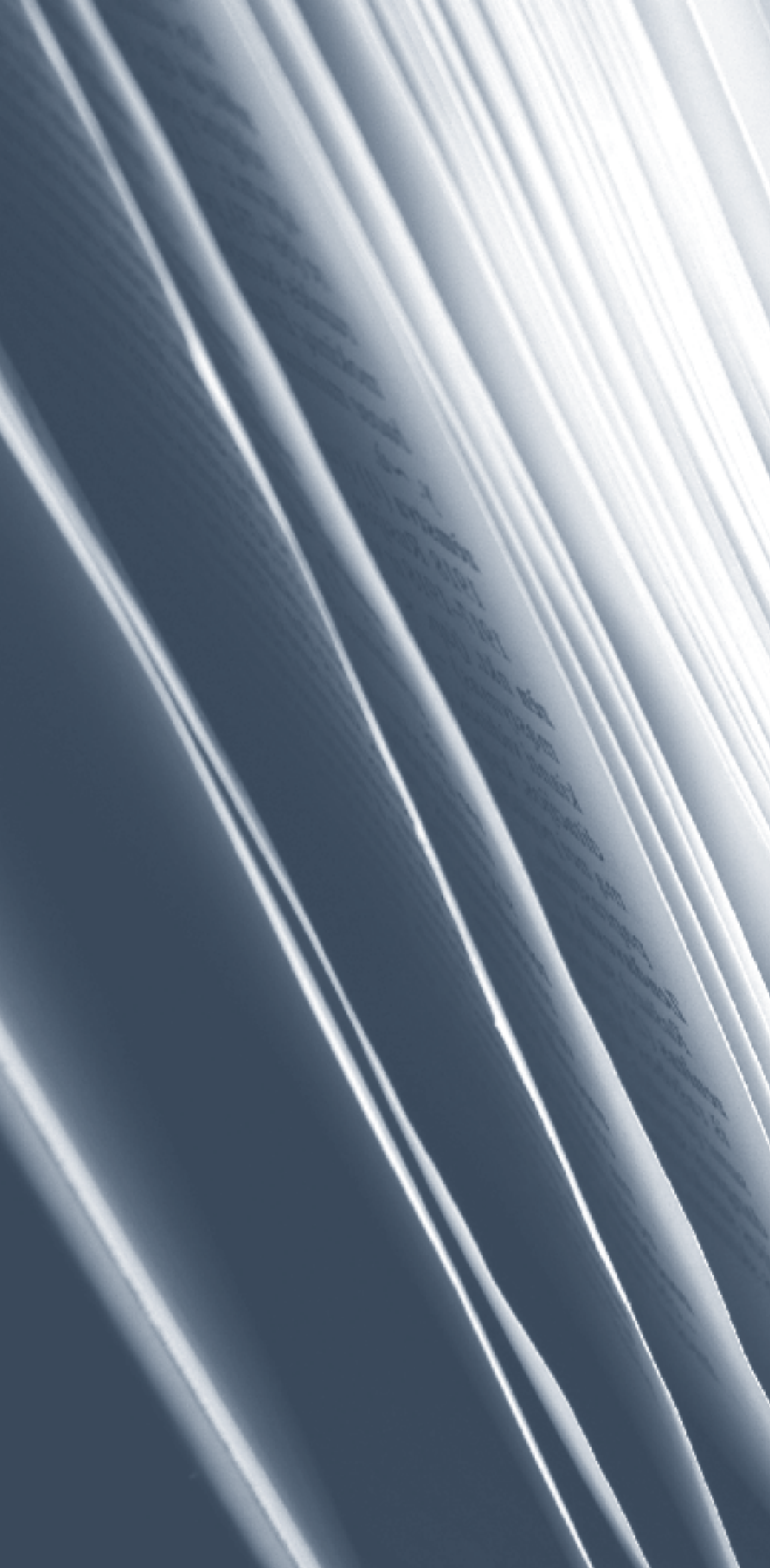
ANNEX I.

Annex I.

The First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security was held in Mexico City from October 7 to 8, 2008. Copies of all documents, including the Schedule (MISPA/doc.3/08 rev. 2), the Rules of Procedure (MISPA/doc.3/08 rev. 2), the Rapporteurs Report (MISPA/doc.10/08 rev. 1), the List of Participants (MISPA/doc.9/08), as well as all other preparatory documents, presentations, and speeches (contained in the List of Documents Registered by the Secretariat, MISPA/doc.1/08 rev. 1) can be obtained from the General Secretariat of the OAS, Department of Public Security, 1889 F Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. They are also available on the Internet at:
http://www.oas.org/seguridad_hemisferica/english/default.asp.

The final text of the Commitment to Public Security in the Americas, adopted by the Ministers at the conclusion of the meeting on October 8 and revised by the Style Committee at its meeting of October 28, 2008, is attached below.

FIRST MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC SECURITY IN THE AMERICAS	OEA/Ser.K/XLIX. 1
	MISPA/doc.7/08 rev. 4
October 7 and 8, 2008	29 October 2008
Mexico City, Mexico	Original: Spanish

"COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SECURITY IN THE AMERICAS"

(Adopted at the seventh plenary session held on October 8, 2008
and revised by the Style Committee on October 28, 2008)

We, the Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas, gathered together in Mexico City, Mexico, on October 7 and 8, 2008, bearing in mind the purposes of the Charter of the Organization of American States and recalling the Declaration on Security in the Americas adopted on October 28, 2003, have, within our specific spheres of competence, adopted the following Commitment.

RECOGNIZING:

That public security is the duty and exclusive obligation of the State, strengthens the rule of law, and is intended to safeguard the well-being and security of persons and protect the enjoyment of all their rights;

That conditions for public security are improved through full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as through the promotion of education, health, and economic and social development;

The importance of international cooperation for improving economic and social conditions and thereby strengthening public security;

That law enforcement forms part of any public security strategy that includes crime prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration, and that all those factors are required to effectively combat crime, violence and insecurity;

The importance of the cross-cutting integration of the provisions of international law in the institutional culture, doctrine, education, training, and actions of the security forces;

The important work on multidimensional security on a subregional basis in the inter-American system and the United Nations system;

The contributions of international organizations and agencies, distinguished scholars, and civil society during the preparations for this ministerial meeting;[79]
AWARE:

That the effective exercise of the rule of law depends on enforcement of the laws that govern it;

That violence and crime negatively affect the social, economic, and political development of our societies;

That the actions of public security institutions should be governed by respect for human rights, and the principles of legality, objectivity, efficiency, professionalism, and honesty;

Of the priority of confronting crime and insecurity in a joint, preventive, comprehensive, coherent, effective, and continuous manner;

Of the growing presence of private security services in many of our countries, which governments are responsible for regulating, monitoring, and supervising;

Of the need to ensure linkages with the Meeting of Ministers of Justice or Other Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA) on public security issues related to criminal justice in the Americas in the context of its mandates;

CONCERNED:

That in addition to interpersonal violence and common crimes, many countries in the region are confronted with some of the following criminal activities: transnational organized crime, illegal trafficking of drugs, arms, and persons, money laundering, corruption, terrorism, kidnapping, criminal gangs and crimes associated with the use of technology, including cybercrime;

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79. Forum of academics and experts in Santiago, Chile (CSH/GT/MISPA-2/08) (November 26-27, 2007); Forum of academics and experts in Montego Bay, Jamaica (CSH/GT/MISPA-4/08) (March 6-7, 2008); Meeting with civil society representatives, held in Guatemala City, Guatemala (CSH/GT/MISPA-14/08 corr. 1) (August 6-7, 2008); Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); International Center for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC); Inter-American Coalition for the Prevention of Violence (IACPV); International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); Andean Community; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Latin American and Caribbean Regional Office of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); Pro tempore Chair of MERCOSUR; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR); Caribbean Community (CARICOM); and the Inter-American Integration System (SICA).

That transnational organized crime activities may be used to finance and facilitate terrorism;[80]

About the increase in many countries of the region in victims belonging to at-risk populations, especially youth, and about the increase in the participation of youth in crimes and acts of violence;

That violence can also manifest itself in different areas, affecting in particular and in different ways the community, families, women, children, and men;

About the need to improve prison conditions in the Hemisphere and the challenges to public security stemming from the increase in the prison population, including the administrative costs, the need to ensure the safety of inmates and prison staff, and the impact on rehabilitation of the inmates;

TAKING NOTE of the Inter-American Police Training Program of the Organization of American States (OAS), the purpose of which is to leverage the different police training experiences of the countries of the Hemisphere;

BEARING IN MIND the progress achieved in the study on citizen security and human rights being prepared by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) under an agreement with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); and

RECOGNIZING that additional efforts are needed at the hemispheric, subregional, and national levels, including at the local level, to reduce crime, violence, and insecurity in the region,

WE SHOULD THEREFORE:

PUBLIC SECURITY MANAGEMENT:

1)   Foster and strengthen comprehensive long-term governmental public security policies, with full respect for human rights;

2)   Strengthen, within the context of those policies, the capacity of our states to promote citizen security and to respond effectively to insecurity, crime, and violence, by adapting their legal framework, structures, operational procedures, and management mechanisms, as necessary;

3)   Analyze public security problems from a comprehensive point of view, taking into account emerging threats, and to promote management instruments that enable national authorities to evaluate, and, where necessary, improve the effectiveness of public security policies;

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80. The Government of Ecuador reserves its position on this paragraph.

4) Strengthen border security, wherever appropriate, in accordance with the legal and administrative systems applicable in the member states, with a view to preventing and counteracting crime and violence, all the while facilitating the legitimate flow of persons and goods;

5) Enhance our understanding of private security services and develop and/or strengthen, as necessary, legal norms to regulate their functioning;

6) Strengthen and, as appropriate, establish policies and programs for the modernization of the prison systems of the member states and for the design of sustainable social reintegration models, especially for youth;

PREVENTION OF CRIME, VIOLENCE, AND INSECURITY:

7) Foster, in coordination with the pertinent institutions, public policies designed to prevent crime, violence, and insecurity;

8) Promote educational programs, in particular in schools, and raise awareness among the different players in society regarding the prevention of crime, violence, and insecurity;

POLICE MANAGEMENT:

9) Promote the modernization of police management by incorporating transparency and accountability, enhance the professionalization of security forces; and improve the living and working conditions of their members;

10) Continue training human resources in public security issues, including the Inter-American Police Training Program of the Organization of American States (OAS);

11) Request the OAS General Secretariat to conduct a feasibility study, with inputs from member states, on the best ways to strengthen, in the region, the training and education of personnel with responsibility in public security matters, and to submit that study, as soon as possible, for consideration by the member states;

12) Consider creating and maintaining as necessary governmental observatories on crime and violence with the purpose of contributing to the design of strategic and operational plans for public security and citizen security, to strengthen the fight against and prevention of crime, violence and insecurity;

CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:

13) Encourage and strengthen citizen and community participation in the implementation of public security plans and programs;

14) Encourage and strengthen social responsibility as well as a culture of comprehensive prevention of crime, violence, and insecurity, with the participation of citizens, the community, the media, and the private sector;

15) Promote, in this context, public policies that strengthen citizen trust in public security institutions;

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:

16) Strengthen, within a multidimensional approach and in accordance with domestic law, channels of communication and the exchange of information, practices, and experiences among the member states in combating and preventing crimes affecting public security;

17) Promote the adoption of measures that encourage the sharing of relevant information by the police for the purpose of the prevention or investigation of transnational crime affecting public security in an efficient and reliable way, in accordance with national legislation;

18) Consider cooperation initiatives to increase knowledge of the different facets and impact of crime in the member states, in order to strengthen public security policy structures;

19) Encourage member states to consider developing comparable public security parameters in order to strengthen our cooperative efforts;

20) Take note of the contribution of subregional police cooperation mechanisms and of the establishment of the American Police Community (AMERIPOL);

21) Urge member states to consider acceding to and/or ratifying the treaties, agreements, and conventions that contribute to compliance with this Commitment;

22) Call upon the member states to recognize the role of mutual legal assistance and extradition in response to the commission, execution, planning, preparation, or financing of terrorist acts and organized crime, in accordance with their domestic law and established international conventions;

23) Promote the exchange of experiences coming from civil society that contribute to strengthening public security;

FOLLOW-UP:

24) Request the OAS General Assembly to convene future Meetings of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas;

25) Request the OAS General Secretariat to provide to the states that so request, ongoing technical

support in matters of public security management, crime prevention, police management, citizen and community participation, and international cooperation, in order to achieve the purposes, objectives, and actions of this Commitment;

26) Invite OAS member states, permanent observers to the OAS, and the institutions of the inter-American system to make voluntary financial and/or human resource contributions to achieve the full implementation of this Commitment;

27) Invite the entities and agencies of the inter-American system, such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the Pan American Health Organization, as well as other United Nations and international agencies, to contribute, within their respective spheres of competence, to the achievement of the objectives of this Commitment;

28) Request the OAS Permanent Council, through the Committee on Hemispheric Security, to follow up on this Commitment;

29) Welcome with satisfaction the offer of the Government of the Republic of Uruguay to host a Meeting of Experts in Public Security during 2009 in preparation for the Second Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas;

30) Welcome with satisfaction the offer of the Dominican Republic to host the Second Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas in 2009, and the offer of Trinidad and Tobago to host the Third Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas in 2010; and

31) Thank and commend the Government of Mexico for having hosted the First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas, which constitutes a milestone in the Hemisphere's commitment to prevent and fight crime, violence, and insecurity.

Mexico City, Mexico
October 8, 2008

THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington. D.C., from October 1889 to April 1890. The establishment of the International Union of American Republics was approved at that meeting on April 14, 1890. The OAS Charter was signed in Bogota in 1948 and entered into force in December 1951. Subsequently, the Charter was amended by the Protocol of Buenos Aires, signed in 1967, which entered into force in February 1970; by the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias, signed in 1985, which entered into force in November 1988; and by the Protocol of Managua, signed in 1993, which entered into force in January 1996. In 1992, the Protocol of Washington was signed; it will enter into force upon ratification by two thirds of the Member States. The OAS currently has 35 Member States. In addition, the Organization has granted Permanent Observer status to 60 States and to the European Union.

The basic purposes of the OAS are as follows: to strengthen the peace and security of the continent; to promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention; to prevent possible causes of difficulties and to ensure the pacific settlement of disputes that may arise among the Member States; to provide for common action on the part of those States in the event of aggression; to seek the solution of political, juridical and economic problems that may arise among them; to promote, by cooperative action, their economic, social and cultural development, and to achieve an effective limitation of conventional weapons that will make it possible to devote the largest amount of resources to the economic and social development of the Member States.

MEMBER STATES: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, The Bahamas (Commonwealth of), Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica (Commonwealth of), Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

General Secretariat
Organization of American States

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n October 2003, OAS member states, meeting in Mexico, adopted a new concept of security, giving it a multidimensional scope. To the list of traditional threats were added a number of others, including transnational organized crime, trafficking in drugs and weapons, human trafficking, corruption, criminal gangs, and natural disasters. This concept is based on democratic values, on the observance, promotion and defense of human rights, on solidarity, and on cooperation.

In 2005, in response to these new challenges, the OAS General Secretariat established the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, comprising the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), the Department of Program and Policy Coordination, and the Department of Public Security.

The Department of Public Security, which coordinated the study, promotes public security policies, legislation and programs of technical assistance in the countries of the inter-American system. It engages in the analysis and consideration of the new forms of public security threats in the region. To this end, it conducts studies and recommends solutions using comprehensive and multidisciplinary strategies that, from a human rights perspective, embrace the prevention of violence and crime as well as rehabilitation and law enforcement.