

FAST FACTS

United Nations Development Programme



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Rule of Law: building peace through justice and security

More than 1.5 billion people around the world live in countries affected by violence and insecurity. Conflict and violence are major symptoms of a breakdown in the rule of law, and more broadly in state-society relations. Where the rule of law breaks down, tyranny, poverty and instability prevail, violence begets violence, and abusers commit crimes with impunity.

The fair enforcement of just laws is more than a dividend of peace — it is a prerequisite for an equitable society that restores dignity to all. For these reasons, strengthening the rule of law is a key component in the United Nations' mission to enhance security, foster development, and protect human rights. Without access to an equitable and enforceable system of laws, citizens have no guarantee that the income they earn will remain their own, human rights fought for by local and international activists are subject to the whims of power, and women subjected to sexual and gender based violence have no recourse to justice or protection from further abuse.

UNDP's approach

In 2008, UNDP created the **Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations** (*Global Rule of Law Programme*).



The Women and Children police desk in Hargeisa, Somaliland. With UNDP's support, this unit and others like it ensure that the particular needs of women and juveniles coming into contact with the law are appropriately addressed. UNDP photo/UNDP Somalia

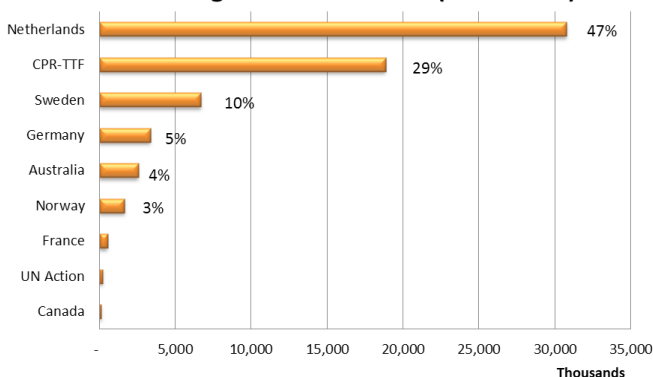
As part of this programme, UNDP works with judges, police, prosecutors, elected officials, and civil organisations to provide free legal aid to victims. In addition, UNDP provides human rights training, and technical assistance to enable countries to build accountable, transparent and fair institutions, as well as open political dialogues on justice and security.

With the support of the *Global Rule of Law Programme*, UNDP is working to strengthen the rule of law in over 25 fragile and conflict-affected countries, including **Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia, Somalia and Sudan.**

The *Global Rule of Law Programme* focuses on:

- Improving access to security and justice in conflict-affected countries;
- Responding to sexual and gender-based violence;
- Building efficient and accountable rule of law institutions;
- Supporting transitional justice processes;
- Strengthening citizen security and reducing armed violence;
- Supporting economic and social development by enhancing justice and security.

Global Programme Resources (2008-2011)



UNDP in Action

Improving access to justice

UNDP has created mechanisms to provide free legal aid in conflict-affected communities. In **Sri Lanka**, UNDP enabled the Legal Aid Commission to create five new criminal legal aid offices, enabling the Commission to undertake over 1,700 legal consultations for community members. UNDP also helped to establish 39 courthouses in the north and south of the country and trained 228 judges, helping thousands of people to access legal services that were not available to them beforehand. In **Nepal**, community paralegal programmes were expanded to 70 villages, legal aid clinics provided free services to 1,524 clients in one year and local mediation centres successfully resolved 60 per cent of 230 cases registered.

Responding to Sexual and Gender Based Violence

UNDP seeks to prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and provide legal support where it occurs. With UNDP's support in **Sierra Leone, Somalia** and **Nepal** more than 3,000 survivors of SGBV received access to justice services in one year, through legal advice and representation. UNDP is working towards ending impunity among offenders: in 2008 there were no SGBV-related convictions in **Sierra Leone**. Two years later, due to UNDP efforts, local courts pronounced 45 such convictions. Similarly, UNDP's support in **the Democratic Republic of Congo** resulted in the first prosecutions of military personnel for SGBV crimes.

Building efficient and accountable rule of law institutions

UNDP provides support to Member States to improve oversight and accountability of their security services – an essential aspect of a democratic society, governed by the rule of law. In **Kosovo** UNDP partnered with national and civil society actors to review legislation to improve transparency and punish abuses in its security sector. In **Timor-Leste**, UNDP assisted the Office of the President to review legislative frameworks of security institutions, and strengthen civilian oversight and management capacity in the security sector.

Supporting transitional justice processes

Ensuring truth-telling, accountability for past violations and reparations for victims are essential elements of reconciliation, and the consolidation of peace after conflict. In **Colombia**, UNDP was instrumental in supporting the game-changing Victims & Land Restitution Law, and ensuring implementation of the Justice and Peace Law. To date, UNDP has helped more than 1,200 men and women acquire legal representation at hearings leading to reparations for victims of the conflict.

Building Justice and Security Institutions

Through the *Global Rule of Law Programme*, UNDP has strengthened justice and security institutions in 20 conflict affected countries. In **Haiti** and **Liberia** new courthouses and police facilities have been constructed, providing the necessary infrastructure for rule of law. After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, UNDP helped the Haitian police create a database to identify escaped detainees.

In **the Democratic Republic of Congo** and the **Central African Republic** UNDP has boosted the numbers of security and legal professionals serving in the judicial system. Meanwhile, in **Somalia** and **Burundi**, UNDP has provided operational support to improve the efficiency of overworked court systems. In Somalia 2,905 police were trained in one year. In addition, Police Advisory Committees were established as independent oversight mechanisms which now monitor, mentor and train police and prison personnel on gender, human rights, and how to treat detainees with dignity.

Strengthening citizen security and reducing armed violence

UNDP focuses on reducing the supply of weapons through the collection and destruction of firearms, enhancing export controls, and formulating laws and regulations against illicit supply.

In **Angola**, UNDP supported a civilian weapons-collection campaign that resulted in the collection of 76,000 illegally held weapons, while in **Burundi** more than 12,400 explosives and 2,000 firearms were destroyed, and 9,000 police arms marked.

UNDP also emphasises measures that reduce the demand for weapons and drivers of violence. For example, UNDP supports national level Violence Observatories in **Burundi, Haiti, Honduras** and **Jamaica** which are helping to identify, prevent and reduce crime hot spots.

Through the *Global Rule of Law Programme*, UNDP is committed to strengthening the rule of law in fragile and crisis-affected areas as an end in itself but also as a fundamental way to advance political, economic and social development.

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