



Shared Security, Shared Elections

Best practices for the prevention of electoral violence

A study by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
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**American Friends
Service Committee**

About AFSC

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice, as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

AFSC's work for shared security

AFSC works with communities, decision-makers, and ally organizations to advance global shared security. In simple terms, traditional security is when you target a particular group, and build a wall around them under the pretext that it will keep you safe; shared security is when you build ties with that group such that your relationship keeps you both safe. Shared security harkens to a far more thoughtful way of approaching our common fate.

We do this by supporting evidence-based good practices, documenting success stories, and linking our work to policy recommendations. We promote nonviolent approaches to reduce violence and militarism, engage all actors in seeking peaceful solutions to conflicts, and support local people as positive change agents in their societies.

AFSC focuses its global shared security work on several key issues. They include:

- Prevention of electoral violence
- Migration and human mobility
- Restricted spaces for peacebuilding
- Business and peace
- Political and organized violence

Our work to promote shared security looks different in different places as we respond to community needs in specific contexts, but it is bound together by a search for truly shared solutions to our shared problems.

Executive summary

What are the major causes of electoral violence? What have proven to be the most effective means of preventing such violence? With several recent notable cases of violent elections, understanding the dynamics around electoral violence has become increasingly important in improving the quality of democracy around the world. This report presents findings from research on the causes of electoral violence and the best practices among practitioners for its prevention. The report consists of a literature review of the existing academic, policy, and practitioner literature as well as an analysis of interviews with practitioners in four countries: Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone, and Sri Lanka.

The existing literature suggests that political systems based on patronage and clientelism are more likely to experience election violence. In political systems in which formal political institutions are superseded by informal relationships based on the exchange of resources and political loyalty, political supporters seem willing to perpetrate election violence in support of their preferred candidates. The literature also highlights the weakness of electoral management bodies, such as electoral commissions, given their importance in establishing credible elections. The presence of pre-existing social conflicts, such as ongoing conflicts over land or other resources, also increases the likelihood of election violence. While this relationship can have several explanations, one appears to be the tendency for politicians to adopt the grievances of conflicting factions into their campaigns. International election observation missions may decrease the likelihood of pre-election violence, but interestingly they may increase the likelihood of post-election violence if they expose attempts at election fraud. A growing number of studies also find significant differences in how men and women experience election violence. However, too few policy interventions in the field explicitly take these differences into account.

The report also finds that very little research currently exists on the effectiveness of different types of election violence prevention strategies. The findings from field interviews for this study contribute to filling this gap. The interviews suggest that there are solutions to electoral violence based on collective, shared efforts by key stakeholders. **In particular, electoral violence prevention efforts are more successful when they are coordinated by a strong coalition or consortium.** A cooperative approach such as this has several advantages, but the field research shows that one critical component of a coordinated intervention platform is that it more easily facilitates practitioners' ability to deeply engage a full range of political parties and candidate in their efforts. Interviews showed that the inclusion of the politicians themselves was key in developing successful violence mitigation strategies. **The research further showed that prevention efforts are more successful when practitioners are able to gain access to and adopt methods successfully used in other countries.** This strongly suggests that successful investments in secure elections in one country can have positive spillover effects in other countries via transnational civil society networks. Violence prevention efforts are also more successful when

practitioners have access to geographical violent incident mapping during the campaigns. Both civil society actors and state organizations are able to target their resources best when they have access to accurate, up-to-date information on violent events in their respective countries as well as information on “hotspot” areas most likely to experience various types of election violence.

In terms of recommendations for donors, the research suggests that donors should consider placing additional resources into program follow-up assessments as well as long-term programming for those youth who are likely to participate in violence. Interview participants felt that not enough resources were available outside of the immediate time frame just before elections, despite the importance of maintaining programs across the election cycle. Finally, reforms of the security services, in particular how police are prepared to deal with protests, crowd control, and conflicts between party supporters are in need of considerably more attention from donors. Several existing violence prevention programs engage the security services in only a superficial manner, despite the frequency with which the police are responsible for election-related fatalities.

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Part A. Literature review of the existing scholarship on electoral violence

I. Introduction

In the wake of several notable outbreaks of violence during elections, the topic of electoral violence has become increasingly important among both scholars and practitioners. Growing interest in electoral violence has led to an increasing number of publications that examine the causes and consequences of such violence as well as potential policy solutions (Bekoe 2012; Claes 2017; Kovacs & Bjarnesen 2018). The purpose of this section is to identify and summarize the major findings of this literature. The literature is organized according to each study's contributions to the understanding of electoral violence. The following two sections consider definitions and key aspects of electoral violence. These are followed by a section reviewing the frequency of electoral violence. Section V reviews the literature on the causes of electoral violence. This section is divided into five broad categories of explanations: 1) institutional causes; 2) structural causes; 3) pre-existing conflicts; 4) election-specific/proximate causes; 5) international causes. The categories should not be considered mutually exclusive, as many studies show that electoral violence can have multiple causes. A section on the consequences of election violence then follows. Section VII summarizes the existing work on best practices among practitioners on the prevention of electoral violence. The cross-national research on prevention is relatively small in comparison to the research on the causes of electoral violence, but a few studies do exist.

Summary of findings in the literature:

- The existing literature highlights the importance of patronage and clientelism in increasing the risks of electoral violence. In political systems in which formal political institutions are superseded by informal relationships based on the exchange of resources and political loyalty, electoral violence is more likely.
- Weakness of electoral management bodies (EMBs) is identified in several studies as a cause of election violence. The existing evidence strongly suggests that strengthening EMBs can reduce the chances of electoral violence.
- The presence of pre-existing social conflicts, such as ongoing conflicts over land or other resources, seems to increase the likelihood of election violence.
- The presence of international election observation missions has mixed effects on electoral violence. Observers may decrease the likelihood of pre-election violence, but they may increase the likelihood of post-election violence if they expose attempted election rigging.
- A growing number of recent studies find significant differences in how men and women experience election violence. Despite this, most programs in the field do not explicitly address these differences.

- Very little research currently exists on the effectiveness of election violence prevention strategies beyond the general finding that strengthening electoral management bodies decreases the likelihood of violence.

II. Defining and conceptualizing electoral violence

Defining electoral violence is a key component of developing appropriate policy responses. However, widespread agreement on a clear definition has proven relatively challenging. Broadly speaking, electoral violence can be grouped within one of two more common fields of political analysis (Höglund 2009). First, electoral violence can be thought of as a subset of political violence and thus conceptually similar to communal violence, rebellion, and civil war. Alternatively, electoral violence can be thought of as a type of election malfeasance, and therefore more similar to election rigging, vote-buying, and other forms of electoral fraud. Violence is then one element of the “menu of manipulation” that can be used to manipulate election results (Schedler 2002). As discussed further below, how one conceptualizes electoral violence matters for designing policy interventions. If electoral violence is thought of as similar to other kinds of communal violence, interventions that focus on grassroots peacemaking and local community empowerment may be suitable. If electoral violence is thought of as a type of election fraud, policies aimed at improving the legitimacy of elections and the credibility of electoral management bodies may be more appropriate (Birch & Muchlinski forthcoming).

Electoral violence might be thought of as a type of political violence that is defined by four criteria: 1) the motive of the violence, 2) the timing of the violence, 3) the actors perpetrating the violence, and 4) the targets of the violence (Höglund 2009). In terms of motivation, violence is usually intended to influence the outcome of an election. The specific type of violence employed can take a variety of forms, but it is temporally close to election day. The perpetrators of violence are generally actors who have a vested interest in the election outcome, such as members of the state security apparatus (police, military, etc.), militias that are loyal to particular parties, and rank-and-file party supporters. For the purposes of this report, electoral violence can be “understood as coercive force, directed towards electoral actors and/or objects, that occurs in the context of electoral competition... [It] can occur before, during or after elections and it can target a variety of actors, including candidates, activists, poll workers, election observers, journalists and voters” (Birch & Muchlinski forthcoming, 2).

Importantly, most understandings of “coercive force” place their emphasis on clearly observable acts of physical violence. However, both scholars and practitioners should acknowledge that a perceived threat of violence, even without its manifestation in the form of observable violence, can be enough to coerce voters into compliance. The case of Liberia’s presidential election in 1997 serves as a useful example. Warlord Charles Taylor was able to win the presidential election handily and without the use of much overt physical violence. He had, however, used the implicit campaign message that if he did not win, he would restart Liberia’s civil war (Harris 1999). Thus, even when obvious types of physical violence are absent, the

perception of a high risk of electoral violence may be enough to influence political behavior.

Most studies of electoral violence also examine violence between actors who are competing in the election. However, Mehler (2007) identifies another type of election violence that differs in its motive. This is where violence is intended “to prevent the elections from being held under the existing rules” rather than to directly influence the outcome (Mehler 2007, 210). In this sense, violence is used not to influence the outcome of the election but to spoil the election process itself. Those promoting violence may not stand a chance of emerging victorious or may not be contesting the election at all. The 1996 election in Sierra Leone serves as an illustrative case. The election campaign then was conducted against the backdrop of an ongoing civil war between the government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). In an effort to delegitimize the election, which it was not contesting, the RUF perpetrated several acts of severe violence against the civilian population prior to the election. This was intended to intimidate voters into staying away from the polls (Fischer 2002). While this type of violence is directly related to the electoral contest, it is conceptually different than violence between competing political parties and their supporters. Scholars who measure electoral violence cross-nationally have made different decisions as to whether they include this violence in their analyses of electoral violence. From the perspective of practitioners, this kind of spoiler violence requires very different policies to confront its causes.

Importantly, many current definitions do not explicitly consider the importance of gender. A growing number of studies argue that this is a mistake, as it excludes several important aspects of electoral violence. An understanding of electoral violence that takes gender seriously thus suggests that researchers and practitioners should look beyond those public acts of physical violence in close proximity to an election. Section III considers the gendered nature of electoral violence in more detail, in particular the ways in which women are victimized differently than men.

III. Key dimensions of electoral violence

Disaggregating electoral violence into particular dimensions can help researchers more easily understand underlying causes and identify the most appropriate policy solutions. Existing studies suggest that there are at least four key dimensions that should be examined more closely: 1) the severity of violence, 2) the timing of violence, 3) the perpetrators of violence, and 4) the victims of violence.

Severity of violence

Violence severity can be conceptualized in several ways, and researchers have developed various coding schemes to designate violence as being more or less severe. For example, Straus and Taylor (2012, 21-22) divide violence into three levels of severity. At the lower end, violence is defined by security forces breaking up rallies, party supporters brawling in the streets, confiscation of opposition newspapers, candidate disqualifications, and limited short-term arrests

of political opponents. A second level of violence is defined by high-level assassinations and targeted murders combined with long-term arrests of party leaders, the consistent use of violent intimidation and harassment, and the use of torture. At the highest level of severity, violence is a highly violent campaign with generalized violence, meaning repeated, widespread physical attacks leading to a substantial number of deaths. Other studies that measure severity consider the number of violent events around an election as documented by newspapers and other popular press coverage, with a larger number of events indicating greater severity (Goldsmith 2015). This type of event data can be further broken down by the length of the event, the extent of physical damage, and whether the event resulted in any fatalities.

Mochtak (2017, 18-20) also organizes types of election violence by severity, but argues in favor of further disaggregating violence severity by 1) the salience of short-term damage, and 2) the extent of coordination among violence actors. At the lower ends of both damage and coordination, electoral violence can be defined as “a noisy, demonstrative, or coercive action by individuals or groups of people that interferes with, or disrupts, the proceedings of an election cycle. An incident is a relatively short-lived event that involves violence and triggers limited official response.” At the higher ends of damage and coordination, electoral violence can be thought of “as an outbreak of collective violence including implicit or explicit use of extensive force of great intensity in relation to the organization of an election. Usually it is accompanied by intimidation and coercion, which together may result in physical damage of persons or property or the immediate fear that such would occur.” This conceptualization has the potential benefit of adding a dimension of organization and planning to the severity of the violence rather than just the observed damage or physical harm. Burchard (2015) similarly argues that election violence should be disaggregated between “incidental” and “strategic” violence, where strategic violence is deliberately planned and orchestrated by political elites.

Timing of violence

With regards to the timing of electoral violence, violence can happen before or after an election. However, the motivations behind each are often very different. Pre-election violence is often intended to influence voting behavior, either through discouraging voters from turning out or coercing them into supporting particular candidates. Post-election violence is often for the purpose of protesting an election result or repressing protests by supporters of the losing party. Empirical studies show that pre- and post-vote violence do tend to display different dynamics. Straus and Taylor (2012) find that in sub-Saharan Africa, most election violence has taken place prior to elections and has generally been perpetrated by incumbent governments. However, post election violence is more likely to include opposition supporters as perpetrators and is likely to be much more severe. In their study of electoral violence in Indonesia, Harish and Toha (forthcoming) find that pre-election violence is focused in those regions that have a history of separatist movements, whereas post-election violence is focused in areas that have prior ethno-communal conflict.

This suggests that addressing pre-election and post-election violence may require distinct policy solutions. As discussed more below, some studies suggest that pre-vote violence can be reduced with the presence of election monitoring missions. However, some studies also argue that the presence of monitors may actually increase the likelihood of post-election violence when there are accusations of electoral fraud.

Perpetrators of violence

Understanding who perpetrates violence and why is a critical dimension of electoral violence. Collier and Vicente (2012) argue that violence becomes attractive to incumbents when they are no longer able to afford to buy the necessary votes to remain in power. Thus, violence is actually a strategy of a weakened, cash-strapped government. Similarly, violence used by members of the opposition, at least in the pre-election period, is also a sign of weakness, suggesting that it cannot match the incumbency advantage of the government and must rely on a strategy akin to terrorism. This argument is backed up by some notable cases, such as the 2007 election in Nigeria. However, several other studies suggest that election violence is not just a strategy of the weak. Straus and Taylor (2012) find that most election violence in Africa has been perpetrated by incumbent governments and their supporters, even when those incumbents are relatively strong. This includes regimes such as Equatorial Guinea and Sudan, which enjoy considerable rents from oil revenue and can easily outspend their opponents. Opposition supporters do become more likely to be perpetrators of violence in the post-election period, though post-election violence is still more likely to involve incumbents than members of the opposition.

The presence of different perpetrators of violence in different scenarios likely requires very different solutions. For example, where violence is relatively unorganized and consists of brawls between partisan supporters in the streets, political party cooperation with civil society organizations and law enforcement may be the most effective approach. Where violence is largely perpetrated by members of the security forces against opponents of the regime, this is unlikely to be successful.

Victims of violence

Electoral violence is not experienced equally by all victims. Violence can be targeted at either voters or at politicians themselves, and each has very different means to deal with the threat of violence (Harish & Toha forthcoming). The existing evidence also suggests that certain demographic groups are more prone to certain types of electoral violence. In their study of electoral violence in Sri Lanka, Höglund and Piyaarathne (2009, 296) found that “activists from the lower classes were victims of more serious violence than the local elites, pointing to socio-economic class as important in explaining the different types of violence experienced. It was the people who were active in politics but with a fairly weak socio-economic background that bore the main brunt of arson and physical attacks, regardless of which party they belonged to.”

A growing number of studies also look at the gendered nature of election violence and

argue that women's experiences with electoral violence are very different from those of men. For example, male-oriented and non-gendered understandings of electoral violence often do not include sexist campaign rhetoric that is designed to intimidate and silence female candidates (Bardall 2011). Gendered targeting can also reach levels of physical violence. In a USAID report on women's political empowerment in Kenya, Tripp et al. (2014, 17) find that "perhaps the factor that has the most influence on women's political leadership is the extensive threats of violence and actual violence experienced by women political aspirants as well as leaders... Virtually every woman politician interviewed for this report mentioned a personal experience with violence — against not only herself, but also family members and supporters. Women had to contend with intimidation, destruction of property and verbal abuse, including language specifically aimed at insulting women." Standard definitions further neglect intimate violence in the home, where women may face the implicit or explicit threat of violence from members of their own household if they are politically active or do not support the political choices of their families. Many definitions also do not explicitly consider sexual violence, which often goes either unreported or is not considered politically motivated (Bardall 2011).

Bardall (2011) also finds that even when researchers use more conventional definitions of electoral violence, there are gender dynamics that must be understood. As women's roles in politics have become more diversified and more prominent over time, the likelihood that women will become the targets of violence has also tended to increase (Ballington et al. 2017). However, violence experienced by women is systematically different from that experienced by men. Using data from electoral violence in six countries, Bardall (2011) finds that women are considerably more likely to be victims of psychological abuse, intimidation, and verbal harassment than other forms of violence. They are also more likely to be victims of this type of abuse than men.

Bardall (2015, 5-6) proposes the following definition of electoral violence to incorporate the gendered dynamics of electoral violence: "Electoral violence is a means of controlling and/or oppressing an individual or group's right to free participation in an electoral event through the use of emotional, social or economic force, coercion or pressure, as well as physical and sexual harm. Occurring from the date of voter registration to the date of inauguration of a new government, election violence may take place in public or in private, including in the family, the general community, online and via media, or be perpetrated or condoned by the state." Unfortunately, as much of this violence is not easily observed by those not directly involved, most data sources of election violence rely on non-gendered definitions.

IV. Frequency of electoral violence

There are four main databases that scholars tend to use to examine electoral violence cross-nationally. They each take different approaches to conceptualizing and measuring electoral violence. One of the most commonly used data sources for studies on elections is the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) project (Hafner Burton et al. 2013). This project keeps detailed data on national elections across the world since 1960, making use of

newspaper articles, news wire reports, and election handbooks. With regards to violence, each election is coded according to questions, such as, “Is there evidence that the government harassed the opposition?” “Were there riots and protests after the election? If yes, did the government use violence against the demonstrators?” and “Was there significant violence involving civilian deaths immediately before, during, or after the election?”

Figure 1 below illustrates the frequency of violent elections over the timeframe of the dataset. Hafner-Burton et al. (2014) find that about 30 percent of elections were characterized by pre-election violence and about 7 percent of elections were characterized by post-election violence. Figure 2 shows the NELDA data broken up by region (Norris 2012). Interestingly, the data suggests that despite violent elections in sub-Saharan Africa being given frequent media and scholarly attention, it is actually elections in South Asia and Southeast Asia that seem most prone to violence.

Figure 1: Frequency of election violence using NELDA

(Source: Hafner-Burton et al. 2014)

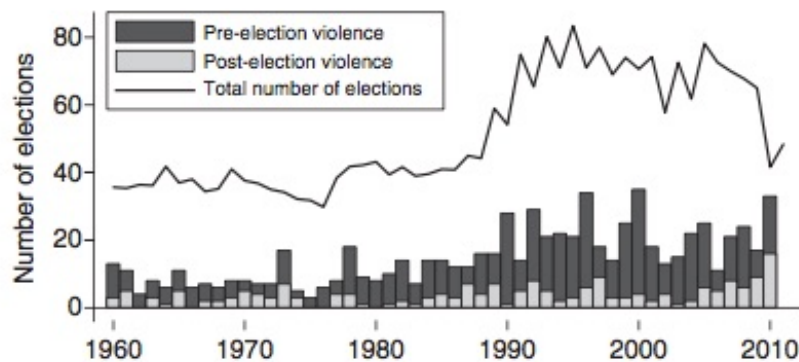
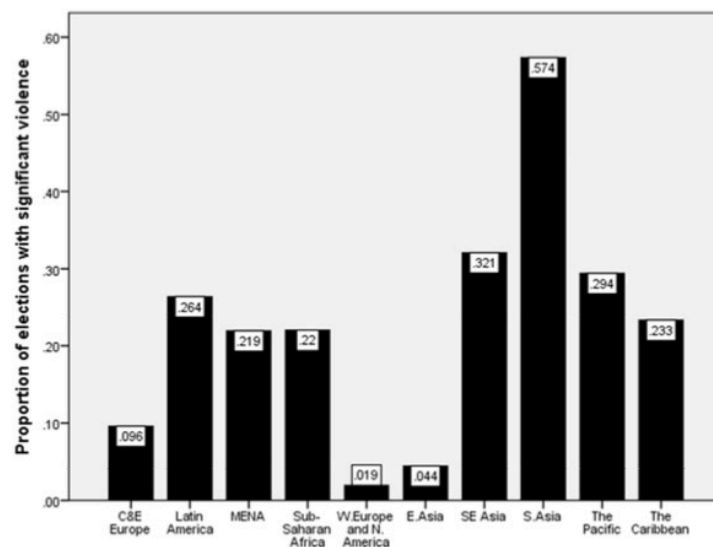


Figure 2: Regional breakdown of electoral violence using NELDA

(Source: Norris 2012)



A second cross-national database used by scholars is the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD).¹ This is an event dataset that tracks newswire-reported violence in Africa and Latin America from 1990-2015. The data is more limited than NELDA in its regional and temporal coverage, but it offers a much more fine-grained coding of political violence, including who the perpetrators and victims are, what the causes of the violence are, and how severe the violence is.

A dataset that covers election violence only in sub-Saharan Africa is the African Electoral Violence Database (AEVD) (Straus & Taylor 2012). Like NELDA, the AEVD uses national elections as the unit of analysis, but it also offers a more detailed look at the characteristics of election violence, including main perpetrators, the timing of violence, and its level of severity.

Finally, the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) database tracks the quality of democracy across the world from 1990. Electoral violence is measured by asking country experts questions such as, “In this national election, were opposition candidates/parties/ campaign workers subjected to repression, intimidation, violence, or harassment by the government, the ruling party, or their agents?” and “In this national election, was the campaign period, election day and post-election process free from other types of violence related to the conduct of the election and the campaigns (but not conducted by the government, the ruling party, or their agents)?” Answers can vary on a five-point scale depending on severity (Van Ham & Lindberg 2015).

V. Causes of electoral violence

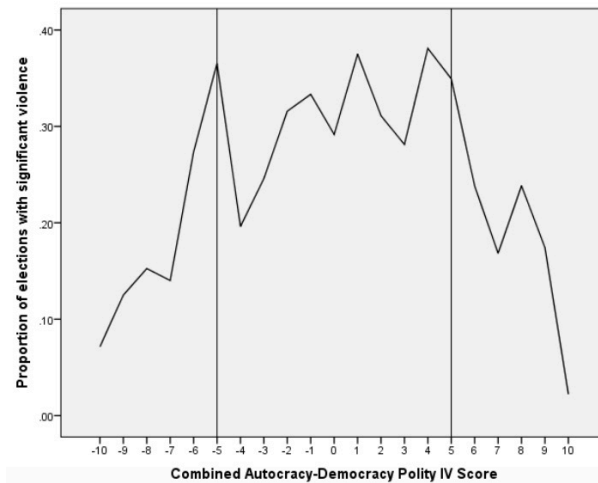
Institutional causes

Political institutions can be broadly thought of as the “rules of the game,” or those rules and norms that guide political behavior. At a very basic level, a difference can be drawn between democratic and authoritarian political institutions. Electoral violence could be thought of as indicative of how institutionalized democratic practice actually is, with more strongly democratic countries witnessing less violence. However, the existing literature shows that there is no simple correlation between the strength of democracy and the likelihood of electoral violence. In fact, Norris (2013) finds evidence of an inverted U-shaped pattern (Figure 3). In both consolidated democracies and consolidated authoritarian regimes, electoral violence is less likely to occur than it is in the middle category of hybrid regimes. Thus, in the most stable authoritarian regimes, even those that hold elections, rulers seem able to stifle any meaningful political challengers well in advance of an election. If multiparty elections are held, incumbent governments will likely be confident of victory without resorting to violence. In consolidated democracies, as one might expect, most political behavior is channeled through peaceful means, with losers willing to accept defeat at the polls.

¹ <https://www.strausscenter.org/scad.html>

Figure 3: Rates of election violence vs. democracy score

(Source: Norris 2012)



Norris (2013) argues that where hybrid regimes critically differ from consolidated democracies is in their ability to handle accusations of electoral fraud and other election irregularities. In consolidated democracies, “public disaffection with any perceived electoral malpractices will normally be channeled through peaceful demonstrations, mass boycotts, and lawful political strikes. Political leaders are more likely to accept the outcome of electoral defeat, refraining from coercive pressures, in part because they accept the legitimacy of the rules of the game, and in part because of institutional checks and balances, limiting executive power” (Norris 2013, 14). However, the lack of public trust in the legitimacy of political institutions in hybrid regimes, and in particular a lack of trust in electoral management bodies, means that political actors may have few avenues to pursue claims of election malfeasance peacefully. Under these circumstances, even minor election irregularities can be perceived as attempts to rig the outcome, making the aggrieved parties feel justified in resorting to violence.

A well-established literature in political science also shows that within multiparty regimes, different types of electoral laws can have important effects on political behavior. A broad distinction is generally drawn between majoritarian electoral laws and proportion representation (PR) laws. In majoritarian systems such as the United Kingdom and the United States, members of the legislature are picked from single-member districts in which the candidate who garners the most votes is awarded the legislative seat. Voters who support losing candidates are not given political representation in the legislature, and minority parties that are unable to form a plurality or majority in any constituency are not awarded any seats. This can mean that smaller political parties and other minority interest groups are excluded from legislative policy making. In PR systems on the other hand, the partisan makeup of the legislature largely reflects the proportion of votes won by each party among the electorate. In these systems, smaller parties are often able to win at least some representation at the national level, giving them a voice on the national political stage.

In support of this, Fischer et al. (2015) suggest that one reason South Africa has seen decreasing amounts of electoral violence since 1994 is because of its PR voting system, which allows for the presence of minority parties in the legislature despite the dominance of the African National Congress. Using cross-national data from African countries, Fjelde and Höglund (2016) suggest that since 1990, electoral violence has been more common in those countries that employ majoritarian electoral rules. The authors argue that “the winner-takes-all dynamic and the high political premium awarded to the largest party under majoritarian rules imply that the electoral stakes are higher than they are under PR systems, where electoral outcomes tend to disperse the nodes of political power across a broader range of groups” (Fjelde & Höglund 2016, 301). In other words, because majoritarian electoral laws have the potential to exclude large minorities from positions of political power, the costs of losing in such systems are much higher, potentially causing a greater willingness to use violence to secure seats. The tendency for majoritarian electoral rules to exclude large ethnic minorities may be particularly problematic. Where “political exclusion follows ethnic lines, exclusion is particularly likely to reinforce the development of grievances and encourage political mobilization” (Fjelde & Höglund 2016, 304). This can potentially reinforce ethnic voting and therefore increase the incentives for politicians to base their campaigns around exclusionary ethnic rhetoric.

Reilly (2002) argues that various types of ‘preferential voting’ systems can help mitigate conflict where election violence is based around ethnic cleavages. These are systems where voters cast ballots on which they rank-order their preferences for party or candidate, depending on the system. These are often called alternative vote (AV) or single-transferable vote systems. In many of these systems, politicians will need to rely on the votes from those voters who may not have chosen them as a first-choice candidate, but did choose them as a second or third-choice candidate. The idea is that this incentivizes politicians to make appeals outside of their own ethnic groups rather than simply attempting to maximize turnout among their own ethnic groups. Reilly (2002) suggests that preferential voting has reduced violence in countries such as Northern Ireland, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea. Burchard (2015) similarly argues that political systems in Africa that require candidates to build support outside of their own strongholds through majorities rather than simple pluralities may be less prone to high levels violence. When only simple pluralities are required, candidates may be able to win with relatively small vote shares, and the benefits of perpetrating election violence may outweigh the costs associated with alienating other candidates’ supporters.

Beyond voting laws, Kraetzschmar and Cavatorta (2010) argue that the laws designating powers to the legislature over the presidency matter for electoral violence. They suggest that where parliaments have the legal authority to check the power of the executive, that executive has larger incentives to use violence to ensure a sizable majority. Egypt under Hosni Mubarak and the National Democratic Party (NDP) serves as a useful example. In Egypt at the time, the parliament was “constitutionally endowed with significant legislative and oversight powers which, if left unchecked, could seriously endanger the foundations of authoritarian rule” (Kraetzschmar &

Cavatorta 2010, 335). Mubarak thus had no qualms about employing violence to ensure that the NDP's majority in parliament was never seriously threatened.

Perhaps more important than the formal laws is the extent to which the formal laws are circumscribed by informal patron-client networks. These informal reciprocal relationships where political loyalty is exchanged for financial benefits can increase the rewards associated with political power considerably (Mares & Young 2016). The hybrid regimes identified by Norris (2012) often operate around a logic of clientelism, and formal democratic institutions, although allowing for multiparty competition, can be circumscribed via private arrangements between political elites.

Indeed, most studies of electoral violence place some emphasis on the importance of clientelism in encouraging violence. Taylor et al. (2017) suggest that election violence has been more likely in African elections in which an incumbent candidate is running for reelection. This is because participating in election violence is a potentially risky proposition for members of the security services and other regime supporters, given the possibility of domestic and international condemnation or prosecution. However, if the incumbent has a proven track record of delivering patronage to his or her supporters, then subordinates are more willing to assume those risks. While Fjelde and Höglund (2016) focus on majoritarian electoral institutions, much of the logic of their argument is based on the importance of clientelism, as majoritarian electoral laws do not just keep sizable minorities out of political office. They eliminate access to the patronage goods that come from winning political power, and thus "electoral defeat implies not only political marginalization, but is also perceived to have devastating economic consequences for those involved both at the elite and constituency level" (Fjelde & Höglund 2016, 6).

Arriola and Johnson (2012) offer a somewhat different perspective on the relationship between patronage and electoral violence. They argue that a stable set of patronage networks should inhibit the outbreak of violence because a "patronage system enables political and economic elites to engage in mutually beneficial transactions that reduce the incentives for coercive tactics in political competition... Electoral violence is unlikely to erupt in unconsolidated democracies where corruption, the everyday manifestation of patronage politics, can satisfy the interests of elites who otherwise have the capacity to organize violence in pursuit of those interests" (Arriola & Johnson 2012, 3). In this analysis, clientelism is not so much thought of as a cause of electoral violence but rather one means by which incumbents can actually preclude anti-government violence. Rather, it is the breakdown of stable clientelistic relationships through either a regime lacking the necessary patronage resources or institutional reforms that exclude certain elites from enjoying access to patronage that are thought of as causes of violence. One implication of this analysis is that the outbreak of electoral violence should not necessarily be seen as a reversion away from democracy back to authoritarianism. Violence may in fact be indicative of a weakening of the patronage networks that maintained a previously stable authoritarian regime. However, even in this framework, violence can still be thought of as incentivized by the economic benefits of winning political power.

Structural causes

Structural factors can be understood as those broader social and economic conditions that influence political life. For example, the level of income of a society may matter for rates of political violence, and existing scholarship suggests that poorer countries are more prone to civil wars. Indeed, case study analysis suggests developing countries in Africa and Asia do seem to be more prone to election violence. However, the regression results presented by Hafner-Burton et al. (2014) suggest that income levels do not reliably predict rates of election violence. Similarly, Taylor et al. (2017) do not find any effect of levels of income within sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, wealthier countries such as South Africa and Equatorial Guinea have been prone to high levels of electoral violence whereas poorer countries such as Ghana and Benin have not (Laakso 2007).

Ethnic diversity may also matter for electoral violence, given the clear ethnic dynamics that have come into play in several well-known cases of high violence, such as Kenya, India, and Nigeria. There is some evidence that competitive elections in developing countries tend to reinforce ethnic boundaries. For example, Eifert et al. (2010) analyze survey data from African countries and find that respondents are more likely to self-identify in ethnic terms the closer they are surveyed to an election. The authors argue that this is due to the tendency for politicians to prime voters around ethnic identities. Wilkinson (2004) argues that in India, at times politicians actually allow and even encourage ethnic riots to break out between Hindus and Muslims as a way of generating support based on ethnicity rather than some other ideological platform.

However, ethnic diversity on its own should not be considered a cause of electoral violence. Even when ethnic identities are salient during elections through the presence of ethnic parties or ethnic bloc voting, violence is not an inevitable outcome. When ethnic diversity is combined with a political system dominated by patron-client relationships and a longer history of social conflict between ethnic groups, violence becomes considerably more likely. This has more to do with the perception that winning political power means access to patronage goods and other resources for the co-ethnics of those in power.

One of the means by which this can manifest itself is through the government's ability to grant land rights to some ethnic groups and deny them to others. This is a form of patronage that several scholars have noted is related to electoral violence, as several ongoing social conflicts are at least partly rooted in perceptions of unequal or unfair land rights. This is noted by multiple studies of election violence in Kenya, where the post-independence period has been marked by several land settlement schemes that have favored some ethnic groups over others (Klaus & Mitchell 2015). Issues of access to land for certain ethnic groups are also noted in studies of election violence in Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe (Boone & Kriger 2012).

Pre-existing conflicts

Several studies argue that pre-existing conflicts will increase the likelihood of electoral violence, given the tendency of political parties and candidates to adopt the grievances of particular communities into their campaigns. This is closely related to the above discussion of

ethnicity and patronage. Several countries that are plagued by political violence on a regular basis, such as Nigeria, Kenya, and India, are also prone to election violence. Using the SCAD data, Taylor et al. (2017) suggest that pre-existing conflicts do increase the chances of election violence. Also using the SCAD data, Salehyan and Linebarger (2015) find that the months surrounding elections in Africa are indeed characterized by both an increase in the number of violent events and an increase in the number of conflict deaths when compared to months not near an election. Harish and Little (2017) find that political violence in Africa peaks around elections, although importantly they note that this violence may be substituting for social violence during other times of the election cycle, and so it should not necessarily be concluded that holding elections causes an increase in violence.

Given the apparent links between pre-existing conflict and election violence, it would seem intuitive for elections held either during or immediately after the end of a civil war to be more prone to violence. The presence of weapons, unemployed young men, and politicians familiar with employing violence could potentially increase the likelihood of violence. Some notable cases of elections held in the context of civil war have proven to be highly violent affairs. For example, Angola's 1992 elections resulted in the losing candidate rejecting the results and reverting to violent rebellion. Sierra Leone's 1996 election saw severe violence against the civilian population by rebel soldiers. The disputed 2011 elections in Cote d'Ivoire led to the resumption of the civil war and the arrest of the sitting president. Yet despite these cases, the cross-national evidence does not suggest that civil wars play a significant role in levels of election violence. Salehyan and Linebarger (2015) do not find that African elections held in the midst of an ongoing civil war or elections held in the post-war period are particularly violent. Taylor et al. (2017) also find no effect for ongoing civil wars or post-civil war elections in increasing the risk of election violence. From a policy standpoint, this suggests that postponing elections due to an ongoing or recently completed civil war may be without justification if the immediate concern is the likelihood of electoral violence.

Election-specific/proximate causes

Several studies suggest that certain elections may be more prone to violence because of circumstances that are particular to that election rather than features of the society or the regime. These are factors that can potentially change from election to election over the course of the same regime. For example, elections may be more likely to turn violent when they are more competitive. Hafner-Burton et al. (2014) find that when an incumbent faces a relatively strong challenger and thus the real possibility of being unseated, the incumbent is more likely to use violence. Identifying when a challenger is strong enough to defeat an incumbent is difficult, and using actual election results raises issues with endogeneity (i.e., election violence is likely to

influence the results of an election).² The authors therefore rely on information from pre-election polls and public statements made by the incumbent regarding his or her confidence of winning the election. The effect is contingent on the institutional constraints limiting the incumbent's strategies but is present both before and after an election. The authors argue that the evolution of electoral violence in Zimbabwe illustrates the argument. As Robert Mugabe faced increasing pressure from the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and its presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai, he became much more willing to employ violence against members of the MDC and its supporters.

In their analysis of African elections, Taylor et al. (2017) argue that when an incumbent presidential candidate is running in the election, the likelihood of election violence increases. Again, this effect is largely due to the clientelistic nature of most African countries, but the mechanism suggests that certain elections even in electoral-violence prone countries may be less likely to experience high levels of violence when there is no incumbent candidate in the election. The authors suggest that this can offer some explanation of patterns of violence in Kenya. Whereas elections in 1992, 1997, and 2007 were characterized by high levels of election violence, elections in 2002 and 2013, when the incumbent presidential candidate was not running for reelection, saw much lower levels of violence.

International causes

Several international variables may matter for predicting election violence. One of these is international aid aimed at strengthening democratic institutions. This includes resources given to political parties, civil society organizations, the media, and election officials. Von Borzyskowski (forthcoming) argues that technical assistance given to election officials is significant in reducing the chances of post-election violence. In particular, international aid that is used to strengthen electoral management bodies "can increase the capacity of the national election commission to reduce delays and technical difficulties in the counting and tabulation process; it also helps ensure that there are sufficient ballots, ink, and ballot boxes, delivered in time, so that voters have a chance to vote rather than being denied this opportunity and turned away at the polling station, often after hour long waits...When elections run smoothly, expectations are clear, and results are verified in a timely manner, this works against rumors and speculation of result tampering which might otherwise arise in the post-election period" (von Borzyskowski forthcoming, 51).

Another important factor is the presence of international election monitors. International election observation missions have become increasingly common in newer democracies since 1990. Incumbent governments have several reasons to allow monitors to observe elections, and observer missions may positively contribute to the conduct of an election. Von Borzyskowski (forthcoming) argues that international observers can lower the chances of pre-election violence

² Salehyan and Linebarger (2015) do examine the effect of election competitiveness using election returns and argue that more competitive African elections are associated with higher levels of violence.

by increasing scrutiny and accountability over those who might otherwise perpetrate violence. Smidt (2016) finds that the presence of international election observers lowers the level of government-sponsored post-election violence, at least in the absence of obvious electoral fraud.

On the other hand, governments may permit observers to oversee an election but employ violence and other intimidation tactics well in advance of the mission's arrival in country. Governments may also continue to engage in various forms of election manipulation even in the presence of monitors (Kelley 2010). Some studies suggest that when election fraud takes place and election monitors are present, those monitors may actually contribute to higher levels of violence. Daxecker (2012) finds that in African elections where international election observers identified serious irregularities with the conduct of an election, there was a significant increase in the likelihood of post-election violence. Her argument is that international observers lend credibility to opposition claims that an election result favoring the incumbent is fraudulent, increasing the likelihood of the opposition protesting the result. This subsequently leads to a violent crackdown by the incumbent. Smidt (2016) makes a similar argument, finding that international observers increase the likelihood of opposition-sponsored post-election violence, as "opposition groups may find that violence is the most effective communicative tool to catch observers' attention and to target an international audience" (Smidt 2016, 230). If the election is plagued by major fraud, incumbent governments become likely to engage in repression under the presence of observers, again likely over concerns of opposition protest: "In order to quell heightened opposition mobilization, governments may resort to more frequent and severe acts of repression" (Smidt 2016, 231). A similar argument is made by von Borzyskowski (forthcoming), although she argues that post-election violence only becomes more likely with observer missions when those observers are willing to publicly allege that an election result has been manipulated.

Also looking at elections in Africa, Salehyan and Linebarger (2015) show that elections with international observer missions are characterized by significantly more deaths than those without observer missions. They suggest that one possible mechanism behind this finding is that "there may be greater incentives to provoke violence as a way to draw international attention and discredit elections that a group does not think it can win" (Salehyan & Linebarger 2015, 40). Importantly, the authors also note the possible selection bias that could be partly responsible for this finding. International observer missions may be more likely to be drawn to elections in countries with a higher potential for violence, meaning that the causal link between the presence of election monitors and higher levels of violence might be questioned.³

Another important international factor is likelihood of international condemnation over the use of electoral violence. This is particularly a concern for incumbent governments, which may lose access to international aid or risk damaging diplomatic relationships if they stand accused of fomenting violence. Some regimes, however, can be reasonably confident that they will

³ Daxecker (2012) attempts to control for this effect in her study with the use of matching in her regression analyses. She still finds evidence that the presence of international observer missions leads to higher levels of post-election violence.

avoid any sanctions if their domestic political goals align with those of major international powers. Kraetzschmar and Cavatorta (2010) suggest that the United States' response to electoral violence abroad has indeed been guided by these considerations. They argue that the Egyptian government has turned to repressive strategies against the Muslim Brotherhood "because in this particular instance Cairo's domestic threat perceptions coincided with American security concerns over rising 'Islamist extremism' in the region, which meant that Egypt was unlikely to come under fire from Washington over the deployment of repressive force against the Brotherhood and its sympathizers" (Kraetzschmar & Cavatorta 2010, 333).

Finally, the risk of international legal punishment from bodies such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) may influence politicians' decisions regarding employing election violence. In the wake of post-election violence in Kenya in 2007-2008, the ICC indicted six individuals for their role in encouraging violence. Former president of Cote d'Ivoire Laurent Gbagbo has also been indicted over his role in post-election violence in 2011. However, the cases against several alleged perpetrators in Kenya ultimately collapsed, and the outcome in the Gbagbo case is unknown. Thus, whether or not the ICC will come to serve as an effective deterrent to perpetrating electoral violence remains unclear.

VI. Consequences of electoral violence

Electoral violence may have several consequences both for voters and the broader political system. The legal impunity often given to supporters of the incumbent government means that victims are not given any justice and violent regimes are able to remain in power without being sanctioned. In the case of Zimbabwe's 2008 elections, in which government supporters killed or injured hundreds of opposition supporters, an internationally-brokered power-sharing agreement led to an end to the violence but effectively kept President Robert Mugabe in power. Voters may also be scared away from future political participation and lose trust in political institutions. Politicians may choose not to run, and opposition parties may be unable to operate. Violence can potentially strengthen ethnic identities if ethnic cleavages played a role in shaping patterns of victimization. Violence may also create a norm of violent behavior in future elections. Indeed, Taylor et al. (2017) find that previous experience with pre-election violence is a good predictor of pre-election violence in later elections.

The existing research supports some of these conclusions but casts doubt on some others as well. With regards to voter turnout, Bratton (2008) finds that the use of electoral violence did indeed reduce rates of voter turnout in the 2007 Nigerian national elections. However, using cross-national data, Bekoe and Burchard (2017) find no significant effects of electoral violence on rates of voter turnout in sub-Saharan Africa more generally. The authors argue that while electoral violence can at times be used to suppress turnout, it has also been used to scare citizens into voting as well as punish particular constituencies for their vote choices in previous elections.

With regards to the political consequences for those competing in the election, it is generally assumed that when an incumbent government perpetrates election violence, its chances

of remaining in power will increase. Hafner-Burton et al. (2018) find that to some extent, this is true. Their study suggests that governments that perpetrate pre-election violence are significantly more likely to win an upcoming election. However, they also find that perpetrating such violence is often not without considerable costs. Pre-election violence by the incumbent also increases the chances of post-election protest by the opposition. When facing mass protests, incumbents are often forced to make considerable concessions, such as annulling the result of the election or even being forced from office. Employing violence is therefore a gamble for incumbent governments.

The tendency for social violence to peak around election time suggests that elections may have a way of sustaining and even increasing the intensity of existing conflicts. Gutierrez-Romero (2014) uses survey data in Kenya after the violence in 2007-2008 and argues that those individuals who directly encountered election violence are more likely to identify in ethnic terms and more likely to tolerate the future use of violence than those who did not directly experience violence. However, Ishyama et al. (2016) do not find that experiencing election violence strengthened ethnic identities for Kenyans after the 2007 elections.

VII. Best practices for electoral violence prevention (EVP)

The literature examining strategies for electoral violence prevention (EVP) is only in its infancy. Although numerous organizations undertake various programs aimed at violence prevention, only a few studies have systematically studied what works in terms of policy interventions. This is in part because of the difficulty of measuring the success of a particular strategy. As the literature on the causes of election violence shows, violence has many causes, and an outbreak of violence does not necessarily mean that intervention efforts failed; without them, violence may have been more severe. Similarly, the absence of violence does not necessarily mean that interventions were successful. Furthermore, accounting for all of the effects of simultaneous violence prevention programs in a given election cycle can be challenging. In some countries, where interventions are not closely coordinated, donors and practitioners may not even be aware of one another's programming. Still, some studies have looked at the efficacy of various types of EVP strategies.

In a field experiment in Nigeria, Collier and Vicente (2014) partnered with the NGO ActionAid to promote an anti-violence campaign prior to the 2007 elections. The primary slogan of the campaign was "No to political violence! Vote against violent politicians." The campaign was conducted by local NGO partners through town meetings and popular theatre in 24 randomly selected communities in six Nigerian states. The slogan was also written on T-shirts, caps, hijabs, leaflets, stickers, and posters in the treatment communities. Town hall meetings "were designed to minimise the collective action problem that impedes diminishing conflict at the local level. Popular theatre was based on the same script for all states (featuring one good and one bad politician, with the bad one instilling violent intimidation), and was designed to target youths (usually the ones providing labour for violent activities) and others (e.g. women) who were relatively difficult to attract to town meetings" (Collier & Vicente 2014, F332).

The authors find that exposure to the anti-violence campaign increased a sense of local empowerment to resist and counteract electoral violence. The treatment also reduced actual instances of election violence in the treatment communities as reported by local journalists. Using data from the same study, Fafchamps and Vicente (2013) find that there were both positive reinforcement and diffusion effects of the campaign. Reinforcement effects were evident in the increased effects on individuals' sense of empowerment if they regularly interacted with other individuals who had also been targeted by the campaign. Diffusion effects were measured by the effects on individuals who had not been directly targeted by the campaign but who regularly interacted with someone who had been targeted. These initially untargeted individuals also showed positive increases in a sense of empowerment regarding election violence.

Asunka et al. (forthcoming) find that deploying domestic election monitors to polling stations on election day reduces both the likelihood of electoral violence and rates of electoral fraud. Using a field experiment that randomized the assignment of observers to polling locations, the authors find that the presence of observers does reduce voter intimidation. However, the study also finds that to some extent, parties can modify violent strategies to avoid detection by observers. In competitive districts (districts outside of party strongholds), parties seem able to shift the use of election day violence to non-observed polling locations. This tactic can be partially mitigated with larger numbers of polling stations under observation. Where districts are highly saturated with observers, shifting violence to non-observed locations becomes less feasible and overall rates of violence decrease, even in competitive districts. This suggests that the most efficient means to reduce election day violence is to focus the presence of election observers at polling stations throughout competitive districts.

In one of the only cross-national studies of EVP strategies to date, Birch and Muchlinski (2017) distinguish between two broad types of EVP programs commonly undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): 1) programs that focus on the technical assistance of elections, and 2) programs that focus on attitude transformation. Programs focused on technical assistance mainly target their efforts at the key actors and institutions that oversee the election itself. The goal of technical assistance “is typically to increase the capacity of electoral actors – including electoral management body (EMB) and security agencies, but also civil society organizations, voters and other groups—to enable them to deliver a credible election whose outcome will be recognized as fair by winners and losers alike... The logic behind capacity building is that in under-developed and under-democratized settings, lapses in electoral procedures are often the result of poor logistical planning and lack of skills, but those who believe that they have been disadvantaged by such lapses almost invariably attribute to them a political motive” (Birch & Muchlinski 2017, 4). Thus, it is thought that increasing the likelihood that an election result will be widely viewed as legitimate will preclude the major political actors from resorting to violence.

The attitude transformation approach takes a much more grassroots approach to addressing election violence, targeting the community conflicts that may lie at the heart of

election violence. This approach “includes activities such as ‘peace messaging,’ that are designed to alter perceptions of the utility and viability of violence as an election strategy, as well as youth programmes that provide alternative activities for the youth who are often engaged as agents of violence. Attitude transformation also includes various pacting mechanisms (including roundtables, peace pledges and codes of conduct), dialogue fora and mediation that aim to build trust and provide dispute-resolution tools to elites” (Birch & Muchlinski 2017, 4).

The authors identify 99 elections between 2003-2015 that received electoral assistance from the UNDP. They find that UNDP assistance does seem to reduce the likelihood of electoral violence, although with each type of program having different effects on the actors in the election. The results suggest that technical assistance programs reduce the likelihood of nonstate-initiated violence whereas attitude-changing programs reduce the likelihood of state-initiated violence. The authors argue that because technical assistance is likely to strengthen public confidence in critical institutions such as electoral management bodies, nonstate actors will be more likely to view elections as legitimate. The effect of attitude transformation programs on state actors can potentially be explained by these programs’ ability to “bind state actors morally to peaceful strategies...Negotiation fora may also provide opportunities for behind-the-scenes deals that lead to cooptation of opposition elites or enable such elites to press for key grievances to be addressed” (Birch & Muchlinski 2017, 12).

While the study makes a critical step in analyzing the efficacy of EVP programs using cross-national quantitative data, it has some limitations that should be considered. The dataset only considers UNDP programs, although other organizations and programs may have been present in countries under study. The program types are also not randomly assigned to the countries in the dataset, and thus estimating the quantitative effect of a particular program on the chances of election violence remains difficult.

More common than quantitative cross-national studies are country case studies that examine the multiple strategies employed in a given election. A recent United States Institute of Peace volume looks at programs across five countries to examine the success of different types of strategies. The volume offers some evidence that prevention strategies do indeed work in reducing violence. Notably, the study suggests that civil society programs seem to be limited in their efficacy, finding that “despite theoretically compelling logic, the measurable impact of citizen- or community-oriented instruments such as peace messaging, voter consultations, and even youth programming remains small or unclear” (Claes 2016, 198). The case studies in fact suggest that state-led programs such as security sector engagement and improving election administration and management may be the most effective means to reduce violence.

Other case studies argue that civil society organizations (CSOs) can initiate successful programs to limit election violence. CSOs can, for example, agree on acceptable codes of conduct during the election and bring together the candidates to support a “peace pledge” and publicly declare their support for a peaceful standard of conduct (Höglund & Jarstad 2010). CSOs can further participate in the education of local law enforcement and news media on respecting an

accepted code of conduct (Höglund & Jarstad 2010). Adebayo (2016) argues that training and agreement among media organizations for journalists on best practices for “conflict-sensitive reporting” can help reduce election violence. Perhaps one of the most effective practices CSOs can follow is to participate in the monitoring and reporting of election day activities, including documenting acts of election day violence and intimidation. Ghana’s Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) has shown itself to be a successful example of CSO-generated election monitoring since its inception in 2000 (Oduro 2012).

VIII. Avenues for future research

The literature review here shows that the field of election violence research has grown considerably in recent years. However, for practitioners to develop effective policy solutions, several questions require additional consideration. Little is known about the details of exactly why specific violence mitigation programs have been successful in certain contexts. Even less is known regarding how such programs can be transmitted to other countries. The exiting literature also says very little on why incumbent governments in some countries are more supportive of violence prevention efforts than are others or to what extent donor resources affect incentives to encourage or inhibit violence. The gendered nature of election violence has also only recently begun to influence field programs and scholarly studies and warrants considerably more attention. The next section examining interviews with practitioners in four countries offers insights into some of these questions, but continued research will be required to further refine the key lessons to be learned from violence prevention programs.

Part B. Strategies for the prevention of electoral violence

This section considers the best strategies for mitigating electoral violence based on original data collected from interviews with practitioners in four countries. The literature review shows that the existing research on strategies for mitigating violence is still in its infancy, and only one cross-national study could be found that based its findings on interviews with practitioners on their experiences implementing violence prevention programs in the field (Claes 2016).

The findings presented below contribute to this literature and offer lessons to both practitioners and donors. The section also offers an original typology of violence prevention strategies that were identified in the research. It is hoped that this typology will contribute to further identifying and adapting the most effective programs to meet challenges across different elections. Additional research will be needed to further identify why similar programs have varying levels of success in different elections. However, the points made below should offer some guidance in the growing research field of election violence prevention.

Types of violence prevention programs

The evidence suggests that several types of electoral violence prevention programs have the potential to successfully reduce the risks of violence. However, it should be noted that no single set of strategies exists that will prove effective across all countries. Different historical and institutional contexts require that programs be tailored to meet the needs of particular countries' circumstances. The findings offered in this section should be considered a set of lessons for both practitioners and donors looking to improve the efficacy of their programs based on the experiences of those in the countries included in the study.

Table 1 proposes a typology of electoral violence prevention strategies that have been encountered both in the literature review and field research. The typology suggests that electoral violence prevention strategies can be broken down along three dimensions: 1) whether the program is civil society-initiated or government-initiated; 2) whether the program is aimed at improving technical aspects of the election, aimed at promoting social peace, or aimed at closely engaging political parties and their candidates; and 3) whether a program is short term and focused around the time of an impending election or long-term and lasts across multiple election cycles. Ideally, a country that is prone to election violence would make use of several programs that cover each of the dimensions, although the design of the programs would need to be tailored to the particular needs of the country and resources available. As noted below, the categories are not rigid distinctions, and one intervention may fit into multiple categories depending how it has been designed and implemented.

The first dimension is focused on which stakeholder initiates a particular program. The major distinction is between whether civil society or the government initiates the program. It should be noted that often the most effective programs are characterized by cooperation between

the two, as both are critical stakeholders in the electoral process. For example, government-sponsored peace platforms and local peace committees have the potential to effectively coordinate CSO programs at the local level to avoid program redundancies. These platforms may be able to draw on the financial and material resources of the state if there is the political will to support them. For example, the Multiparty Liaison Committees in Malawi, although state-sponsored, have proven to be an effective platform to encourage collaboration between incumbent and opposition parties as well as CSOs. However, other programs will likely be much more effective if one or the other is the primary organizer. Necessary reforms of the electoral commission or police, for example, require considerable efforts by state actors. On the other hand, facilitating long-term inter-community dialogue may be better put in the hands of civil society actors that do not face accusations of being affiliated with any political party.

The second dimension considers the targets of an intervention and whether they are the organizations that organize the election, the communities that may be affected by election violence, or the political parties and candidates. The first two types of strategies—technical improvements and social peace building—correspond to the distinction drawn by Birch and Muchlinski (2017) in their own research, although they refer to the two types as “capacity-building strategies” and “attitude transforming strategies.” Regardless of the labels, the difference here is between strategies that attempt to strengthen those institutions that manage elections, such as the electoral commission and election observation teams, and those strategies that attempt to inhibit violence through grassroots stakeholder mediation, intercommunity dialogue, and engagement with potential perpetrators and victims of violence. Both types of programs offer strong justifications for being used in a potentially violent election. Indeed, the literature review demonstrates that violence can be caused by both weak election management institutions and local resource conflicts between rival groups. The two types of strategies are often related and may both be part of the portfolio of the same anti-violence campaign. For example, a civic education program may be used to both communicate the procedures and rules for voting and engage in peace messaging and stakeholder meetings in communities that are prone to violence. The typology presented here also considers those programs that engage the political parties and their candidates as the primary targets of an intervention as a third type. Most of these programs are intended to influence political party behavior during campaigns such that the likelihood of encouraging violence by supporters is decreased. This can involve strengthening and enforcing party codes of conduct or introducing hate speech laws to regulate campaign rhetoric. Again, these programs are not necessarily mutually exclusive with the first two. A program aimed at community peace building may include engagement with local party supporters, such as the local party youth wings, as a key component of its strategy. Indeed, the interviews for this study suggested that field programs were generally more successful when the political parties were engaged in some capacity.

Finally, whether programs are long-term or short-term—whether they last beyond the immediate election cycle—is an issue that was identified as critically important across interviews

in several countries. While certain programs such as the training of election monitors or civic education campaigns on campaign rules require shorter time frames that are focused close to the date of the election, other programs must be extended beyond the immediate election cycle to be successful. Unfortunately, the field research suggests that in many cases, programs that should be sustained in non-election years are initiated only with an impending election. For example, systematic police reforms that better train and equip police forces to handle demonstrations and protests without lethal force are often foregone in favor of short-term training courses that give police only limited training close to election day. Similarly, CSO programs that foster intercommunity dialogue in conflict-prone areas are often not given funding from donors until the election cycle begins, despite the presence of social conflict and considerable tension in non-election years.

**Table 1: Typology of programs
for the prevention of electoral violence**

	Civil society-initiated programs		Government-initiated programs	
Election technical assistance	<p><i>Shorter term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Independent domestic election monitors (NEWS, Sierra Leone; CODEO, Ghana). •Early warning system and mapping of hotspot areas (WANEP, Sierra Leone; CMEV, Sri Lanka). 	<p><i>Longer term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Journalist/media training on election violence-sensitive reporting (AFSC, Kenya & Sierra Leone). 	<p><i>Shorter term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inviting international election monitors (UN, EU, Carter Center, etc.). •Civic education of rules and processes for casting ballots and running for office. 	<p><i>Longer term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Strengthening election management body. •Constitutional change/reform of electoral laws (Kenya 2010). •Post-election dispute resolution mechanisms.
Social peace building	<p><i>Shorter term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Peace messaging during campaign (ActionAid, Sierra Leone & Nigeria; NICE, Malawi). •Civic education of rights, laws, and regulations regarding election (SEAG, Sierra Leone; NICE & MESN Malawi). 	<p><i>Longer term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Youth peace programming and education (PAMBIO, Kenya; Amani clubs, Kenya). •Fostering intercommunity dialogue (PeaceNet, Kenya) •Sensitization of gendered nature of electoral violence (VAWIE). 	<p><i>Shorter term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Training and stationing of law enforcement for election security (UNDP, Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone). •Establishing peace platforms and local peace committees for the election (MPLC, Malawi; <i>Uwiano</i>, Kenya). 	<p><i>Longer term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Broad ethnic integration and promotion of tolerance (NCIC & NSC, Kenya). •Land/resource conflict resolution (NLC, Kenya).
Political party engagement	<p><i>Shorter term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Authoring peace pledges for parties and candidates to sign (PAC, Malawi). •Provide support and resources for female candidates (WSR, Sierra Leone). •Involve political candidates and parties in field programs. 	<p><i>Longer term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Training for political parties on manifesto development and issue-based campaigning (CMD-Kenya). •Recruit youth party wing members in peace programs (ActionAid, Sierra Leone). 	<p><i>Shorter term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Establish enforceable “code of conduct” for parties (PPRC, Sierra Leone; MEC, Malawi). •Encourage parties’ participation in peace platforms and local committees (MPLC, Malawi; <i>Uwiano</i>, Kenya). 	<p><i>Longer term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hate speech monitoring, enforcement of hate speech laws, and public sensitization of acceptable political discourse (NCIC, Kenya).

Country case selection

Four countries are discussed in detail in the case studies that follow: Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone, and Sri Lanka. These countries were selected largely based on recommendations offered by individuals in the academic and donor communities. The author conducted original fieldwork in Kenya, Malawi, and Sierra Leone. Interviews with practitioners in Sri Lanka were conducted remotely with the help of research assistants rather than in person. Each country in the study has experienced electoral violence in recent elections. Importantly, the nature and level of electoral violence have varied both across countries and within countries over different election cycles. While this makes controlling for different variables difficult, the advantage for this study is that practitioners have considerable experience implementing programs to respond to several different scenarios of election violence. Furthermore, practitioners across the four countries have implemented a variety of violence prevention strategies. Enough variation in strategies exists across the four countries to fill in each of the categories in Table 1 with at least one example encountered during the fieldwork. There is also enough overlap in strategies to make explicit comparisons between similar programs used in different countries.

Methods

After reviewing the relevant literature for the cases under study, organizations in each country that have been involved in violence prevention programs in recent elections were identified. These included both civil society organizations and state agencies. Identification of these organizations was facilitated through AFSC's network of civil society partners as well as through discussions with several U.S.- and U.K.-based experts with experience working with field practitioners. Individuals with experience managing and participating in local programs were then targeted for semi-structured interviews during field research. Field research in each country lasted between one and two weeks.

Interviews generally lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. All participants were given an informed consent form to review before participating that asked permission to be included on an executive list of interview participants and permission to be audio recorded during their interview. Most participants consented to having their interviews audio recorded.

Participants were asked about the details of their participation in electoral violence prevention programs in the most recent or upcoming election in their countries. This included the goals of their programs, how successful they felt their interventions were, the biggest challenges they faced, and improvements they thought needed to be made in the overall programming environment. Participants were also asked about the ability of CSOs and state agencies to cooperate, the relationships between CSOs, and the relationships between donors and field partners. Participants were also asked to provide any available literature or reports on their programs.

Key findings

Several findings emerge from the case studies and fieldwork. These are discussed in greater detail in the following sections, but they are summarized below. The major findings are divided into those that are most relevant to field practitioners and those that are most relevant to donors. Importantly, there are limitations to any set of violence prevention programs regardless of how well-designed and well-implemented they are. Countries that are dominated by patronage politics, have weak electoral institutions, and have a history of violence are challenging environments in which to work. Still, the findings below should provide some lessons in the successful implementation of peace programs. Several of the findings show that solutions to election violence rely on shared participation by donors, civil society organizations, and domestic and international networks in ensuring successful policy interventions. Indeed, improved cooperation and collective investment among both domestic and international actors emerges as a key theme across several of the recommendations.

Key findings for practitioners:

- **Coordinating peace platform/consortium**—The field research showed that peace programs were more successful when they were implemented under the structure of a coordinated platform or consortium. This allowed CSOs and state agencies to avoid program redundancies and benefit from the lessons and information produced by one another's projects. In some cases, platforms were state-sponsored. In other cases, civil society groups formed independent consortiums. As discussed in the case studies, each type of coordinating platform presents unique challenges, and some platforms are more successful than others. However, peace programming clearly benefits from increased coordination among stakeholders, and practitioners should make concerted efforts to collaborate on shared platforms.
- **Incorporation of political parties and candidates**—Peace programs were generally more successful when they could closely involve the political parties and candidates in their interventions. While this is not entirely within the control of field practitioners—political elites may choose not to participate in peace programs for many reasons—when programs did engage political elites, interview participants felt that their programs had considerably more impact. When influential politicians are not part of peace programs, their campaign discourse and overall attitude to promoting peace seem relatively unaffected by the efforts of practitioners. Therefore, even if there is some resistance or lack of interest by political candidates, practitioners should make every effort to include political candidates as stakeholders in their programs.
- **International program learning**—Some of the CSOs in this study had implemented programs that had been previously used in other countries under slightly modified formats to meet local circumstances. They were therefore able to benefit from the lessons of implementation and apply them to their own programs. Where local practitioners were

part of an international network of related CSOs that had similar election violence prevention experience, they were able to draw on considerable preexisting resources to improve their own programs. For example, the Women's Situation Room (WSR) has proven to be a very adaptable program intended to limit violence against women. First used in Liberia's 2011 election, WSR has since been replicated in several elections in Africa. Practitioners in Sierra Leone's 2018 election have been able to benefit from the lessons of these previous uses of the program structure. This strongly suggests that successful investments in secure elections in one country can have positive spillover effects in other countries via transnational civil society networks.

- **Geographical incident mapping**—Practitioners could target their resources best when they had access to accurate, up-to-date information on violent events in their respective countries as well as information on hotspot areas most likely to experience various types of election violence. This was particularly true when practitioners all had access to the same data and reports through a shared early warning system. This proved to be particularly useful in Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, where the sharing of updated data facilitated effective programming among civil society groups working toward secure elections. Where resources are available, practitioners should invest in training violence monitors who can report on incidents of violence throughout the campaign and voting period to a central database.

Key findings for donors:

- **Program follow-up funds**—Multiple practitioners in each country stated that there was not enough funding available from donors for follow-up programs and the continuation of violence prevention programs after the election cycle ended. In some cases, practitioners were in fact required to spend their grant funds before the date of the election, or else return the remaining funds to their donors. Several interview participants noted that because their grants did not include funding for follow-up programs after the election, the long-term impact of their interventions was limited.
- **Long-term youth programming**—Practitioners also noted that more resources were needed for long-term programs that engaged those youths who were most at risk for perpetrating election violence. While several programs do target this demographic, most interview participants felt that programs did not start early enough and needed to include employment programs and skills training as soon as vulnerable individuals were identified. Much of this was due to the potential financial benefits of perpetrating violence. Several practitioners felt that more programs were needed to counteract the economic benefits that politicians can offer to those who perpetrate violence on their behalf.
- **Police reform**—One key commonality across all cases under study was the very limited success of police training to handle protests and demonstrations, as well as skirmishes

between supporters of rival parties. In all three countries in which fieldwork was conducted, some amount of donor funding was dedicated to police training prior to recent elections. However, most interview participants felt that this was considerably less than what was needed, and that longer-term reform of the police needed to be better supported. Indeed, in multiple countries in the study, the majority of fatalities during recent elections were in fact caused by the security services. However, interview participants generally felt that there was very little accountability or subsequent reform of policing practices. The findings suggest that donors should begin funding police reforms well in advance of an election. They also suggest that where possible, civil society practitioners should attempt to include the security services in their programs as key stakeholders. While CSOs may be limited in their ability to reform policing practices in the short term, the inclusion of the police in local programs can help establish a working relationship between peace practitioners and the security services.

Kenya

Country background

Shortly after independence in 1963, Kenya became a de facto one-party state under President Jomo Kenyatta and the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU). Although KANU initially represented the interests of several ethnic groups, Kenyatta's regime came to favor the interests of his own ethnic group, the Kikuyu, most prominently. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, Kikuyus came to dominate most senior government positions. With these political posts came access to lucrative commercial enterprises, giving those closest to Kenyatta immense political power and economic wealth (Branch 2011). Among those excluded from Kenyatta's inner circle was his former ally and the political leader of the Luo, Oginga Odinga. This exclusion, as well as the assassination of another prominent Luo politician, Tom Mboya, created a sense among many Luos that Kenyatta had exploited their political support for his own benefit only to abandon them after consolidating power (Branch 2011).

Ethnic Kikuyus also benefitted from the government's land settlement schemes across Kenya's most fertile farmland, much of it in the Rift Valley. However, much of this land was claimed as ancestral homeland by several of Kenya's pastoralist ethnic groups, such as the Kalenjin, Maasai, and Samburu. The settlement of Kikuyu farmers created local ethnic animosities based on competing claims over rightful ownership, with Kikuyus referred to as "outsiders" or "foreigners" by many pastoralists in the Rift Valley. These debates over rightful land ownership and resettlement in the Rift Valley continue to inform political debates today (Boone 2011).

After Kenyatta's death in 1978, Vice President Daniel arap Moi, a Kalenjin, became president. Moi ruled as a more dictatorial president, using both violence and patronage to balance the interests of Kenya's various ethnic groups to keep himself in power. By the early 1990s, facing increasing calls for liberalization at home and the loss of foreign economic assistance, parliament legalized opposition parties and permitted elections in 1992. Although opposition to Moi was initially united under the banner of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), opposition parties soon fractured, largely along ethnic lines. Since 1992, Kenya's elections have been largely characterized by candidates mobilizing voters around ethnicity, with certain powerful individuals emerging as the political "kingpins" of their respective ethnic communities (Elischer 2013).

Elections in both 1992 and 1997 saw very high levels of violence. Incumbent President Moi successfully won both elections in part by allowing members of those pastoralist ethnic groups in the Rift Valley who felt aggrieved by the Kikuyu to kill or expel Kikuyus and others from the ethnic groups of opposition candidates from disputed land. The Coast Province saw related violence, with Kikuyus and other pro-opposition groups killed and expelled (Branch 2011). Urban protests against the election results were met with violent responses by the security

services (Levitsky & Way 2010). This violence, as well as the continued use of state patronage, allowed Moi to remain in power until the end of his term limit in 2002.

The 2002 election was considerably more peaceful and saw opposition candidate Mwai Kibaki from the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) defeat Moi's handpicked successor, Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of Jomo Kenyatta. NARC was a multiethnic alliance of opposition parties aimed at unseating KANU. However, it fell apart soon after Kibaki assumed the presidency amid accusations of broken promises by Kibaki and claims that he favored his fellow Kikuyus in government appointments. Kibaki's attempt to pass a new constitution via referendum in 2005 was defeated largely because of the efforts of his former coalition members. The referendum campaign took on the characteristics of an election campaign, with Raila Odinga, the most prominent Luo politician and a former Kibaki ally, emerging as the most powerful voice in opposition. The campaign was characterized by ethnic hate speech from both sides and largely set the tone for the campaigns in 2007.

To challenge Kibaki for the presidency in 2007, Raila Odinga assembled a multiethnic alliance under the banner of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). William Ruto, the prominent Kalenjin politician, also ran as a parliamentary candidate under the ODM banner, as did several other candidates who came from ethnic groups with a contentious history with the Kikuyu. Kibaki and his remaining allies relied on a hastily assembled coalition under the banner of the Party of National Unity (PNU). Like the 2005 referendum, the 2007 campaign was characterized by the use of ethnic hate speech by candidates from both coalitions. Although the campaign period saw limited violence, the vote-tallying process proved hugely controversial. Immediate polling station results suggested that Odinga and ODM would emerge victorious. Yet when the Electoral Commission announced the result, it declared Kibaki the winner.

Protests by opposition supporters began immediately after Kibaki's apparent victory was announced. In several cases, these escalated into attacks against Kikuyus and members of other ethnic groups that were thought to have supported PNU. In areas with continuing land disputes, such as the Rift Valley, members of the Kalenjin, Maasai, and other pastoralist communities killed or expelled Kikuyus from farms and towns. Pro-opposition areas of Nairobi saw protests and riots that were met with violent police crackdowns. Pro-Kibaki militias were also organized to enact retributive violence against opposition supporters. The violence lasted several weeks and claimed more than 1,000 lives before a power sharing arrangement was reached. The international Criminal Court would ultimately indict six individuals, including both Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, for their alleged roles in provoking the violence.

The 2013 election took place after the enactment of a new constitution. Odinga again ran for president on the ODM ticket and faced Uhuru Kenyatta. Kenyatta agreed to an alliance with William Ruto, forming an "alliance of the accused," with each man facing ICC charges of having fomented violence against one another's co-ethnics in 2007-2008 (Lynch 2014). This so-called Jubilee coalition defeated Odinga, with Kenyatta becoming President and Ruto becoming deputy president. The election was relatively peaceful, although there were clashes between supporters of

rival parties and instances of violence and intimidation against female candidates (European Union 2014).

Background to the 2017 election

In 2017, Uhuru Kenyatta ran as the incumbent with William Ruto as his deputy under the banner of the Jubilee coalition. Raila Odinga again contested the presidency, this time with Kalonzo Musyoka as his running mate, under the name of the National Super Alliance (NASA). Fortunately, the campaigns were not characterized by the intensity of ethnic hate speech that has characterized previous elections, and pre-election violence was limited. However, the campaign period was surrounded by considerable tension due to accusations of attempted rigging by the opposition. These claims resulted in several public protests by opposition supporters against both the government and the Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC). Very worryingly, IEBC Information Communication Technology (ICT) manager Chris Msando was kidnapped, tortured, and murdered in July, without anyone being held responsible to date.

The August 8 election was conducted peacefully. However, delays in formally declaring poll results and a lack of transparency in the vote-tallying process created suspicion among opposition supporters (European Union 2017). When the IEBC declared Kenyatta the winner with 54.27% of the vote, the opposition immediately rejected the result and accused the government of manipulating the outcome. This led to several protests and violent responses by police. NASA filed a petition declaring that the election was not legitimate, and the Supreme Court of Kenya agreed with the opposition. The results were annulled, and a new election was eventually scheduled for October 26.

Accusing the IEBC of continued bias, Odinga boycotted the second election. This led to continued protests and clashes between police and NASA supporters. With Odinga's boycott, Kenyatta was able to win the second poll with 98.27% of the vote. However, voter turnout for the October 26 poll was low, with only 42.36% of the electorate voting compared to the 77.48% turnout on August 8.

Risks for election violence

Kenya's elections have generally suffered from high levels of violence since 1992, and the risks for violence in 2017 were quite high. The country's history of violent elections has created an atmosphere of apprehension and tension around political campaigns. Political parties continue to be dominated by wealthy individual candidates who represent particular ethnic groups, and the country continues to suffer from perceived injustices based on the exclusion of certain ethnic groups from the centers of political and economic power. Incumbent candidate Uhuru Kenyatta maintained strong control over the patronage resources of the state, giving him the financial means to organize violence in favor of his candidacy if he so desired. Furthermore, the IEBC continued to suffer from institutional weaknesses that led to perceptions of bias and election rigging. This was complicated by the murder of IEBC ICT manager Chris Msando just prior to

the election. The post-election controversy over the initial poll in 2017 had the potential to lead to very high levels of post-election violence, especially with the major opposition candidate boycotting the election re-run.

Perhaps the key mitigating factor that may have kept the violence from reaching levels similar to those in 2007 is that William Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta have remained political allies since the 2013 election. This alliance of the major Kalenjin and Kikuyu politicians—who were on opposing sides in 2007—has led to lower levels of political violence between Kikuyus and other ethnic groups in the Rift Valley. The experience of several political figures being indicted by the ICC may have also led to less explicit ethnic hate speech than previous campaigns have witnessed. However, the effect of the ICC indictments is unclear, given that the trials against both Ruto and Kenyatta were ultimately halted.

Violence in 2017 was generally characterized by post-election protests from NASA supporters, which in several cases were met by violent responses from the police leading to several deaths. The European Union Election Observation Mission stated that in the wake of the first poll, “dozens of people were reportedly killed, mainly through disproportionate police responses, according to the Kenya National Commission for Human Rights (KNCHR), Human Rights Watch, the Kenya Red Cross and the Independent Medico Legal Unit. Later, on 9 October, the KNCHR published a comprehensive report recording 37 deaths between 9 and 15 August, most of them resulting from gunshots attributed to the police during the post-election disturbances. The police denied using live bullets, stating that force was used only against looters and reported only six people killed, all criminals” (European Union 2018, 30). Thus, while organized violence between members of rival ethnic groups was relatively low, violent protests and violent responses by the security services remained a serious problem.

Instances of gender-based violence further highlighted the weaknesses of the security services in promoting a safe election. The EU observer mission noted that “twenty CSOs, professional associations and independent state organizations wrote an open letter on 25 October citing at least 60 cases of sexual violence, reportedly mainly committed by police officers. Later on 14 December Human Rights Watch released a report noting that most women referred to being raped by policemen or men in uniform, and most had not received post-rape medical or psychological care” (European Union 2018, 32).

Electoral violence prevention in 2017

Kenya had several simultaneous programs focusing on electoral violence prevention in 2017 initiated by both state agencies and civil society organizations, and these likely had a positive effect on limiting violence. Indeed, since the 2007-2008 violence, there has been a growth of both civil society organizations and state agencies that are at least in part committed to promoting peaceful elections. Some of the strategies employed by both CSOs and state agencies were relatively novel and can potentially provide lessons for other countries. However, Kenya’s peace programs still suffer from a few critical shortcomings. These have little to do with a lack of

interventions and much more to do with a lack of coordination by the relevant stakeholders. Interview participants almost universally noted that despite some attempts at cooperation, the platforms that were designed to coordinate interventions did not live up to their potential. Furthermore, and in a critical difference to Malawi (see case study below), interview participants also noted that very few programs have successfully incorporated the political parties and their candidates into their programs. This meant that political candidates often were not direct stakeholders in the success of these programs, which likely limits their long-term impact.

National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)

The National Cohesion and Integration Commissions (NCIC) is a relatively new arrival on the scene of Kenya's politics. Created under the National Integration and Cohesion Act of 2008, NCIC's mission is to eliminate ethnic discrimination across Kenyan economic, social, and political institutions. In particular, the commission is in part responsible for enforcing the recent laws banning hate speech. This is particularly relevant to election violence given the role that ethnic hate speech played in fomenting violence in the wake of the 2007 election. While the commission is not able to prosecute offenders directly, its mandate allows it to investigate cases and recommend prosecution. Among African countries, the commission serves as a relatively new means of promoting ethnic integration in historically divided societies. Indeed, of the various strategies outlined in Table 1, the creation of the NCIC is one of the only longer-term, government-sponsored attempts to promote lasting social peace that was encountered during field research.

Interview participants generally felt that the creation of the NCIC was a necessary step in reforming political discourse in Kenya. However, several participants both in civil society and in state agencies noted that the NCIC was limited in its achievements thus far for several reasons. These included a lack of resources, an inability to prosecute, a negligible presence outside of Nairobi, and an overly bureaucratic approach to its work. As one state official noted, "the biggest problem is that [NCIC] cannot bite. For various reasons, whether the laws do not provide them with that ability to prosecute, or they themselves have not gone a step further to actualize it."⁴ A senior member of a civil society group similarly stated that there were widespread expectations that NCIC would punish certain politicians for their use of language during the 2017 campaign, but these were never realized. She noted that "people feel like [NCIC] gets a lot of budgetary allocations, but they don't actually feel them down on the ground. It only has the national office here in Nairobi, but it doesn't have any other office in the 47 counties. ... We don't really know what they do."⁵

An additional criticism that interview participants from civil society had was that the agency does not address any of the root issues that cause hate speech in the affected communities.

⁴ Author interview, Dec. 5, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

⁵ Author interview, Dec. 7, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

This was both because of its limited local presence and its somewhat narrow mandate. One interview participant from a CSO stated that “the whole concept of [NCIC] is OK, but they haven’t yet gotten into one-on-one meetings, creating reports, meeting with you always, getting to know what you are doing. ... Only once or twice do they chip in. Personally, I haven’t felt them chipping in.”⁶ Another CSO leader stated, “Sadly, I wouldn’t say that [NCIC] has been successful. To give them some credit, the only thing that they have tried to do is that they have tried to bring some coordination among civil society. But in terms of cohesion and integration, you need to have mass programs in education that are aimed at changing attitudes. We haven’t seen that kind of mass educational program.”⁷

An interview participant from NCIC acknowledged the criticisms of the commission, but stated that many of these were due to misunderstandings both of the commission’s mandate and of what constitutes hate speech.⁸ As NCIC has no jurisdiction to enact prosecution on its own and is bound by the existing legal definition of hate speech, which focuses explicitly on cases of clear ethnic hate speech, most of the other inflammatory rhetoric that might incite violence was not under the commission’s mandate. Part of this misunderstanding, he felt, was due to both politicians and the media providing misleading information to the public about the commission’s true mandate. The commission, he felt, had several successes that were not adequately covered in the press, including prosecutions and public sensitization campaigns.

Importantly, an official from a related state agency also noted that the shortcomings of the NCIC are not just due to limitations of the commission as an institution. The divisive political cultural around Kenya’s elections was also partly to blame, because “to punish electoral offenses is a very difficult thing. ... You don’t have a very sincere society that will look at the offense and say ‘Yes, so-and-so committed an offense. He shouldn’t have said this. This was an inflammatory remark that can cause division. It is very dangerous speech.’ They would quickly look at who said it and say [to the NCIC], ‘You are victimizing our party.’”⁹ Thus, despite the commission’s benefits in monitoring campaign discourse, the legal and institutional limitations of NCIC are further complicated by a political culture that commonly suspects bias by public agencies that oversee elections.

Uwiano Peace Platform

The NCIC also collaborated with the National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management (NSC), an agency based in the Ministry of the Interior, on creating a broad national platform in an attempt to coordinate the countries’ violence prevention programs. The platform, first created in 2010, is dubbed “*Uwiano*,” meaning “cohesion” in Swahili. The most important component of *Uwiano* during the 2017 campaign was the organization of peace

⁶ Author interview, Nov. 30, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

⁷ Author interview, Nov. 30, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

⁸ Author interview, Dec. 8, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

⁹ Author interview, Dec. 5, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

committees across several districts that the NSC determined were at a high risk of election violence. These were organized at the district level, then further down at the local level, where 15-member committees consisted of local stakeholders such as influential elders, local officials, and local CSO leaders. The goal of the local peace committees was to identify sources of conflict and develop the most appropriate solutions. Many of the committee members were given conflict resolution training from the NSC and also served as local early warning observers who could report incidents of violence to the NSC national office.

Some interview participants from CSOs spoke very positively about the creation of the peace committees and actively participated. For example, members of PeaceNet-Kenya, one of the larger CSOs implementing peace programs in 2017, worked closely with the committees in scheduling and implementing their own programs. In conjunction with the local peace committees, PeaceNet held several community dialogue forums to address issues of community conflict. The organization also held several outreach programs to sensitize community members on the peace committees and the available mechanisms for resolving conflicts. PeaceNet additionally funded a small grants program to which smaller local CSOs could apply as well as identified influential young people who could serve as “cohesion champions” in their respective communities.

The *Uwiano* Secretariat was also intended to coordinate the activities of the other CSOs that were working on election violence prevention in each community. However, nearly all interview participants felt that the platform fell considerably short of this goal. As one member of a state agency noted, “Every entity that sits on *Uwiano* does things on their own. There was no synergy.”¹⁰ A leader of a civil society organization similarly stated that “[NCIC and NSC] are supposed to do coordination of grassroots organizations. But that is not really happening. Personally, I don’t feel that there is that kind of intervention coming in terms of national support. It’s not really visible.”¹¹ Another leader of a CSO felt that the lack of coordination was harmful to the ultimate goal of local community participation, stating:

“The biggest challenge [with *Uwiano*] is coordination. To help these key actors work towards a unified front towards peace building. Currently, people tend to work in silos. You have your organization there, you do your own stuff. If people work in silos and the target group is the same, it brings credibility issues of the peace builders, especially in relation to the recipients. You go for example to Mathare, you bring the youth together for a festival, or you bring the community for a community dialogue as One Nation Under God, you leave, then tomorrow is American Friends Service Committee, AFSC leaves, then tomorrow is PeaceNet. ...It leaves the target group more disillusioned.”¹²

¹⁰ Author interview, Dec. 7, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

¹¹ Author interview, Nov. 30, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

¹² Author interview, Dec. 8, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

Numerous interview participants echoed the sentiment that despite the existence of the platform, *Uwiano* had not been successful in coordinating peace interventions. Some participants felt that this was in part because the NSC is located within the Ministry of the Interior, and either too closely affiliated with the incumbent government or too bureaucratic in its orientation. Importantly, it should be noted that a state official who worked closely with the *Uwiano* platform suggested that much of the lack of coordination between CSO programs was not the fault of *Uwiano* organizers. Rather, it was more because CSO donors were not flexible in allowing their implementing partners to modify their programs to avoid redundancies with other organizations.¹³

Some participants also felt that the lack of coordination was due to rivalries between CSOs over funding. One member of a CSO stated that the local peace building environment “can sometimes become more of a competition ground. ... Organizations come up, and they want their logos to appear on the banners. ... There is a sort of visibility competition, under which ‘the more activities we do, the more other organizations have failed to do, so maybe donors will prefer us than them.’ What is the motivation? Is it really peace, or is it funding?”¹⁴ Another leader of a CSO stated that the dependence on foreign funding had “commercialized the peace process. ... That is the biggest challenge. There is no trust. Even civil society, they do not trust each other.”¹⁵ According to interview participants, this lack of cooperation manifested itself in several ways, including redundancies in the targeting of specific communities and the creation of several different telephone hotlines (more than a dozen, by one participants recollection) that citizens could call to report incidents of election violence.

IFES Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWIE) Program

Gender-based violence (GBV) has been a recurring feature of Kenya’s elections, and many organizations have included issues of gender into their programs. One of the few national programs focused explicitly on issues related to gender and election violence during 2017 was the International Federation of Electoral System’s (IFES) Violence Against Women in Elections Program (VAWIE). The purpose of VAWIE was to address a gap in other major programs that rely on more traditional definitions of election violence. VAWIE is based on the premise that women experience election violence differently from men, and that these differences require specific programming. Indeed, as the literature review of this study discusses, the existing scholarship shows that this is the case.

VAWIE’s major initiative during the 2017 election campaign was a partnership with the NGO Health Assistance Kenya (HAK) to provide resources to women affected by election violence. This included a phone number that women could call to report gender-based election violence, receive counseling services, and get health care referrals. IFES and HAK trained dozens

¹³ Author interview, Dec. 5, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

¹⁴ Author interview, Nov. 30, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

¹⁵ Author interview, Dec. 8, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

of tele-counselors, held several workshops with community leaders and members of civil society, and collected data on instances of gender-based violence related to the election. Reusable shopping bags and stickers with the VAWIE phone number on them were also widely distributed. IFES also continued to promote its social media campaign #BetterThanThis to raise awareness of violence against women during elections as well as combat the growth of violent online speech directed at women and female candidates.

One limitation of VAWIE's efforts was the limited incorporation of their efforts with those of the NCIC and NSC. One CSO member who worked with VAWIE noted that when efforts were made to include NCIC and NSC in VAWIE's programs, "the response was quite lackluster."¹⁶ Indeed, it should be noted that in one interview for this report, an official at a state agency felt that donor emphasis on gender was misplaced. He felt that gender issues were not a major issue for Kenya with regards to electoral violence and that perhaps too many resources had been put into gender-related programs. These observations by interview participants stand in contrast to the literature published by the *Uwiano* secretariat, which repeatedly emphasizes the platform's sensitivity to gender-based violence. They also contrast with the need for gender-specific programming, given the regularity with which gender-based violence has been reported in Kenya's recent elections. This suggests that while the theories behind a gendered understanding of electoral violence may be influencing the language of policy makers in Kenya, a clear agreement on how gender considerations should influence policy implementation has yet to be reached.

Limitations of violence prevention intervention in Kenya

Given the large number of organizations working on peace building in Kenya, the potential for highly effective interventions exists, and many of the programs likely contributed to a more peaceful campaign environment than Kenya has seen in previous elections. However, interviews for this report revealed several aspects of the political environment that limited program efficacy. As noted above, one of these was a lack of coordination among different organizations. While the *Uwiano* platform has the potential to facilitate the needed cooperation, it remains underutilized.

Uwiano also did not involve members of the clergy to a great extent. While some clergy did participate in local peace committees, the major religious organizations chose not to work with the *Uwiano* national secretariat, and instead formed their own interreligious platform that they called the Multi-Sectoral Forum (MSF). The idea behind this forum was to encourage inter-religious cooperation and dialogue to encourage a peaceful election environment. Membership organizations of the MSF conducted several activities that were similar to those of CSOs and the NSC peace committees, including holding workshops and outreach events to facilitate inter-community dialogue. However, a division seemed to exist between the work of secular CSOs and

¹⁶ Author interview, Dec. 5, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

religious organizations to the extent that some members of the MSF with whom I spoke were not aware of the NSC local peace committees or what their activities entailed.

One leader of a CSO stated that working with religious authorities was difficult because “religious leaders have not been able to create social cohesion because of a lack of moral authority. ... They have lost it. ... They are being viewed as partisan, pro-incumbent, and some are pro-opposition. So they lack that moral authority. ... The religious leaders have gone into bed with political elites. That is the reality.”¹⁷ Indeed, Kenya’s religious leaders do have a history of endorsing certain political candidates or policies. However, some other interviewees were somewhat more positive on the role of the clergy. One participant stated that “compared to 2007, there has been progress in seeing a stronger interfaith voice in the prevention of violence. ... I think they have really tried this time around. I have seen progress. In my view, by and large, as religious leaders, they try to play a neutral role. ... Definitely there are interests of some individuals. Once in while there are those tones, but overall the tone is neutral to me.”¹⁸ Members of the MSF with whom I spoke felt that the clergy was in fact better placed than secular civil society to engage in peace building because most civil society groups are small and urban-based, whereas the clergy has a longstanding presence in every community in Kenya.¹⁹ Thus, while there was not one clear reason for the lack of cooperation between religious and secular organizations, interviews revealed a clear divide between the two.

Another limitation was the clear lack of incorporation of the political parties and candidates themselves in the peace programming. Multiple interview participants noted that working with politicians on peace programs had proven very difficult, either because of a lack of interest by the candidates in appearing at a non-political event during a campaign or because politicians attempt to manipulate peace programs for their own benefit. One member of a CSO recounted an experience in which her organization had invited Members of the Council Assemblies (MCAs) to participate in one of their programs. However, the organization received “unrealistic demands from the MCAs. For one, they wanted to have the meeting here in Nairobi, and that means we would have to pay for their transport, we would have to accommodate them, and then we would have to pay them based on the rates of an ‘Honorable.’ So they were talking about 10,000 Kenyan shillings to participate in a forum. So involving leaders sometimes is very hard.” She added that on the occasions when an organization is able to convince a politician to attend a workshop or meeting, “you need to really make him stick to the line, because he will talk about peace a bit, then he goes into politics. He starts campaigning. It has been really hard working with the politicians.”²⁰

¹⁷ Author interview, Dec. 8, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

¹⁸ Author interview, March 9, 2018; Nairobi, Kenya.

¹⁹ Author interview, Dec. 7, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

²⁰ Author interview, Dec. 7, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

Some participants stated that when politicians are in opposition, they are somewhat more interested in participating in peace building programs. However, after they are elected, they become nearly inaccessible. One member of a CSO described the attitude of many incumbent elected officials the following way: “As long as I am comfortable, and in my AC climate-controlled vehicle, then I am happy you voted for me and put me here. See you in five years.”²¹ It should be noted that an interview participant from a state agency who had worked on the *Uwiano* platform felt the program had successfully incorporated local political candidates, if not national ones. Another interviewee felt that any lack of participation by political parties had more to do with politicians’ busy campaign schedules rather than an intentional disregard of peace programs. However, these sentiments were not widely shared by other interview participants. Many participants felt that politicians still insisted on campaigning by using divisive language and pitting voters against one another rather than incorporating peace messages into their campaigns. As one practitioner noted, “You can have a program in Kisumu and talk about peace, but then a politician from there can go and tell them, ‘You know those people from the other tribe? Those are the bad people. The problem is that tribe.’ This negative ethnicity really kills us.”²² Similarly, another practitioner noted that politicians “have so much power. That is why we have to do civic engagement differently. We have to be able to see how to act best with the centers of power. ... Those centers are located in the private sector and in the political elite. And we have to identify who in the political elite we can work with.”²³

Kenya’s electoral management body, the IEBC, could also be considerably strengthened to increase election security. While the IEBC is much stronger and more independent than the Electoral Commission in 2007, it continues to suffer from certain shortcomings that place election security at risk. Delays and a lack of transparency regarding the vote-counting process created public suspicion that the results were being manipulated, and inconsistent use of the commission’s vote-tallying forms led the Supreme Court to annul the first result in August. This created several opportunities for politicians to call for public protests over the conduct of the election.

The IEBC’s attempt to work with the Kenyan police also fell well short of its goals and represents perhaps the clearest limitation of Kenya’s state-initiated electoral violence prevention programs. The IEBC’s Electoral Security Arrangement attempted several training programs to educate police officers at both local and national levels on the causes of violence and best practices for security responses to local conflicts and protests. However, as one IEBC official stated to me, “unfortunately this one has failed. It has failed because the police did things that were contrary to what we had agreed on. In fact, I think the police now are the greatest threat to the election itself because of the way they conduct themselves and so forth.”²⁴ Although the program consisted of

²¹ Author interview, Dec. 5, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

²² Author interview, Dec. 7, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

²³ Author interview, Dec. 5, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

²⁴ Author interview, Dec. 7, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

considerable efforts dedicated to police education, IEBC officials felt that their efforts were not internalized by the police forces. One IEBC official stated that “the police have their own bureaucracy, and the police also do not want to learn new ideas on how to do things. They are still stuck with the old ways of doing their work. If you look at the protests around elections, there are better ways of managing them.”²⁵ Those at the IEBC who had worked on the program felt that what is needed is a more systemic reform of police culture to reduce the tendency for violent responses to public protests. Absent a large-scale program to reform policing practices, interview participants felt that programs focused only around the election cycle would likely have limited effects.

An additional limitation noted by several CSO participants was the lack of programs that lasted beyond the immediate election cycle. As one leader of a CSO noted, programs for the 2022 election “should start immediately, after this election is over. Now, we should try to weave it into the fabric of the country. But since the election is over, people just chill, and there is little interaction with the public. It is so limited.”²⁶ Another member of a CSO noted that “nowadays, donors fund their projects in bits—in quarters, in milestones—you have to achieve these before you go on to the next one.” She recounted a recent grant that she worked on for her CSO in which the organization was required to spend their funds before the date of the election, otherwise return the remaining funds. However, she noted that “what we need most is continuous follow-up of community projects. ... From the donors’ point of view, they should not just look at it as, ‘you have three community dialogues to implement, how many have you implemented?’”²⁷ Several participants felt that in particular programs that engaged young men in high-risk communities needed to have a longer time horizon so that they could identify at-risk youths and provide them with jobs or training before campaigns started. As one participant noted, young men need to “have some independence, so that they can’t go out [and participate in violence] for 200 shillings when they can work and get maybe 1,000 a day.”²⁸

Finally, Kenya still suffers from a political legacy of patronage politics and ethnic divisions that continue to hamper peace programs. As one member of the IEBC stated, “we still have a centralized system, or the hangover from the centralized system. This gives a lot of tension and expectations that we expect from elections. People see those community issues. ‘This is my person. This is somebody from my tribe. So it doesn’t matter if the issue is integrity, and everybody knows that so-and-so has integrity problems, as long as he comes from my community, it’s all right. Those integrity issues are not a problem.’ So we won’t solve those kinds of issues. I think the expectation is far beyond what we can deliver.”²⁹

²⁵ Author interview, Dec. 7, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

²⁶ Author interview, Nov. 30, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

²⁷ Author interview, Dec. 7, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

²⁸ Author interview, Nov. 30, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

²⁹ Author interview, Dec. 5, 2017; Nairobi, Kenya.

One potential avenue for improved election violence prevention programming in Kenya could be through a more concerted effort to engage the private sector as a key stakeholder in maintaining peaceful elections. Many of Kenya's major industries, including tourism and commercial agricultural, suffer considerable losses when the country is plagued by violence (de Vidovgrad 2015). Thus, given the large financial resources that private companies can potentially offer to violence prevention programs, a more systematic engagement of the private sector would likely have benefits for both CSO practitioners and the companies themselves.

The 2013 elections in particular saw some programming that was initiated by private sector actors. For example, the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KPSA) funded a program titled "Mkenya Daima," meaning "my Kenya forever," which, in collaboration with several civil society organizations, engaged in several types of peace messaging throughout the country. This included peace messaging through print media outlets, church meetings, and stakeholder roundtables. One of Kenya's largest mobile phone services, Safaricom, also donated 50 million text messages to the CSO Sisi ni Amani to send out SMS messages promoting peace during the election (de Vidovgrad 2015).

Unfortunately, Kenya's private sector remains dominated by companies that are closely affiliated with the political elite. Kenya's most powerful political families, including those of Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga, own large stakes in several economic sectors. The private sector as a whole is thus somewhat constrained in its ability to remain a neutral force for peace.

Malawi

Country background

After gaining independence from Great Britain in 1964, Malawi quickly reverted to a one-party dictatorship under Hastings Kamuzu Banda and the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP). Banda's regime kept tight control over state agencies and the media, outlawing the existence of either an independent civil society or opposition political parties. While the military was kept relatively weak, Banda relied on the paramilitary wing of the MCP—the Malawi Young Pioneers—to enforce his regime (Levitsky & Way 2010, 282).

By the 1990s, with Banda's health failing and Malawi's economy suffering from decades of slow growth, the MCP no longer had the patronage resources needed to maintain the one-party state. Banda faced discontent from within his own security services and growing opposition from a nascent civil society. Perhaps the strongest voice of opposition to the regime emerged from Malawi's churches. In an unprecedented show of opposition in March of 1992, Catholic bishops read a Pastoral Letter in churches across the country that criticized the regime's corruption and human rights abuses (Levitsky & Way 2010, 283). The Catholic churches were soon joined in opposition by churches from several denominations under an umbrella organization called Public Affairs Committee (PAC). PAC's opposition to the regime combined with student protests and a military mutiny to force Banda to agree to a referendum on a multiparty constitution in 1993.

Multiparty elections in 1994 saw the victory of opposition candidate Bakili Muluzi from the United Democratic Front (UDF). Despite this change of government, rule under the UDF was in many ways similar to that under the MCP. UDF was made up mainly of former members of government and was strengthened by numerous defections from the former ruling party. Furthermore, Muluzi proved to be more of an authoritarian than a liberalizing democrat. Inheriting the patronage networks of the previous government, Muluzi made full use of distributing state rents to support his government. The government also “employed the UDF youth wing—the Young Democrats—to harass government critics and break up opposition rallies. Opposition leaders were occasionally arrested and newspapers suffered thug attacks, defamation suits, and occasional bans” (Levitsky & Way 2010, 285). Muluzi's reelection in 1999 was a violent affair, with the campaigns characterized by confrontations between supporters of the major political parties to intimidate one another's supporters and break up competitors' campaign rallies (Travagianti 2016). Malawi's political scene under Muluzi was also characterized by continuous party defections and party switching by politicians. This is a trend that has continued into recent elections, with political candidates and their followers often switching alliances and party affiliations depending on variables such as the popular support of the government in power or their chances of gaining from access to patronage (Young 2014).

Facing the end of his presidential term limits in 2004, Muluzi attempted to change the constitution in 2003 to allow him to run for a third term. The legislation faced considerable

opposition both within the government and among civil society. Like in 1992, Christian churches acting under the guidance of the PAC were among the most vocal critics within civil society of the proposal. Although the UDF attempted to limit criticism by arresting opposition politicians and journalists, breaking up rallies, and banning public protest, the legislation failed to pass.

Muluzi thus picked Bingu wa Mutharika to be his successor as UDF's presidential candidate in 2004. Mutharika won the presidency with only 36 percent of the vote in an unfair and hotly contested election. Mutharika enjoyed access to state resources, disproportionate media coverage, and an electoral commission biased in his favor (Levitsky & Way 2010). He also had the support of the ruling party supporters' efforts to intimidate his opponents. Travagianti (2016, 103) finds that by 2004, "intimidation had become so widespread, that almost half of those prevented from voting in the northern region in that elections said that they had been intimidated by the other parties' loyalists."

Mutharika's reform agenda conflicted with many in the ruling party, and anticipating his own expulsion from the party, he formed the Democratic Progress Party (DPP). He ran as an incumbent in 2009 from the DPP with Joyce Banda as his running mate. Mutharika won reelection in part because he ensured that Bakili Muluzi was barred from running again because he had already served two terms (Levitsky & Way 2010).

President Mutharika and Vice President Banda soon became estranged when the president appointed his brother, Peter Mutharika, to be president of the ruling party, seemingly anointing him as his successor. Banda then formed her own political party, the People's Party (PP), but remained as vice president. When President Mutharika unexpectedly passed away in 2012, those supporting Peter Mutharika attempted to keep Joyce Banda from assuming the presidency despite the clear succession laws in the constitution. The succession struggle saw rumors of a coup plot by Peter Mutharika and his allies (Patel & Wahman 2015). However, Banda was ultimately able to assume the presidency.

Background to the 2014 elections

May 20, 2014 saw simultaneous elections for president, parliament, and local government, giving them the moniker of the "tripartite elections." Twelve candidates contested the presidency in 2014, although there were only four serious contenders: Incumbent President Banda from the PP, Peter Mutharika from the DPP, Lazarus Chakwera from the MCP, and Atupele Muluzi, the son of Bakili Muluzi, from the UDF. Throughout the campaign, Banda enjoyed disproportionate access to resources and the media given that she was the incumbent (Patel & Wahman 2015).

Election day itself saw several challenges. Many voting centers did not receive election materials on time, causing delays in voting, and accusations of attempts to rig the outcome. Patel and Wahman (2015, 84) argue that "poor election management ultimately harmed the credibility of the elections, and voters in some affected areas resorted to limited use of violence." As the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) announced the results, Peter Mutharika emerged as the

preliminary leader. Banda, in an attempt to halt the vote counting, announced that she had nullified the election due to alleged irregularities. After a court ruling clarified that Banda had no legal right to nullify an election, the parties trailing in the polls demanded a manual recount. However, a High Court ruling allowed the MEC to announce the original results. On May 30, Peter Mutharika was confirmed as the winner with 36.4 percent of the vote.

Risks for election violence

Malawi has a history of political violence in recent elections. Like the other countries in the study, parties in Malawi also tend to have both ethnic and regional strongholds. Furthermore, the Malawi Electoral Commissions (MEC) suffers from several institutional weaknesses that contributed to delays in voting and vote tabulation. However, Malawi is fortunate not to have Kenya's history of major land disputes between the country's largest ethnic groups. The incumbent Banda was also not a well-entrenched patron in 2014 given that she had only recently assumed the presidency after the death of her predecessor. Still, the election was surrounded by considerable tension. Episodes of limited violence during the campaign and subsequent controversy over the electoral commission's handling of the vote count led to multiple fatalities and destruction of property.

Perhaps the greatest risk for election violence in Malawi comes from the country's history of politicians employing youth wings as political enforcement arms. This has its roots in organizations such as the Malawi Young Pioneers and the Young Democrats. Today, while the power of national youth wings has diminished, it remains the norm for politicians to employ a coterie of young men during their campaigns to support their candidacies in various ways, both legal and illegal. In 2014, "incidents of skirmishes between party supporters were reported from around the country and resulted in several criminal investigations and convictions" (European Union 2014, 26). The most serious incident took place on March 16 during a rally for President Banda that was held in a regional stronghold of Peter Mutharika. The resulting clashes between rival supporters and the police led to the death of one civilian and one police officer. The debates regarding the electoral commission's declaration of the winner produced additional protests that turned violent. In one post-election protest on May 30 by supporters of those candidates demanding a recount of the ballots, one civilian was killed and multiple police officers suffered injuries (European Union 2014).

Electoral violence prevention in 2014

Like the other countries in the study, Malawi saw multiple simultaneous anti-violence initiatives take place in the lead-up to the 2014 election. These originated from both civil society and state agencies. The three most prominent categories of violence prevention efforts were: 1) programs undertaken by the Public Affairs Committee (PAC), 2) programs by the Multiparty Liaison Committees (MPLCs), and 3) civic education programs by multiple stakeholders. The benefits and limitations of the interventions discussed below reveal some similarities with Kenya.

However, a few critical differences in the design of these programs should serve as useful lessons for practitioners in other contexts. In particular, the success of Malawi's violence prevention programs in incorporating the political candidates themselves as active stakeholders serves as a key difference that should be taken note of. Whereas politicians were bypassed by several of Kenya's violence prevention programs, multiple programs in Malawi made considerable efforts to ensure that both national and local political candidates were incorporated into pre-election peace programs and subsequent mediation efforts.

Public Affairs Committee (PAC)

Public Affairs Committee (PAC) is one of the oldest civil society organizations in Malawi dedicated to the promotion of democracy. It is an interfaith organization based on the collaboration of Malawi's Christian churches and Muslim mosques. Formed during Malawi's transition to multiparty rule in 1992, PAC played a critical role in negotiating with President Hastings Banda and the ruling MCP into liberalizing the political environment and legalizing opposition parties prior to elections in 1994. Indeed, PAC is one of the only civil society organizations that has survived intact since 1992 without having been co-opted by the state machinery. This gives the organization a certain cachet among politicians, donors, and the general public. As an executive member of PAC noted to me about the organization's current programs, "the history is fundamental to all that we are talking about. The 1992 scenario was where Dr. Banda was a dictator of a one-party state, and he was defeated through this institution. And that, for a certain generation, contributes quite a lot."³⁰ As it draws its membership from its member churches and mosques, PAC is one of the only civil society organizations in Malawi that is able to maintain a local presence in numerous constituencies throughout the country. Consequently, it is able to draw on a network of approximately 4,500 volunteers.³¹

PAC was responsible for some of the major peace initiatives in the 2014 election, with much of its funding coming from the UNDP and the European Union. Most prominently, PAC organized a highly publicized ceremony at the national soccer stadium in which all 12 presidential candidates signed the Lilongwe Peace Declaration, a peace accord committing the candidates to run peaceful campaigns and accept the results of the election. The signing ceremony was attended by many of Malawi's prominent clerics and was accompanied by an interfaith prayer service.

The success of this type of initiative—a civil society-initiated peace program involving all major presidential candidates—is somewhat unique. Rarely in Kenya are civil society organizations able to gain the cooperation of all major politicians on a peace program. For example, the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya attempted to have all 2017 presidential candidates appear at a national peace prayer during the campaign. Incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta and

³⁰ Author interview, Dec. 11, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

³¹ "Public Affairs Committee: Profile." PAC Secretariat.

two others did attend. However, Raila Odinga, the strongest opposition candidate, chose not to appear on stage with his rival and instead held his own peace prayer at a different venue.

PAC's success in facilitating the cooperation of all of Malawi's major presidential candidates in signing the Peace Declaration can be attributed to two factors: First, its success in remaining Malawi's most prominent democracy-promoting civil society organization. Since liberalization in 1992, no other CSOs have demonstrated the level of long-term sustainability that PAC has, with most either exiting the political scene or becoming coopted by political interests. Second, PAC's identity as a faith-based organization. Malawi is a country where religion plays a central part in peoples' lives. As one interview participant noted:

"The churches have been around much longer than other civil society organizations. The churches have a clearly defined constituency and membership. Not so much with the other civil society actors. The levels of linkage, trust, and relationship with a religious administration are much higher. It has to do with the belief systems."³²

Indeed, PAC has also ensured the inclusion of Malawi's Muslim minority in its leadership structures. This status allowed PAC's leadership to engage all candidates in 2014 through what they termed "shuttle diplomacy." This involved meeting separately with all candidates to explain the purpose of the Peace Declaration and review the proceedings of the signing ceremony before the event. This ensured that all candidates were clear on their own roles at the signing ceremony and what the order of events would be. When asked how PAC was able to keep the candidates from turning the ceremony into a campaign event or otherwise exploiting the occasion for their own purposes, one executive member of PAC answered:

"That is to do with your planning during the shuttle diplomacy. ... You have to spend a bit of your resources in meeting each of the candidates, explaining about the Peace Accord because that is where you are going to convince them. They have to be clear about their roles. Especially the sitting president. You have to be clear to say, 'It is not your show. It is the show of the organization.' So in our case, we had reached those challenges whereby the sitting head of state Joyce Banda had rejected [the idea] that she wouldn't come, because she wanted to be the first to sign publicly. ... We are very happy as an organization and very successful to go very deep into engaging with politicians."³³

Indeed, the Peace Declaration was of such prominence that U.N. General Secretary Ban Ki-moon referenced it in his appeal to the candidates to ensure a peaceful election.³⁴

³² Author interview, Dec. 14, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

³³ Author interview, Dec. 11, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

³⁴ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2014-05-19/statement-attributable-spokesman-secretary-general-forthcoming>

Beyond the Peace Declaration, PAC also trained a pool of mediators drawn from its membership clergy in conflict resolution. These individuals could serve as a resource in case a major political dispute required third-party mediation. To ensure that there were women represented in the mediation teams, PAC further initiated a program entitled the Women in Faith Peace Initiative. This program recruited women from both Christian and Muslim membership groups to receive mediation training. The idea was that a six-person team of mediators that might be assigned to mediate any conflict ought to have at least two female members.³⁵

At the local level, PAC also engaged in an early warning system whereby members of PAC churches and mosques could report incidents of political violence or political tension to the national office in Lilongwe. This involved the training of local clergy and volunteers on the relevant local political issues that could escalate into violence. PAC's national office could then use its own mediation resources to help facilitate a dialogue between the relevant stakeholders.

Multiparty Liaison Committees (MPLCs)

The Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) organized district-level conflict resolution committees in 12 of Malawi's districts. Known as the Multiparty Liaison Committees (MPLCs), they consist of the district commissioner, who serves as chair; the district information officer, the district police chief; representatives from the political parties; traditional authorities; local civil society members, including members of the clergy; and district clerks from the MEC.³⁶ The purpose of the committees is to resolve local conflicts related to the election that could potentially escalate into more severe violence. The MEC, along with the Center for Multiparty Democracy-Malawi (CMD-M), a civil society organization whose membership consists of the political parties represented in the National Assembly, began organizing and training members for the MPLCs in 2012 with funds from the UNDP. Most of those district officials who participated in the committees received at least some conflict resolution training from the MEC and CMD-M.

Importantly, these committees represent another case of close cooperation between civil society and the political parties in preventing election violence. Interviewees noted that the success in achieving this cooperation was due to multiple factors. One was the all-inclusive aspect of the committees in that they included representatives from the state, all major political parties, and CSOs. This made them especially attractive to opposition parties. Additionally, the fact that membership and procedures were based on clear and transparent rules, but still held behind closed doors, gave stakeholders trust in the process.³⁷ Multiple participants also noted Malawi's history of considerable political party switching and fluid political alliances. In other words, because politicians either had a history of having once worked within the same party, or anticipated that one day they might become allies, at the district level they were willing to work together within the MPLCs and not antagonize one another. Multiple participants also noted that

³⁵ Author interview, Dec. 11, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

³⁶ MPLCs may also include additional district-level officials.

³⁷ Author interviews, Dec. 12, 14, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

levels of cooperation may be relatively high because politics in Malawi is not quite as divisive as it is in other countries in the region. As one participant stated, “When it comes to elections in Kenya, it is almost a war. ... But here, it won’t matter as much as to whether the person holding the [presidency] comes from Lilongwe or is coming from elsewhere.”³⁸

The committees addressed local conflicts from multiple sources. One member of an MPLC stated that the conflicts his committee generally addressed came from one of two sources. First, disputes came from the scheduling of political rallies and campaign events. In these cases, the MPLC ensured that parties did not have major campaign events on the same days in close proximity to one another. Second, disputes arose around allegations that traditional rulers were endorsing certain candidates and not permitting competitors to campaign in their jurisdictions. The MPLC’s role in these cases was to ensure that parties were given the right to hold campaign events according to the rules established by the MEC.

By most accounts offered by the interviewees, the MPLCs served as a very effective means of coordinating conflict resolution at the district level. Interviewees noted that this particular mechanism allowed for a transparent means to address concerns of various stakeholders, including civil society, the political parties, and the MEC. Of the shorter-term strategies in Table 1 available to governments, in the case of Malawi, investing in local committees seemed to be the most effective. Furthermore, although Malawi had multiple parallel “early warning” mechanisms through various civil society groups, such as NICE and PAC, this was somewhat less of a problem than it was in Kenya because of the coordination efforts at the district level of the MPLCs.

MPLC’s did encounter several challenges. As they were chaired by the District Commissioners, who are government appointees, the committees were occasionally accused of having a pro-government bias, especially if supporters of the ruling party were thought to have been responsible for any disruptions. One interviewee noted that certain committees thus had a noticeable power imbalance between the political parties.³⁹ Furthermore, although many members of the committees did receive conflict resolution training, one committee member stated that “There is a lack of skills sometimes among the committee. How do you handle issues, how do you handle the problems. These should be considered more seriously.”⁴⁰ He also noted that funding was also a problem: “The issue sometimes is also about resources. When we meet, we fail to go to the field in various areas in the communities due to lack of funding.”⁴¹

Another issue related to resources was the lack of access to MPLCs outside of the immediate electoral cycle. For example, one interview participant noted that MPLCs are generally not active during the early voter registration phase even though several conflicts can emerge

³⁸ Author interview, Dec. 14, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

³⁹ Author interview, Dec. 12, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

⁴⁰ Author interview, Dec. 12, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

⁴¹ Author interview, Dec. 12, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

during this period that require some form of mediation.⁴² The Government of Malawi, with technical and financial support from the UNDP, began a National Peace Policy that implemented a “peace architecture” at the district-level with permanent committees intended to address conflict outside of the election cycle.⁴³ However, the policy remains in a pilot phase, and its future is somewhat unclear.

Civic education

Multiple organizations participated in civic education efforts in the lead-up to the election to keep voters aware of registration laws, the voting process, and rules governing vote counting and announcing results. Many of these same organizations provided domestic observers on election day. Among the largest of these was the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE). Getting much of its funding from the European Union and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, NICE engaged in several civic education programs, including workshops, door-to-door campaigns, radio broadcasts, and drama and musical performances.

In areas that are prone to election violence, NICE made concerted efforts to provide peace building education to local stakeholders. They also engaged with local police departments to sensitize officers on issues that could lead to violence. NICE members also participated in the MPLCs, working directly with the political parties to resolve conflicts at the district level. One NICE member noted that one limitation of the organization’s effort was that members had varying levels of training in conflict resolution, and that “a systematic [training] program packaged on peace building has not been there. Yes, there are those structures, but those structures can only be functional if they are capacitated. In my view, that is a gap.”⁴⁴

Civic education efforts were generally coordinated by the Malawi Electoral Support Network (MESN), a collaborative organization based on the membership of several of Malawi’s most prominent civil society organizations that also worked closely with the Malawi Electoral Commission (Travagianti 2016). MESN also helped coordinate the efforts of international observation missions and facilitated cooperation between secular and faith-based civil society groups. Although some interview participants noted that MESN could have done more to ensure that the information conveyed to the public was accurate, MESN generally served an effective role in coordinating civic education programs.

Limitations of violence prevention intervention in Malawi

Although Malawi’s 2014 election saw relatively limited violence, most interviewees noted several improvements that could be made in prevention strategies. Most interview participants also noted the institutional weakness of Malawi’s secular civil society as an important factor

⁴² Author interview, Dec. 14, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

⁴³ <http://www.mw.one.un.org/malawi-launches-national-peace-policy/>

⁴⁴ Author interview, Dec. 14, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

limiting deeper engagement with affected communities. As one interview participant noted, in comparison to churches, other civil society organizations “are very much elitist. They are very much urban-based. ... They are very much donor-dependent. The churches are self-reliant.” Indeed, PAC—a faith-based organization—remains the strongest voice promoting democracy in Malawi’s civil society. An additional problem within civil society noted by multiple interview participants is the tendency for experienced members of civil society to be offered—and eventually accept—more lucrative positions in government, either working in particular ministries or accepting appointments to government positions abroad. This hampers efforts within civil society organizations to build long-term capacity based on previous policy implementation.

Similar to other countries in the study, multiple participants also noted that relatively little funding is available to continue interventions once elections have ended. One participant stated that the biggest challenge his organization faces is:

“To have adequate funding for follow-ups. Because once you have trained [community participants], they make their own recommendations, which are very brilliant—for they themselves to do, not for the office to do—they themselves, to empower the communities to undertake conflict prevention at the local level to manage those particular conflicts. That particular process, the funding, in the processes of the program becomes a problem. ... Yet donors cannot easily change their budgets. [They] wait for electoral processes to come again. So next year, you will see a number of players in Malawi—international donors—coming in. But if you look at issues which caused problems, outside of elections, nobody is interested.”⁴⁵

Another participant noted the lack of penalties for politicians and supporters who engage in activities that might lead to violence, suggesting that a stronger accountability mechanism would be beneficial: “Who enforces the MEC Code of Conduct? It’s like a gentleman’s agreement. There is no specific agent or institution that can say, ‘Party A, you spoke like this, and it ignited violence. Therefore, here is the penalty.’ There is nothing in the MEC law. ... There are some acts that are not regulated by any law. So, for example, if I go and remove the campaign poster of my opponent, it can be condemned, but I don’t think there is a specific law where you can say, ‘OK fine, you defaced this candidate and here are the penalties.’”⁴⁶

A final limitation of Malawi’s election violence prevention efforts in 2014 was the limited resources dedicated to training and equipping the police. The security services in Malawi have a reputation for suffering from both financial and institutional weakness. Some improvements were made in the lead up to 2014, with President Joyce Banda appointing a new inspector general of

⁴⁵ Author interview, Dec. 11, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

⁴⁶ Author interview, Dec. 12, 2017; Lilongwe, Malawi.

police who promised much-needed reforms. This was accompanied by a U.K.-funded Policing Improvement Program and the EU-funded creation of an Independent Police Complaints Commission (Travagianti 2016). Still, the security services in Malawi continue to be relatively weak and poorly trained. Travagianti (2016, 113) notes that Malawians tend to associate the police with violent responses to public protests as well as bias in favor of the government.

Sierra Leone

Country background

Sierra Leone's political history is heavily influenced by the discovery of diamonds in the 1930s in the eastern regions of the country. The country's first president after independence, Siaka Stevens from the All People's Congress (APC), maintained political control over the country largely by distributing patronage from the rents on diamond exports. Stevens plundered Sierra Leone's economy, using diamond revenues to enrich himself and close group of associates (Reno 1995). By the time Stevens handed over power in 1985 to an associate, Sierra Leone was largely impoverished and on the verge of state failure.

It was under these conditions that a rebel movement entitled the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) emerged with the backing of Liberian warlord Charles Taylor in 1991. The RUF quickly seized control over Sierra Leone's diamond fields in the east. With the help of Taylor, the rebels funded their operations for the next 11 years through the sale of so-called "blood diamonds." The civil war was characterized by brutal violence against the civilian population, including a campaign by the RUF to amputate the limbs of non-combatants. The RUF and pro-government militias also made use of child soldiers as well as perpetrated sexual violence against civilians. Sierra Leone was able to hold a multiparty election in 1996 that saw Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) candidate Ahmad Tejan Kabbah become president. However, Kabbah was deposed in a coup the following year and the civil war continued. Kabbah was eventually able to return to the presidency, and after a military intervention by the British, the RUF collapsed and the war was declared formally over in 2002. Later that year, Kabbah won re-election with 70 percent of the vote.

The reintroduction of multiparty politics saw the re-emergence of the two major parties, the SLPP and the APC, as the dominant players on the political scene. Each party draws much of its support from an ethnic and a regional stronghold, with the SLPP garnering the majority of votes in the south among Mendes and the APC controlling the north, which is largely populated by Temnes. Together, Mendes and Temnes, Sierra Leone's two largest ethnic groups, make up roughly 68 percent of the population (CIA World Factbook). However, Freetown and several other areas outside of these strongholds are closely contested.

With Kabbah having reached the end of his term limits, the 2007 election saw incumbent Vice President Solomon Berewa take on Ernest Bai Koroma from the opposition APC for the presidency. Tension around the election increased when the political parties began mobilizing former combatants and other urban youths to serve in security "task forces" for the presidential candidates. Although both candidates pledged not to use former combatants to do their bidding during the campaign, "both presidential candidates continued the political mobilization of former combatants. ... Though ex-combatants initially feared the consequences of political involvement, events took a radical turn when campaigning got underway, with hundreds of ex-combatants

being enrolled in the task forces” (Christensen & Utas 2008, 522). These security forces were involved in several violent clashes with rival party supporters over the course of the campaigns. Fortunately, violence remained at a relatively low level, and Koroma emerged victorious in an election that was generally seen as credible.

Koroma won re-election in 2012 against SLPP candidate Julius Maada Bio in an election that was widely seen as credible, although Bio did allege fraud and challenged the results in court. Although the election itself was peaceful, riots in 2009 between supporters of the two major parties that saw party buildings attacked and burned created considerable tension around the campaigns. Fortunately, widespread fears of violence were not realized, and the campaign period was generally peaceful (European Union 2012).

Background to the 2018 election

The elections were held on March 7, 2018. President Koroma generated considerable controversy in 2017 by appearing to express his interest in running for a third term despite reaching the end of his constitutional term limits. Ultimately, he chose not to run and named Minister of Foreign Affairs Samura Kamara to be the APC presidential candidate. The APC entered the campaign as a relatively strong incumbent party, but stood accused by the opposition of favoring northerners and Temne speakers in civil service appointments during Koroma’s tenure. The SLPP again chose Julius Maada Bio as its candidate.

The political landscape was somewhat complicated by the emergence of the National Grand Coalition (NGC), a third party made up largely of former members of the SLPP. NGC presidential candidate Kande Yumkella threatened to take some of the APC’s northern bloc of votes away, and thus the ruling party challenged the legality of Yumkella’s candidacy, arguing that because until recently he held both Sierra Leonean and American passports, he should be disqualified. While the rules regarding dual citizenship and candidate eligibility have played very little role in previous elections, the ruling party’s attempts to have Yumkella disqualified generated considerable animosity between the parties. Ultimately, the National Electoral Commission permitted Yumkella to contest the election.

Risks for election violence

Election violence in Sierra Leone generally does not reach the high levels seen in Kenya, but campaigns since the end of the civil war have seen several deaths related to both clashes between party supporters and suspicious murders of party members. These are combined with violent responses by the police to public demonstrations. The 2018 election did not feature an incumbent candidate, although it was widely believed that the APC’s Samura Kamara was closely allied with President Koroma, and he was likely able to rely on Koroma’s patronage network during the campaign. Sierra Leone’s large population of unemployed and underemployed young men has made it particularly prone to violence in the past. Since the end of the civil war in 2002,

many former combatants have been mobilized to serve in security task forces for the political parties.

This has been true in both urban areas and the more rural mining areas. Kono District in the far east of the country has historically been the site of both the country's diamond resources and a site of political violence. Despite its mineral wealth, Kono remains among the poorest areas of the country and is heavily populated with young men working in the mining sector. The district is also closely politically contested as it does not fall into the strongholds of either party. As one interview participant who has worked extensively with Kono residents noted, "There is so much poverty in the mining areas. There is so much agitation. People want roads, electricity—all the things that go with development. And yet you don't find them. So that breeds tension. ... You have a lot of ex-combatants in the mining areas so they can do artisanal mining. That is why you find Kono very populated with these ex-combatants. With the violence, it's becoming a hotspot."⁴⁷

Electoral violence prevention in 2018

For the 2018 election, Sierra Leone's violence prevention efforts were led by a relatively new monitoring program designed to provide practitioners with accurate, up-to-date information about violent events in the country. Titled the National Early Warning System (NEWS), the program provided guidance to several organizations in implementing violence prevention programs.

WANEP National Early Warning System

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is a regional peace organization that was founded in 1998 in response to the many civil wars ongoing in West Africa at the time. With its headquarters in Accra, Ghana, the Network now has over 500 member civil society organizations across West Africa. WANEP is the implementing partner of the USAID-funded Mitigating Election Violence through National Early Warning Systems (NEWS), a five-year \$2.5 million program that has been implemented in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Ghana, and Sierra Leone.⁴⁸

The first stage of the NEWS program involved identifying and mapping potential hotspots for election violence based on previous elections and additional field research. After this mapping, NEWS trained 60 observers drawn from WANEP member organizations and other community members in monitoring violent events and political developments that could produce violence. Observers were given cell phones and tablets to report developments to the regional directors of WANEP according to 40 indicators under which the violence can be categorized. Regional directors confirmed the accuracy of the information then uploaded the data into a

⁴⁷ Author interview, Jan. 24, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁴⁸ <https://www.usaid.gov/west-africa-regional/fact-sheets/mitigating-election-violence-through-national-early-warning-systems>

national database of information known as the Peace Monitoring Center. This database allowed the WANEP national office to produce maps and charts with up-to-date data on violent events in the country.

At the end of each month, political analysts at WANEP compiled a report on the latest data with recommendations on how violent incidents could be best handled and potential future conflicts could be avoided. These reports were then shared with the National Elections Response Group (NERG), whose role it was to develop effective strategies to respond to threats of violence. NERG was responsible for the entire country except for Kono District, which had its own District Elections Response Group (DERG). The DERG was reserved specifically to deal with conflicts in Kono because the initial mapping of potential hotspots identified Kono District as the district most likely to experience violence during the election due to the high rates of poverty and the intensity of political competition. NERG and DERG were co-chaired by the Inter-Religious Council, a coalition of Sierra Leone's religious groups, and the Campaign for Good Governance, a CSO that undertakes several programs supporting the election. The role of the NERG and the DERG was to engage the relevant stakeholders, Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), National Electoral Commission (NEC), chiefs, police, and local CSOs to develop effective strategies to counteract threats of violence. The PPRC in particular reactivated its District Monitoring Committees (DMCs) as of December 2017. The DMCs in each district are given the authority to resolve disputes between the parties related to the PPRC Code of Conduct and were intended to serve as a local platform for mitigating violence.

One clear advantage that WANEP in Sierra Leone had in comparison to other programs in this study is that the NEWS program had already been implemented in four other countries in the region, and the network was able to learn from the lessons of those programs. Furthermore, because WANEP was the implementing partner in each country, Sierra Leone's WANEP members could easily communicate with CSO members who participated in NEWS programs in the other countries. As one member of WANEP stated, "Sierra Leone will emerge as one of the best, because we have copied examples and case studies from the other countries to improve them better in the Sierra Leonean case."⁴⁹

The greatest benefit of the NEWS program for practitioners was that it successfully provided easily interpretable data to relevant stakeholders who could then more easily develop the most appropriate responses. Of the shorter-term programs listed in Table 1 that are available to civil society practitioners, interviews suggested that detailed monitoring and mapping of violent incidents was among the most effective. However, the NEWS program did rely on observers around the country being able to load information electronically into the database. One member of WANEP noted that the biggest challenge with the program was therefore Sierra Leone's erratic electricity and internet service.⁵⁰ This means that although the NEWS national headquarters

⁴⁹ Author interview, Jan. 22, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁵⁰ Author interview, Jan. 22, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

distributed cell phones and tablets to the observer teams, the observers were sometimes delayed in their ability to upload the relevant information. Another limitation is that the program relied on the police to help facilitate peaceful resolutions in many instances. As several interview participants noted, Sierra Leone's police force is relatively weak in terms of its institutional capacity and often lacks transparency regarding official decisions and police responses. Furthermore, the common perception among the population is that the police tend to act in support of the ruling party. Thus, although NEWS and NERG have close working relationships with the security services, responses that require police can be limited in their efficacy.

SEAG consortium

For the 2018 election, WANEP was a member of a larger coalition of stakeholder CSOs under the umbrella of the Strengthening Electoral Accountability and Governance (SEAG) consortium. SEAG consisted of WANEP, Society for Democratic Initiatives (SDI), Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL), National Advocacy Coalition on Extractives (NACE), and Peace Africa Alliance Consulting, Education, and Training Centre (PAACET). The consortium received funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to coordinate civil society activities related to supporting a peaceful election. In total, the consortium consisted of the five Freetown-based NGOs and 25 local CSOs distributed throughout the country. At the regional level, these CSOs were led by regional committees that consisted of seven members, including representatives of persons with disabilities.

In addition to WANEP's activities reporting incidents of violence, the coalition's major role was to monitor and assess the preparedness of the major electoral management bodies to conduct a peaceful and transparent election. As multiple members stated to me, the focus of the consortium was on "electoral justice," or ensuring that the institutions were fair and transparent. The guiding principle of the consortium was that peaceful elections can be best promoted through strengthening the relevant state agencies, including the NEC, PPRC, the judicial system, and the police. This included preparing and publishing a report on the preparedness of these institutions. The leadership of SEAG then met with the heads of each of these bodies to share their concerns regarding gaps in the agencies' readiness for the election. Among the most important gaps that SEAG identified was a lack of resources for existing mechanisms to resolve election irregularities and disputes regarding party selection of parliamentary candidates.⁵¹ The leadership also printed materials for its membership organizations to use in public presentations and appearances on radio programs to educate the public on the roles of the various EMBs.

ActionAid

The Sierra Leone branch of the international NGO ActionAid implemented two related programs to encourage a peaceful election. The first involved recruiting youth participants from

⁵¹ Author interview, Jan. 22, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

ten of Sierra Leone's districts to participate in a three-day training exercise in Freetown. ActionAid selected the target districts based on the hotspot mapping exercise conducted by WANEP to identify those areas most at risk of violence. The purpose of the training was to sensitize the participants on the importance of civic engagement and inform them of the laws and procedures surrounding the election. In particular, the training focused on the importance of considering policy proposals by the candidates rather than just their ethnic or regional backgrounds. The participants were also given information on how to promote peace in their respective communities. The goal was for the participants to serve as ambassadors for ActionAid to encourage civic education and peaceful participation in the election. The training modules were supported by the National Election Commission (NEC) and the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), a government-created agency that supports democratic reforms.

The second program focused on using music as a medium to promote peaceful elections. With funding from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and in partnership with a media development company, ActionAid developed songs that were played on the radio and television as well performed live on road shows around the country. The messages contained in the songs are a product of the training sessions conducted with youth participants and thus are intended to be relevant to those youths most at risk of participating or being victims of election violence. In support of both of their programs, ActionAid promoted two hashtags on its social media accounts: #thinkrightvoteright and #votesalone.⁵²

One member of ActionAid noted that the major factor limiting the efficacy of their programs is the continued tendency for at-risk youths to do the bidding of politicians as members of security details, dancers, or canvassers regardless of their campaign messages. She noted that "the youths are still the core of the politicians' instruments. ... They can pay these youths, and considering the level of poverty, youths sometimes go to the highest bidder. ... We are going into the communities and working on that mindset to say 'Yes, you can do what you are doing and take what you are taking, but you have to vote right.'"⁵³

National Election Watch

The National Election Watch (NEW) served as the primary domestic election observation organization during the 2018 election. NEW was a coalition of 375 CSOs across the country and recruited and trained several thousand domestic observers who were stationed around the country on election day. The observers' primary role was to ensure that voting was conducted in a free and peaceful environment as well as to provide a parallel vote tabulation on the results of the presidential election. However, experiences from previous elections have taught the leadership of NEW that they needed to start their observation activities far in advance of the election to be effective. As of February 2018, NEW had thus already begun observing and reporting issues

⁵² 'Salone' is a common local abbreviation for Sierra Leone.

⁵³ Author interview, Jan. 24, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

regulating the behavior of political parties and candidates during campaigns. NEW was headed by a national committee of 15 civil society leaders. Below them were regional offices in each of the country's regions, and further down were 16 district coordinators. These coordinators oversaw teams of 12 local members, which had a roughly equal gender balance and membership that included citizens with physical disabilities. In several districts, NEW had further structures that reached into individual chiefdoms.⁵⁴

The role of the district teams was to monitor the electoral environment in their respective communities and report violations of the campaign rules to the national office. The NEW national office in Freetown set up a situation room to collect data on these incidents and report them to the relevant authorities. NEW therefore established memorandums of understanding with police and the NEC. Much of NEW's work prior to the election was based around reporting violations of the campaigns laws to the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) and the NEC. This included candidates explicitly using religious identities to mobilize voters and traditional chiefs endorsing certain candidates, both of which are against the campaign laws. Unfortunately, NEW's biggest challenge was that the PPRC's and NEC's ability to enforce the campaign laws is limited, given their limited reach throughout the country. The PPRC's Code of Conduct therefore often acts as more of a "gentleman's agreement" rather than an enforceable set of regulations. This is despite the recent reactivation of the PPRC District Monitoring Committees. A member of NEW thus stated that this leaves many of the rules open to interpretation by the parties themselves.⁵⁵

Women's Situation Room

The Women's Situation Room (WSR) is a platform first used in Liberia's 2011 election to deal specifically with violence and intimidation against women. The platform also addresses other obstacles to women's participation in the election and facilitates peaceful negotiations between competing parties. Since 2011, the platform has been replicated in several African countries with some modifications depending on local conditions. WSR was previously used in Sierra Leone's 2012 election, and it was again organized for 2018 with funding from the UNDP.

At the time of field research, WSR was training observers from its membership organizations in each of Sierra Leone's districts in monitoring and reporting instances of violence against women and other barriers to women's participation in the election. WSR was also setting up a hotline that witnesses and victims could call to report instances of violence or intimidation. The leadership had also appeared on radio programs to advertise the role of the platform. The goal was that the situation room, when fully operational, would have specific desks dedicated to resolving issues that are best handled through cooperation with particular partners, such as the police, the National Electoral Commission, and youth groups.

⁵⁴ Author interview, Jan. 24, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁵⁵ Author interview, Jan. 24, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

WSR members also feel that one of their most critical roles is to serve as mediators in case of conflict. According to the leadership, one clear advantage of a female-led platform is that leaders can use their identities as women to better facilitate cordial negotiation during peace mediations. As one WSR member noted, “We don’t go [to mediations] as fighters. We go as mothers, as grandmothers. We go there as a peace process. Sincerity opens doors for us.”⁵⁶ Thus, because the WSR is associated with women, and thus the gender roles associated with maternal figures, its members felt that it is perhaps better able to assume the role of a non-political organization dedicated solely to peace. WSR members felt that their role was critical in ensuring a peaceful outcome in the 2012 election when the SLPP’s Julius Maada Bio challenged the results in court. WSR was able to shuttle between the various stakeholders in that election to urge the parties to respect the outcome of the court’s decision, even setting up a phone call between Bio and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.⁵⁷

One limitation facing the organizers of the WSR prior to the 2018 election was a delay in receiving expected funds from the UNDP. Although a site for the physical situation room had already been confirmed and many of the logistical details had already been agreed upon by leaders of the membership organizations, as of January 2018, most of WSR’s preparation activities were funded from the budgets of the member organizations themselves rather than from donor funding reserved specifically for WSR. Although the cause of the delay was unclear, interview participants noted that they were hindered in their ability to set up the WSR headquarters because of the delay.

Limitations of violence prevention intervention in Sierra Leone

One of the clearest limitations to violence prevention efforts noted by every interview participant in Sierra Leone was the institutional weakness of the police. Most programs relied to some extent on the police to respond to reported incidents or a risk of violence, yet most participants stated that few Sierra Leoneans expect the police to respond in a neutral manner. Most CSOs anticipate that the police will act largely in favor of the government. As one leader of the CSO stated, “The police suffer from a confidence gap. There is major confidence deficit with the police. [The opposition] does not trust the police to take the initiative in curbing violence.”⁵⁸

The police forces also lack the ability to properly respond to protests and demonstrations. One participant noted that “the capacity is not there on how to respond to crowds. For me, crowd control has been their biggest problem. You have a riot, with students or youths on the rampage, and [the police] don’t know what to do except fire. There are other techniques they should be able to use other than using live bullets to kill.”⁵⁹ Other participants stated that the police are rarely

⁵⁶ Author interview, Jan. 23, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁵⁷ Author interview, Jan. 23, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁵⁸ Author interview, Jan. 24, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁵⁹ Author interview, Jan. 22, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

able to do much more than fire tear gas in response to a disruptive crowd.⁶⁰ The police did undergo a training program in January funded by the UNDP to prepare for the election, but officers received only a few days of training, and most participants noted that there needed to be much more systematic reforms of the police force to make them a more effective and transparent agency.

Another potential limitation noted by some participants was the presence in civil society of organizations that were not neutral. One participant stated that “the civil society space is polluted. You have some segments of civil society that are honestly pro-government. ... Fundamentally, the civil society space is a little politicized.”⁶¹ This participant also noted that the government accuses many CSOs of being pro-opposition to manipulate the public’s perception of any criticism of the government’s handling of the election. Another CSO member stated that so called “portfolio NGOs” exist that purport to speak for a particular community or issue but are in practice closely affiliated with a particular politician.⁶²

Another concern for some participants was that CSOs at times felt themselves to be in competition for funding and that this generated some conflict over credit for projects. As one participant stated, “In the event of meager resources, there is bound to be the element of rivalry for resources.”⁶³ It should be noted, however, that the leaders of those CSOs that were members of larger consortiums felt that the consortiums had been largely successful in coordinating CSO activities and that the environment within the consortiums was largely cooperative.

Importantly, Sierra Leone does not have an effective equivalent to the Multiparty Liaison Committees in Malawi or the National Steering Committee’s Local Peace Committees in Kenya that have the potential to closely involve the political parties in coordinating local peace building activities. The Political Parties Registration Commission does have District Monitoring Committees (DMC) that have representatives from the political parties, but their role is somewhat more narrowly focused on resolving disputes related to the PPRC Code of Conduct than it is on coordinating peace programming on a broader scale. In previous elections, the DMCs have acted as a platform to address complaints by the parties that they are being prohibited from campaigning in certain regions or that parties are recruiting chiefs to participate in campaign activities, both of which violate the Code of Conduct. In 2007 and 2012, the DMCs were successful at resolving some of these disputes (Jackson 2013). For the 2018 elections, the DMCs were only reactivated with support from the UNDP on December 17—less than three months before the March 7 elections. This has given the committees very little time to organize meaningful activities. Evidence from previous elections suggests that the DMCs have historically not been given enough resources to function as reliable community peace committees for

⁶⁰ Author interview, Jan. 22, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁶¹ Author interview, Jan. 22, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁶² Author interview, Jan. 24, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁶³ Author interview, Jan. 24, 2018; Freetown, Sierra Leone.

meaningful conflict resolution and that they have failed to operate at all in some districts where they are needed (European Union 2013).

Finally, as a very poor country with a historically weak state, Sierra Leone's major election institutions and organizations, such as the NEC and PPRC, continue to lack the capacity to ensure a free and fair election. These organizations have become considerably stronger since the end of the civil war, but disputes over the election outcome and the fairness of the political process continue to threaten peaceful acceptance of the results.

Sri Lanka

Country background

After independence in 1948, politics in Sri Lanka was dominated by two main political parties: The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP). This continued after the constitutional reforms of 1978, which created an office of president and introduced aspects of proportional representation. Although Sri Lanka has continuously held elections since then, the political scene has been characterized by violence, patronage politics, and ethnic and religious conflict. Public policies have tended to favor the Buddhist Sinhalese majority, effectively marginalizing many of the country's minority groups, including ethnic Tamils and Muslims.

Sri Lanka's civil war began in 1983 when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a Tamil nationalist rebel group, attacked government forces and declared its desire for a separate ethnic Tamil state. The civil war saw significant violence against civilians, including terrorist attacks by the LTTE. Despite several attempts at internationally mediated peace talks, the civil war continued for another 25 years, causing more than 80,000 deaths. Elections continued despite the ongoing war. Some of these were characterized by high levels of electoral violence. For example, elections in 2000 and 2001 saw murders and bombings between supporters of the two major coalitions, as well as significant police brutality (Hoglund & Piyarathne 2009).

The 2005 presidential election saw the rise of Mahinda Rajapaksa, the presidential candidate from the SLFP-led United People's Freedom Alliance. Once becoming president, Rajapaksa turned Sri Lanka in a decisively authoritarian direction. Soon, "all Sri Lankans were feeling the Rajapaksa government's heavy hand. Civil society activists, regime critics, and journalists who reported independently on the war were harassed; some were even disappeared and killed. The government's no-holds-barred approach to winning the conflict failed to distinguish between LTTE combatants and Tamil civilians" (DeVotta 2016, 154). Rajapaksa also stacked key government posts with his own family members, and together they ran an extensive patronage network to keep themselves in power.

In 2009, government forces launched a military offensive in the northern and eastern districts of the country, brutally crushing the LTTE rebellion. The offensive was characterized by considerable violence against Tamil civilians. With the war over, President Rajapaksa "pursued not national unity but the expansion of his own powers at the expense of democracy and ethnic reconciliation alike" (DeVotta 2016, 155). Rajapaksa also allowed the rise of extremist Sinhalese nationalist groups such Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), which targeted ethnic minorities with violent attacks. Often, "the BBS acted with impunity. Police typically did nothing but look on passively as mob violence raged, and in Dharga Town the Special Task Force (a paramilitary police unit) even appeared to assist the anti-Muslim rioters" (DeVotta 2016, 158).

Background to the 2015 elections

President Rajapaksa used his presidential powers under the constitution to call for an early election, seeking a stronger mandate for his rule. Having weakened the country's democratic institutions in the previous years, most observers thought his chances of re-election strong. He faced an opposition alliance under the UNP headed by his former health minister, Maithripala Sirisena. Quite surprisingly, Sirisena emerged victorious with 51 percent of the vote. Calling for parliamentary elections after the victory, Sirisena's coalition again emerged victorious, leaving former president Rajapaksa with only a seat in Parliament. With this changeover, the political scene has been considerably liberalized, with many referring to the 2015 election as the "Rainbow Revolution" (DeVotta 2016).

Risks for election violence

Sri Lanka has a history of recent election violence, and the incumbent government in 2015 had not shied away from perpetrating violence against political opponents. President Rajapaksa ran as a relatively well-entrenched patron, having pushed the country toward corrupt authoritarianism. He also ended the civil war in brutal fashion. As the government had stoked religious tension in the years prior to the election, the risks for election violence were relatively high. Furthermore, elections in Sri Lanka are often characterized by vote buying, ballot box stuffing, and other forms of electoral malfeasance. Ultimately, most fears of high violence were not realized. There were however several violent incidents over the course of the campaign, including a few election-related deaths. However, the country managed to avoid the large-scale violence that could have taken place, given the risks.

Electoral violence prevention in 2015

Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV)

Perhaps Sri Lanka's most well-known violence prevention program is the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV). Formed in 1997 by a consortium of civil society organizations led by the Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA), CMEV's primary role is to monitor and report on incidents of violence during the campaign. Similar to WANEP's programming in Sierra Leone, CMEV geographically maps and categorizes reported incidents as well as publicly reports them through press releases via its website over the course of the campaign. In 2015, CMEV trained 193 monitors for the parliamentary election and 180 monitors for the presidential election to report incidents of violence to the organization's headquarters in Colombo. Incident reports were fact-checked by district coordinators before being included in the mapping. CMEV also deployed observers on both election days and helped coordinate international election observation missions.

The idea behind CMEV's programming is that violence can be reduced if it is publicly exposed. As one CMEV member stated, "the rationale for the whole exercise was that violence was a problem in our elections and that we were going to 'name and shame' individuals and political parties who engaged in violence. And of course, we were going to use the media as much as possible to put this information out, on the basis that voters had to be properly informed before they made any informed choice at the ballot box."⁶⁴ The organization's leadership considers the program's existence to be one of the primary reasons why election violence had decreased since the early 2000s. CMEV has thus established itself as one of the primary vehicles for strengthening and observing elections in Sri Lanka. Widely recognized as a credible election monitoring organization, CMEV was one of the two civil society organizations given access to polling stations for observation in the 2015 elections by the electoral commission.

One challenge CMEV faces is a certain amount of resistance from the government. In addition to reporting on election violence, CMEV works to improve election quality, human rights, and good governance more broadly. This can place it at odds with the incumbent party. An interview participant from CMEV noted that "we face certain hostility from [the party in power], in a systematic campaign of vilification, and all of that kind of thing. But we've managed to soldier on without too much of a problem. ... Governments have always attacked us and said we are working according to a foreign agenda and that kind of thing. But at the end of the day, the people judge you in terms of the work that you do and what you come out with."⁶⁵

People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL)

The largest election observation organization in Sri Lanka is the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), which has been monitoring elections since 1987. Along with CMEV, PAFFREL is the only other civil society organization given access to polling stations for observation by the electoral commission. For the 2015 elections, PAFFREL deployed 11,200 stationary observers, 335 long-term observers, and 1,640 mobile observers to help promote a free and fair election.

In Sri Lanka's recent local elections, PAFFREL also set up a team in each of the country's 25 districts at the start of the nomination process to address any problems related to the campaign. Each team included a complaint mitigation unit to deal with complaints from the public regarding difficulties in participation or problems with the conduct of the parties. This included incidents of violence, intimidation, or other obstructions to a fair election process. An interview participant from PAFFREL stated that in each district, "there is a lawyer and then around 10 people there to assist the complaint unit, and we have given huge publicity about this complaint unit to the political parties. We have informed the political parties, we have given the phone numbers, fax numbers, email contacts to the media so everybody is aware that PAFFREL

⁶⁴ Interview; March 21, 2018.

⁶⁵ Interview; March 21, 2018.

has this complaint unit. So if anyone has any election related issue, they can call this complaint unit, and they can complain to the district office.”⁶⁶ After receiving complaints from the public, PAFFREL then engages with the relevant stakeholders, including the electoral commission and the police, to find a resolution to the issue.

In recent years, PAFFREL has also engaged in civic education programs, voter registration programs, and programs aimed at improving good governance and human rights. This includes programs to improve the quality of candidates and campaigns in elections. For example, PAFFREL has developed a set of criteria to evaluate various candidates on their democratic credentials that can be enumerated on scorecards for each candidate. PAFFREL then “distributes this scorecard throughout the country. It can’t reach all the citizens but at least three or four million can use the scorecard to assess their candidate, and we have given some sort of criteria by the side of the card and they can do the math. At the end of the day, they can select the best person. We are involved in the whole process, not just observe the elections.”⁶⁷

National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (NPC)

The National Peace Council (NPC) undertakes several activities related to promoting social peace. Founded in 1995, NPC addresses issues related to election violence, post-civil war reconciliation, and mitigating tensions between Sri Lanka’s ethnic and religious groups. One of NPC’s primary programs is organizing District Inter-Religious Committees (DIRCs), which serve as community platforms to resolve conflicts peacefully. The DIRCs exist throughout the year but can be employed to facilitate anti-violence and voter education campaigns in preparation for an election. An interview participant from NPC stated: “We mobilize the communities themselves, community leaders, to be willing to come out and form a network where they also feel more secure in taking a stand if there is a problem. We also get the cooperation of the election commission. ... So we get the election commissioner’s cooperation as well as the police cooperation. And that also gives a certain bite to the work we do, because those who are trying to create trouble know that our people can report them to the police or to the election commissioner who can take punitive action against them.”⁶⁸

NPC also undertook a voter education program prior to each of the elections in 2015. The program made particular efforts to empower those voters who had been disenfranchised by the civil war. The program included community meetings, radio broadcasts, newspaper advertisements, and the distribution of leaflets, wristbands, and posters. These materials advised voters of the election procedures as well as their own rights and responsibilities. The NPC annual report notes that prior to the parliamentary elections, NPC distributed 80,000 calendars across twelve of Sri Lanka’s districts. The “new calendars urged voters not to support candidates who were racist, violent and corrupt, and to unite to support those who stood for good governance and

⁶⁶ Interview; March 21, 2018.

⁶⁷ Interview; March 21, 2018.

⁶⁸ Interview; March 19, 2018.

Rule of Law, were for a peaceful solution to the ethnic conflict and did not consider ethnic, religious and gender differences” (NPC 2015, 20). NPC made sure that messages in both print and radio were conveyed in English, Sinhala, and Tamil wherever possible.

NPC also makes a concerted effort to involve local politicians in its anti-violence programming. This has been made somewhat easier by the changeover of government in 2015, which considerably liberalized the political landscape in Sri Lanka. An interview participant from NPC noted that it is critical to “get the buy in of the political party leaders. We go to them and ask them to make public pledges [like] ‘there will be no election violence.’ And in fact, in the last election that we held, there was very little violence. Comparatively little violence.”⁶⁹

Limitations of violence prevention intervention in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has been fortunate to see generally decreasing levels of election violence in recent years. This suggests that to some extent, Sri Lanka’s anti-violence programming has had a positive impact. Still, some limitations are worth discussing. For example, most organizations do not operate under an overarching consortium during elections. A future consortium may or may not improve overall program efficacy. As one interview participant noted, “There is no overall coordination, but it’s not as if they are fighting with each other either. They have a little bit of rivalry but because, after all, they each have to raise their own funds from donors. ... [We] won’t operate under one command structure and try and see that each one fills the gaps the other leaves. But there is also informal coordination also. [We] do get together and they do discuss. We do broadly say ‘we are going to be working in these areas and this is how we are going to do it’ so that the others know what we are doing. So there is no close collaboration to come up with a single program or action.”⁷⁰ An identifiable consortium could also potentially help the public identify those neutral CSOs from those that are politically motivated. As one participant noted, “Some organizations—honestly, don’t ask me the name of them—some are politically motivated groups. Some election monitoring bodies are organized by a political party. Some are not, but are biased by some political party.”⁷¹

Police reform has emerged a key theme throughout this report. In Sri Lanka, despite having a history of using excessive force, the police were somewhat better prepared to deal with cases of violence in recent elections compared to police forces in the other countries in this study. The observation mission from the Commonwealth that observed the presidential election stated: “We note that the Police committed to disciplinary action against officers who did not perform their duties with regard to election law violations in the campaign period” (The Commonwealth 2015, 11). The European Union mission that observed the parliamentary election also found that “the police played an active role in maintaining campaign rules. They were quick to respond to calls by the Commissioner of Elections to remove illegal posters and address other breaches. In

⁶⁹ Interview; March 19, 2018.

⁷⁰ Interview; March 19, 2018.

⁷¹ Interview; March 21, 2018.

comparison, police activity was more heavy-handed during previous election periods. However, many opposition candidates from the UPFA criticized the police for being slow to take up their complaints. EU EOM observers reported that often police did not act in a consistent manner across the country” (European Union 2015, 16). Thus, although improvements can be made to the police with regards to elections, Sri Lanka’s police force is more prepared than security forces in many other young democracies.

Civil society organizations are beginning to consider the gendered nature of election violence more seriously in their programs, but this remains relatively new. Indeed, in recent elections, women have continued to report violence and intimidation aimed at limiting their political participation. The European Union observation mission for the 2015 parliamentary elections further reported that “in addition to cultural and gender stereotypes and socio-economic considerations, the political culture of violence prevalent in previous elections is a major hindrance to women’s participation in politics” (European Union 2015, 26). The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has recently started its Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWIE) program in Sri Lanka, but this was introduced only in 2017 in preparation for local elections in 2018.

The success of Sri Lanka’s anti-violence programs also still depends on the attitude of the government in power. One interview participant felt although the current government is more supportive of CSO programs, “the previous government might have unleashed thugs and criminals on their opponents. So, success of a strategy will also depend on the government, not simply that civil society by itself turns things around one way or the other. We need the cooperation and support of the government, political actors. ... That government had it very strongly that civil society are working for dollars, are traitors, and they said it publicly and created a strong body of public opinion, which was also difficult for us to work against.”⁷² Thus, unfortunately not all political parties in Sri Lanka are in favor violence prevention efforts.

Finally, Sri Lanka remains a relatively poor country where voters can be bribed to support candidates both peacefully and potentially with violence. Multiple interview participants noted that the lack of clear campaign finance laws and enforcement of vote-buying rules allows candidates to subvert the democratic process in several ways. They felt that to some extent the ability of politicians to pay supporters to campaign for them inhibited the effectiveness of anti-violence programs.

⁷² Interview; March 19, 2018.

List of Interview Participants

All interview participants in this study consented to being listed in this report, although no quotations are individually attributed to them. Participants in Sri Lanka were interviewed via Skype or telephone. All others were interviewed in person.

Kenya:	
Johnson Mwalulu	Amani Clubs
Samuel Karuita	Peace Ambassadors Integration Organization (PAMBIO)
Kimani Njogu	Twaweza Communications
Mercy Nkatha	International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
Selina Wanjiri	National Steering Committee for Peace Building and Conflict Management (NSC)
Andrew Limo	Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC)
Festus Rotich	Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC)
Eusebius Atamallo	Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC)
Linus Onyango	Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC)
Mercy Letting	Peace and Development Network Trust (PeaceNet-Kenya)
Arthur Wasongo	One Nation Under God
Kilian Nyambu	National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)
Alice Anukur	Kenya Peace Conference (KPC)/American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Malawi:	
Robert Phiri	Public Affairs Committee (PAC)
Gerard Chigona	The Centre for Multiparty Democracy-Malawi
Joseph Dzuwa	Multiparty Liaison Committees (MPLC)
Ollen Mwalubunju	National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE)
Augustine Magolowondo	The Centre for Multiparty Democracy-Malawi
Sierra Leone:	
Charles Lahai	Peace Africa Alliance Consulting, Education and Training (PAACET)
Isata Mahoi	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)

Hawa Samai	Women's Situation Room (WSR)/Advocacy Movement Network (AMNET)
Barbara Sangare	Women's Situation Room (WSR)
Ibrahim Tommy	Centre for Accountability and the Rule of Law-Sierra Leone (CARL-SL)
Aminata Kelly-Lamin	ActionAid Sierra Leone
Marcella Samba-Sesay	National Election Watch (NEW)
Cecillia Mattia	National Advocacy Coalition on Extractives (NACE)
Tanu Jalloh	Open Tax Initiative
Sri Lanka:	
Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu	Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV)
Rohana Hettiarachchie	People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL)
Jehan Perera	National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (NPC)

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