



ELECTORAL CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

A Strategy for Study and Prevention

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An electoral process is an alternative to violence as it is a means of achieving governance. It is when an electoral process is perceived as unfair, unresponsive, or corrupt, that its political legitimacy is compromised and stakeholders are motivated to go outside the established norms to achieve their objectives. Electoral conflict and violence become tactics in political competition.

There are examples of elections that have exacerbated long-term conflict (Angola 1992) or have politically hardened conflict-related alliances (Bosnia and Herzegovina 1996). From these experiences, it is generally recognized that post-conflict elections can be held too early and produce results that may extend the conflict rather than resolve it. However, in most cases, such elections mitigate the effects of larger conflict issues and reduce them into localized, manageable incidents.

“An electoral process is an alternative to violence as it is a means of achieving governance.”

Election processes that are fair, responsive, and honest can be similarly victimized. In either scenario, stakeholders use conflict, violence, and threat as means to determine, delay, or otherwise influence the results of the election. When conflict or violence occurs, it is not a result of an electoral process; it is the breakdown of an electoral process. Elections are the mechanisms by which public questions are resolved and public contests are determined. It is difficult to identify any electoral surrogate that has brought about non-conflictive transitions of power with the same consistency.

Past thinking at stemming electoral conflict and violence has been deficient because of the lack of a common framework for research and practice. A marriage of research and application has not occurred because the object

of the research—electoral or political violence analysis—is different from the concern of the practitioners: election security.

“When conflict or violence occurs, it is not a result of an electoral process; it is the breakdown of an electoral process.”

Electoral conflict and violence can be defined as any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay, or to otherwise influence an electoral process. Election security can be defined as the process of protecting electoral stakeholders, information, facilities, and events.

Electoral conflict and violence can occur at five intervals in an election chronology:

1. **Identity conflict** can occur during the registration process when refugees or other conflict-forced migrants cannot establish or re-establish their officially recognized identities.
2. **Campaign conflict** can occur as rivals seek to disrupt the opponents' campaigns, intimidate voters and candidates, and use threats and violence to influence participation in the voting.
3. **Balloting conflict** can occur on Election Day when rivalries are played out at the polling station.
4. **Results conflict** can occur with disputes over election results and the inability of judicial mechanisms to resolve disputes a fair, timely, and transparent manner.
5. **Representation conflict** can occur when elections are organized as “zero sum” events and “losers” are left out of participation in governance.

A survey of 57 electoral events from 2001 was conducted in order to assess

the levels and forms of conflict that appeared. Of these countries, 31 are rated as “Free” by the Freedom House rating process; 24 are described as either “Not Free” or “Partly Free;” and Kosovo and East Timor can be considered in a separate, internationally administered category. Instances of conflict were identified in a total of 14 countries (24.5% of the total survey); of those 14, three of the elections occurred in countries considered Free (21%) and 11 were in countries that are considered Partly Free or Not Free (79%).

The fourteen countries included Thailand (January 6 – parliamentary), Yemen (February 20 – municipal and referendum) Benin (March 4 – presidential), Philippines (May 14 – legislative and Local), Chad (May 27 – presidential), Uganda (June 27 – parliamentary), Pakistan (July 2 – local), Zambia (July 17 and December 27 – parliamentary and presidential), Fiji (August 23 – parliamentary), Seychelles (August 31 – presidential), Belarus (September 9 – presidential), Bangladesh (October 1 – parliamentary), The Gambia (October 16 – presidential), and Sri Lanka (December 5 – parliamentary).

Using these snapshots from the 2001 electoral calendar, there are four descriptive categories of conflict and violence that emerge, suggesting a variety of motives, victims, and perpetrators.

1. Voters in conflict with the State and claiming unfairness in the election process (Thailand, Zambia);
2. The State in conflict with voters who challenge the election results or the electoral hegemony of the State (Chad, Belarus);
3. Political rivals in conflict with each other for political gain (Yemen, Benin, Philippines, Uganda, Fiji, Seychelles, Pakistan, The Gambia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka); or
4. A blending of these three categories.

Based on the survey, this translates into voter-motivated conflict occurring in about 14% of the cases, State-motivated conflict occurring in about 14% of the cases, and rival-motivated conflict occurring in about 72% of the cases.

Using these profiles, a potential “watch list” of elections in 2002 can be developed. The preliminary list shows at least 19 examples countries that are rated as Not Free or Partly Free and have experienced previous election violence including The Gambia, Republic of Congo, Cambodia, Colombia, Zimbabwe, Chad, Armenia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan, Georgia, Haiti, Albania, Guinea, Macedonia, Madagascar, and Ukraine.

However, not all scenarios conform to the models that have been defined. These “variations on a theme” include the following ones:

1. Litigation and clemency are employed as post-electoral conflict tools in Zimbabwe to seek compensation for loss of life and absolution for regime-induced provocations;
2. Separatist movements in India exploit the visibility of the electoral campaign to conduct paramilitary and criminal strikes against the government and its symbols;
3. Perpetrators deliberately disable voters in Sierra Leone to prevent them from physically casting ballots;
4. Electoral intimidation is defined by real property with hired thugs enforcing electoral behavior in recognizable physical districts;
5. Avoiding further street demonstrations and a potential no confidence note, an incumbent uses early elections in a conflict resolution tool.
6. Election litigation is employed as a substitute for election conflict and violence.

Election organizers protect the electoral process from conflict and violence through security planning and security instruments. Through experience, the international community is developing a pattern of response to potential violence in elections under its supervision. In an international context, roles are assigned among the three principal security stakeholders: 1) international military forces; 2) international civilian police; and 3) local security forces. In some cases, ad hoc security structures must be established in order to coordinate resources and implement an election security plan.

The 2000 and 2001 election process in Kosovo was conducted under international administration. As such, the international community established special features that were designed to reduce friction among the political players. These features included registration outside of Kosovo for those displaced by the conflict, multiple avenues for political participation, an election complaints and dispute resolution body, homebound voting for inhabitants of enclaves, and systems of representation that have included gender and ethnic set-aside seats. Although there were incidents in the 2000 electoral campaign, Election Day was incident free in 2000 and 2001.

Technical assistance for electoral processes has been effective at providing standards and capacity building for election management bodies, election courts, political parties, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and media organizations. The technical assistance to electoral conflict scenarios can be grouped into three thematic areas: 1) institutional capacity; 2) information resources, and 3) monitoring. Through integrated and focused programming, the threat of electoral conflict can be reduced and the societal function of elections as an alternative to violence can remain intact.

INTRODUCTION

An electoral process is an alternative to violence as a means of achieving governance. When an electoral process is perceived as unfair, unresponsive, or corrupt, its political legitimacy is compromised and stakeholders are motivated to go outside of the established norms to achieve their objectives. Electoral conflict and violence become tactics in political competition. As the Nigerian Academic Staff Union of Universities admonished in a January 1 statement, “Among the factors that make political violence possible and in deed likely [in Nigeria] are deepening poverty, unemployment and hunger, retrenchment resulting from privatization of the people’s property, manipulation of ethnic loyalties, and attempt to rig future elections.”¹ When an electoral process becomes conflictive or violent, its function as an umpire for social decision-making is damaged.

There are examples of elections that have exacerbated conflicts (Angola 1992) or politically hardened conflict-related alliances (Bosnia and Herzegovina 1996), and, from these experiences, it is generally recognized that post-conflict elections can be held too early and produce results that may extend the conflict rather than resolve it. However, in most cases, such elections diffuse larger conflict issues and reduce them into localized, manageable incidents.

As Robert Pastor states in his article, *Election Administration in Democratic Transitions*, “The failure to conduct an election that is judged fair by all sides can pre-empt a democratic transition. Repeated failures can lead to violence and chronic instability.”² Where such failures have been a risk, international technical assistance in election administration has served to tutor and support so that conflict is not engendered by administrative failure or other technical deficiencies.

Electoral processes that are fair, responsive, and honest can be similarly victimized by conflict and violence. In either scenario, stakeholders use

¹ Adeyemo, Ademola, *This Day* (Lagos), “Brace Up for Political Violence in 2002,” January 2, 2002.

² Pastor, Robert, *Democratization*, “The Role of Electoral Administration in Democratic Transitions: Implications of Policy and Research,” winter 1999.

conflict, violence, and threat as means to determine, delay, or otherwise influence the results of the election. However, when conflict or violence occurs, it is not a result of an electoral process, it is the breakdown of an electoral process.

The strategy described in this paper proposes to contain current electoral conflict and violence by determining its causes and directing resources toward conflict management or resolution; and to reduce future electoral breakdowns through conflict prevention capacity building for electoral stakeholders.

As examples will show, the motives, perpetrators, and victims of electoral conflict and violence will vary from country to country and election to election. This mercurial character makes it difficult to properly frame the problem and tailor the response. However, through a survey of the conflicted elections of 2001, a framework for analysis emerges that can be useful in shaping programmatic responses to this problem.

Past thinking at stemming electoral conflict and violence has been deficient because of the lack of a common framework for research and practice. The research that has been performed on political violence has not been applied by election practitioners. This marriage of research and application has not occurred because the object of the researcher—electoral or political violence analysis—is different from the concern of the practitioner: election security. That gap is bridged through this strategy.

Electoral conflict and violence can be defined as any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced “protection,” blackmail, destruction of property, or assassination. The victims of electoral violence can be people, places, things or data. Conflict and violence need not be inflicted on a national scale. In fact, victims can be resident in target ethnic, gender, geographical, or political “hot spot” communities. “Conflict” and “violence” are intentionally

combined in this definition because their respective impacts on electoral processes are similar although the magnitude of the victimization is not equal.

Election security can be defined as the process of protecting electoral stakeholders such as voters, candidates, poll workers, media, and observers; electoral information such as vote results, registration data, and campaign material; electoral facilities such as polling stations and counting centers; and electoral events such as campaign rallies against death, damage, or disruption. The participants in election security are Election Management Bodies (EMBs), security forces, political parties, media, civil society organizations, and judicial officials.

The expression of electoral conflict and violence can occur at five intervals in an election chronology.

1. **Identity conflict** can occur during the registration process when refugees or other conflict-forced migrants cannot establish or re-establish their officially recognized identities. The result is that these populations can remain disenfranchised and outside of the political process and potentially provoke conflict within the process. A recent example of identity conflict can be noted in the “identity cleansing” of identity documents confiscated from ethnic-Albanian refugees fleeing Kosovo. Without an officially recognized identity, these refugees were effectively made into non-persons and non-voters. Through a combination of document searches and investigations, the Joint Registration Taskforce of the United Nation Mission in Kosovo and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe restored identities to over 100,000 individuals in advance of the October 28, 2000, municipal elections.
2. **Campaign conflict** can occur as rivals seek to disrupt the opponents’ campaigns, intimidate voters and candidates, and use threats and violence to influence participation in the voting. As a survey of

electoral events from 2001 will suggest, conflict among political rivals appears to have been the most common form of electoral conflict.

3. **Balloting conflict** can occur on Election Day when political rivalries are played out at the polling station. Steps can be taken to provide alternative means of balloting if particular groups or communities are exposed to violence or intimidation. For example, homebound voting was devised for some minorities in Kosovo to avoid conflictive travel to polling stations.
4. **Results conflict** can occur in disputes over election results and the inability of judicial mechanisms to resolve these disputes in a timely, fair, and transparent manner. The manner in which results are reported can also be a conflict issue. For example, in East Timor's Population Consultation (1999), the United Nation organizers devised a formula to mixed voter ballots from different polling stations so that the results from any single station were completely obscured. Since the question was voted on at-large, there was no reporting need to group results by station. By creating this extra veil of secrecy of the ballot, retaliation could not occur against certain villages or communities based on the reported results from the polling station.

Election dispute mechanisms must also be in place to adjudicate grievances and serve as a conflict prevention and resolution role in certifying the outcome of an election. As stated in the OSCE/ODIHR manual on election dispute resolution, "Election disputes are inherent to elections. Challenging an election, its conduct or results, should however not be perceived as a reflection of weakness in the system, but as proof of the strength, vitality, and openness of the political system."³

5. **Representation conflict** can occur when elections are organized as "zero sum" events where "losers" are left out of participation in governance. As Ben Reilly and Andrew Reynolds state in their book Electoral Systems and Conflict in Divided Societies:

³ Petit, Denis, OSCE/ODIHR, *and Resolving Election Disputes in the OSCE Area: Towards a Standard Election Dispute Monitoring System*, 2000.

The optimal choice for peacefully managing conflict depends on several identifiable factors specific to the country, including the way and degree to which ethnicity is politicized, the intensity of the conflict, and the demographic and geographic distribution of ethnic groups. In addition, the electoral system that is most appropriate for initially ending internal conflict may not be the best one for longer-term conflict management.⁴

ELECTORAL CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN 2001

The IFES *2001 ElectionGuide* listed major electoral events occurring in 55 countries or entities. The assembly elections in Kosovo and local elections in Pakistan can be added to the survey for a total of 57.⁵ Of these 57 locations, 31 are rated as “Free” by the Freedom House rating process (Thailand, Portugal, Cape Verde, Israel, Liechtenstein, Samoa, Andorra, Benin, Micronesia, Guyana, Italy, Cyprus, United Kingdom, St. Vincent, Philippines, Mongolia, San Marino, Bulgaria, Japan, Sao Tome and Principe, Norway, Poland, Argentina, Australia, Denmark, Honduras, Taiwan, Solomon Islands, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Chile). Two of these entities, East Timor and Kosovo, can be considered in a special category while under international administration. The remaining 24 countries are classified as “Partly Free” or “Not Free” (Senegal, Bahrain, Yemen, Moldova, Uganda, Peru, Montenegro, Chad, Iran, Pakistan, Albania, Fiji, Seychelles, Belarus, Bangladesh, Gambia, Mauritania, Singapore, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Gabon, Madagascar, Comoros, and Zambia).⁶

In 2001, instances of conflict or violence were identified in a total of 14 countries (24.5% of the total survey); of those 14, three of the elections occurred in countries considered Free (21%) and 11 occurred in countries considered Partly or Not Free (79%).

In containing the current electoral conflict and violence, it is necessary to understand the motives, victims, and perpetrators. Snapshots of the conflicts

⁴ Reilly, Ben and Reynolds, Andrew, *Electoral Systems and Conflict in Divided Societies*, National Academy Press, 1999.

⁵ IFES, 2001 ElectionGuide, www.ifes.org.

⁶ Freedom House, *Table of Countries: Comparative Measures of Freedom*, 2001.

from each of these 14 countries are shown below.

Thailand – January 6 (Parliamentary)

Vote counting was disrupted by violent protests in several constituencies, mainly in the Southern provinces. The conflict was motivated by voters believing that local election officials were biased in their counting procedures. However, an election official in the Songkhla province stated, “[The bookmakers] do not want to lose millions of baht in bets, so they instigate protests to force a recount and a revote.” In one case, police vehicles were set on fire; in another case, a riot ensued involving 500 people and 15 injuries.⁷

Yemen – February 20 (Municipal and Referendum)

Twenty people were killed, including ten people on Election Day alone, in the first municipal elections since unification. Clashes occurred between supporters of the opposition party, Al-Islah, and the ruling General People’s Party. Five policemen were killed, three of them during a shoot-out at a vote counting center. The deaths also included one candidate, an independent from Al-Bayda, southeast of Sanaa.⁸

Benin – March 4 (Presidential)

Violent incidents appear to have been confined to the town of Aborney (150 km from Cotonou). Aborney had been known as a stronghold for the former President Nicephore Soglo, however, it was now reported to be “up for grabs” by both major political parties. One incident involved the firing of shots into the house of a supporter of the current president, Mathieu Kerekou. Another Kerekou supporter was shot but survived the assault. Several actions were taken to ensure that violence would be minimal including public information campaigns urging peaceful elections, engagement of religious organizations in the role of peace-makers, and devising a Republican Pact of Good Conduct for political parties to sign.⁹

⁷ Ingram, Simon, *BBC News*, Violence disrupts Thai count,” January 9, 2001.

⁸ *AFP*, “Death toll reaches 20 in Yemen election-related clashes,” February 23, 2001.

⁹ Misanet.com/IPS, “Beninese mobilize against election violence,” www.afrol.com, March 3, 2001.

Philippines – May 14 (Legislative and Local)

The death toll in the Philippines electoral campaign rose to 64 when a hand grenade tore through a crowd of 2,000, killing four supporters of an opposition mayoral candidate in the southern town of Sultan sa Bargonis. Other instances of campaign violence involved the shooting of candidates and clashes between armed supporters of political rivals.¹⁰ Pre-election deaths have also been attributed to communist rebels who impose “permit to campaign fees” in countryside areas they control. Muslim rebels and armed groups employed by politicians were also security threats during elections.¹¹

Chad – May 27 (Presidential)

Disputes over the results of the re-election of President Idriss Deby led to street demonstrations in N'djamena that were violently dispersed by government security forces. In one instance, armed police fired tear gas into a crowd, disrupting a peaceful demonstration involving 100 women and injuring several of them. Amnesty International stated, “Chadian security forces made excessive use of firearms and tear gas against non-violent protesters.”¹² The day following the election, police broke up a meeting of six opposition presidential candidates, shot and killed one opposition activist, and briefly detained all six candidates. These candidates and other opposition activists were detained again on May 30 but released the same day. Two candidates were reportedly tortured during their detention.¹³

Uganda – June 27 (Parliamentary)

At least seven people were shot and killed and 150 people were taken into custody for alleged “election malpractice and violence.”¹⁴ One incident was an altercation between a crowd and the bodyguard of a candidate. Voters accused the candidate of distributing bribes for votes and his bodyguard

¹⁰ *Sun*, “Bloody election in Philippines,” iafrica.com/news, May 13, 2001.

¹¹ *AFP*, “Election violence toll: 50 killed, 69 injured,” www.inq7.net, May 10, 2001.

¹² *Afrol News*, “Violent crackdown on peaceful protesters in Chad,” June 12, 2001.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *UN Integrated Regional Information Networks*, “Seven killed in Election Violence,” allafrica.com, June 27, 2001.

shot and killed five of his opponent's supporters. In another town, a bodyguard was similarly involved with the shooting injury of a rival's supporters. Elsewhere, a district administrator was arrested for allegedly using soldiers and police to force electors to vote for his preferred candidate.¹⁵ Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala issued a pastoral letter in advance of the poll warning candidates not to resort to "exclusion, violence, insults, calumnies and character assassination in the election;"¹⁶ and the election monitoring group NEMGROUP issued a statement condemning the violence.¹⁷

Pakistan – July 2 (Local)

Four phases of local elections held under a devolution plan of the military government were concluded in July. Political parties were barred from contesting in the local races and because of campaign unrest, 45,000 soldiers were on patrol in Karachi alone. During this fourth round of voting, seven people lost their lives including one bombing at a movie theater that police linked to electoral violence.¹⁸

Zambia – July 17 and December 27 (Parliamentary and Presidential)

July 17

Riot police patrolled the streets of Lusaka following violence between rival supporters of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy and the United National Independent Party. Although no arrests were made, police warned both parties that further clashes would result in massive arrests.¹⁹

December 27

In a public statement on the legitimacy of the presidential election, the European Union election observation chief Michael Meadowcroft said, "There are clear, glaring irregularities and there is no way we can run away from this," he said. The conduct and outcome of the election sparked violent street protests and armed riot police were turned out to control the crowds.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Muwanga, David, *The Monitor* (Kampala), "Cardinal Warns on Election Violence," January 24, 2001.

¹⁷ *New Vision*, "Election Monitors Condemn Violence," allafrica.com, June 26, 2001.

¹⁸ *CNN.com*, "Seven dead in Pakistan election violence," July 2, 2001.

¹⁹ *BBC News*, "Police quell Lusaka by-election violence," July 16, 2001.

Shops closed and at least 20 arrests were made. Opposition supporters were barred from approaching the inauguration ceremony for the Levy Mwanawasa, candidate of the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy.²⁰

Fiji – August 25 – September 1 (Parliamentary)

The threat of violence was employed in these first post-coup elections through the circulation of a pamphlet warning that a vote for the former Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry would be a vote for bloodshed. Although no incidents were reported, the police conducted an investigation into the distribution of the pamphlet. According to the Assistant Police Commissioner, charges would be filed if sufficient evidence of incitement was uncovered.²¹

Seychelles – August 31 to September 2 (Presidential)

Seychelles President France Albert Rene stated in advance of the polling day that the government intends to prevent violence at any cost. This admonition followed an incident in the aftermath of a public meeting of the Seychelles National Party where stones were thrown at the Election Commissioner's home and a police officer received a knife wound in the ensuing ruckus.²²

Belarus – September 9 (Presidential)

In the *Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions* of the election monitoring report from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, it states, "There were fundamental flaws in the election process, some of which are specific to the political situation in Belarus, including: ...a campaign of intimidation directed against opposition activities, domestic observation organizations, opposition and independent media, and a smear campaign against international observers..."²³

Bangladesh – October 1 (Parliamentary)

²⁰ *CNN.com*, "New Zambia ruler warns protesters, January 3, 2002.

²¹ *ABC News Online*, "Pamphlets circulating Fiji threaten violence if Chaudry elected," August 25, 2001.

²² *Nation Online*, "President Rene says no problem with change of dates, will prevent violence at any cost, www.nation.sc, undated.

²³ OSCE/ODIHR, *Statement of Preliminary Finding and Conclusions, International Limited Election Observation Mission, 2001 Presidential Election in the Republic of Belarus*, September 10, 2001, page 2.

Pre-polling day violence left at least 134 people dead and over 2,000 injured in clashes between political rivals and interventions by security forces. Electoral authorities warned both major political parties, the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, about the participation of their supporters in violence. Nearly 500,000 soldiers and police were deployed before and on Election Day to quell the violence.²⁴ Observers from the European Union said that they were “concerned by the politically motivated violent incidents and their effect on the polls atmosphere.”²⁵

The Gambia – October 16 (Presidential)

The first week of the presidential campaign has been marred by violence with at least nine complaints being filed since September 26. The incidents have involved fights between supporters of the ruling Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction and the opposition alliance. Several injuries were reported in the central part of the country.²⁶

Sri Lanka – December 5 (Parliamentary)

The threats of suicide bombers have kept President Chadika Kumaratunga confined to her official residence throughout the campaign. A deputy government minister was the target of two unsuccessful rebel assassination attempts in the same number of weeks. In similar defensive moves, other candidates have taken to “campaigning” via the Internet, avoiding public exposure, with about 20 candidate Web sites in operation. The Center for Monitoring Election Violence reported more than 2,000 incidents in the six-week campaign period. The opposition United National Party contends that although the violence may appear random, it is generally well orchestrated to frighten opponents and voters and make vote rigging easier. Both the opposition and the ruling People’s Alliance have been accused of hiring thugs to disrupt rival political campaigns and murder candidates and supporters. In parliamentary elections last year, People’s Alliance thugs commandeered several polling stations on Election Day. The balloting in

²⁴ Ganguly, Dilip, *Associated Press*, “Security increased before Bangladesh’s election; violence escalates,” September 29, 2001.

²⁵ *AFP*, “55,000 troops deployed in Bangladesh to calm election violence,” www.news123india.com, September 22, 2001.

²⁶ *ETravel.org*, “Violence erupts during election campaign,” October 5, 2001.

those stations was ordered re-run from the Election Commissioner. Police say that they are out-gunned by the party triggermen.²⁷ On Election Day, military checkpoints were closed to voter traffic in the north for security reasons, effectively disenfranchising about 75,000 ethnic Tamils.²⁸ Nationwide, around 61 people died and over 100 were wounded in election violence.²⁹

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE PROFILING

Using these snapshots from the 2001 electoral calendar, there are four descriptive categories of conflict and violence that emerge, suggesting a variety of motives, perpetrators, and victims:

1. Voters in conflict with the State and claiming unfairness in the election process (Thailand, Zambia);
2. The State in conflict with voters who challenge the results of elections or the electoral hegemony of the State (Chad, Belarus);³⁰
3. Political rivals in conflict with each other for political gain (Yemen, Benin, Philippines, Uganda, Fiji, Seychelles, Pakistan, Gambia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka);
4. A blending of these three categories.

Distilling this observation into percentages means that in 2001, voter-motivated conflict occurred in about 14% of the cases; State-motivated conflict occurred in about 14% of the cases; and rival-motivated conflict occurred in about 72% of the cases.

A further examination of these cases also suggests that there are larger problems with the democratization of these countries than conflictive elections alone. The Freedom House rating system includes consideration of civil liberties, rule of law, and other political rights. Of the 14 countries cited for electoral incidents last year, 11 (79%) of them are described as either “Not

²⁷ Samath, Feisal, *IPS*, “Politics-Sri Lanka: Violence Drives Poll Campaign Indoors,” October 3, 2001.

²⁸ *CNN.com*, “Vote rigging, violence tarnish Sri Lanka poll,” December 5, 2001.

²⁹ *Associated Press*, “Election Violence in Sri Lanka,” December 7, 2001.

³⁰ However, it must be noted that it is sometimes unclear how to distinguish an incumbent’s political muscle from the State security apparatus.

Free” or “Partly Free” by the Freedom House Freedom Rating. Thailand, Benin, and the Philippines are listed as Free by the rating system.

ELECTORAL CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN 2002

Using these correlations, the following countries are having elections in 2002 and have been identified as “Partly Free” or “Not Free” by the Freedom House survey. These countries, the election schedule, and prior electoral conflict are shown in the following table.

Country	FH rating	Election Type	Date	Prior Conflict in last 10 years
The Gambia	Not Free	Legislative	January 17	Yes
Republic of Congo	Partly Free	Referendum	January 20	Yes
Jordan	Partly Free	Parliamentary	January	NA
Lesotho	Partly Free	Parliamentary	January	NA
Eritrea	Not Free	Parliamentary	January	NA
Cambodia	Not Free	Local	February 3	Yes
Laos	Not Free	Parliament	February	NA
Togo	Partly Free	Parliamentary	March 10	NA
Comoros	Partly Free	Pres/Parliamentary	March 31	NA
Colombia	Not Free	Parliamentary	March	Yes
Zimbabwe	Not Free	Presidential	March	Yes
Chad	Not Free	Presidential	March	Yes
Armenia	Partly Free	Presidential	March	Yes
Nigeria	Partly Free	Local	April	Yes

Country	FH rating	Election Type	Date	Prior Conflict in last 10 years
Sierra Leone	Partly Free	Pres/Parliamentary	May 14	Yes
Algeria	Not Free	Parliamentary	June	Yes
Bosnia/Herzegovina	Partly Free	Pres/Parliamentary	September	Yes
Pakistan	Not Free	Legislative	October 1	Yes
Georgia	Partly Free	Local	October 20	Yes
Morocco	Partly Free	Parliamentary	November	NA
Haiti	Not Free	Senate	November	Yes
Albania	Partly Free	Presidential	NA	Yes
Burkina Faso	Partly Free	Legislative	NA	NA
Cameroon	Not Free	Parliamentary	NA	NA
Guinea	Not Free	Parliamentary	NA	Yes
Djibouti	Partly Free	Parliamentary	NA	NA
Iraq	Not Free	Presidential	NA	NA
Macedonia	Partly Free	Parliamentary	NA	Yes
Madagascar	Partly Free	Parliamentary	NA	Yes
Syria	Not Free	Parliamentary	NA	NA
Ukraine	Partly Free	NA	NA	Yes
Vietnam	Not Free	Parliamentary	NA	NA ³¹

*NA: Not available at date of priority. IFES posts updates on <http://www.ifes.org>.

³¹ IFES *Election Guide 2003*, Klipsan Press *International Election Calendar 2001*, Maximiliano Herrera's *Electoral Calendar 2002*.

In addition to countries in these categories, India and Jamaica, both surveyed as free, also have elections scheduled in 2002. Both countries have a history of electoral violence.

From this profiling, a “watch list,” for potentially violent elections can be devised that would include elections held in “Not Free” and “Partly Free” countries with previous conflictive experiences.

VARIATIONS ON SURVEYED PATTERNS

However, not all scenarios conform to the models that have been identified. Below are seven examples of variations on the profiles shown in the election conflict survey.

Zimbabwe

Responses to electoral violence in Zimbabwe in 2000 involved legal actions taken by both the victims and perpetrators. There were 32 people killed in electoral violence by the so-called “war veterans” associated with President Mugabe’s Zanu-PF party. The families of these 32 victims sued Mugabe for \$45 million in damages in a New York court. However, the United States government took the position that Mugabe, as a head of state, could not be sued in the US.³²

President Mugabe took an action of his own and signed a secret Clemency Order No.1 of 2000 that granted a blanket pardon to all those individuals who committed politically related crimes between January 1 and July 31, 2000.³³

Variation A – The families of victims of electoral violence pursue legal recourse and compensation for the loss of life and are unsuccessful. The head of state allegedly responsible for the violence issues a legal clemency order absolving those guilty of electoral crimes from guilt and is successful.

³² Swan, Craig, *BBC News*, “Mugabe sued for election violence,” April 23, 2001.

³³ *afrol.com*, “Mugabe grants amnesty on election violence,” October 11, 2000.

Colombia

In the 2000 elections, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) announced through its political arm, the Bolivarian Movement, that it would not oppose the electoral process. In fact, FARC clandestinely supported candidates and used violence as a tool of political intimidation. The election results turned out to be favorable for FARC it could publicly claim neutrality because it had not attempted to halt it. Between the activities of FARC and the right wing paramilitaries of the United Self-Defense Unit of Colombia (AUC), 21 candidates were killed and over 60 were kidnapped.³⁴

Variation B – A rebel army utilizes the façade of political neutrality as an option to disguise its continued *sub rosa* intimidation of candidates and voters. In the end, FARC's tactics succeed in influencing the results of the elections and providing FARC with an alibi of non-interference.

India

With 600 million voters, India divides its election process into five phases so

that security forces can move about and focus their assets where required. Much of the violence in Indian elections can be attributed to separatist movements and ethnic conflict wherein groups exploit the visibility of an electoral campaign to mount strikes against the Indian government. For example, land mines that took the lives of 33 police officers in September 1999 elections have been blamed on "left-wing" guerrillas.³⁵ In 1998, a land mine was set off under a bus of Indian troops, allegedly by Maoist guerillas in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Five troopers were killed and 26 injured.³⁶

Variation C – Separatist movements employ the visibility of the electoral campaign to conduct paramilitary and criminal strikes against the government and its symbols.

³⁴ *Associated Foreign Press*, "Military, Rebel Presence Mark Violence-Free Colombian Elections," October 30, 2000.

³⁵ *CNN.com*, "India election-related violence kills 42," September 19, 1999.

³⁶ *CNN.com*, "Violence climbs in India election," February 23, 1998.

Sierra Leone

The 1996 elections in Sierra Leone witnessed personal and disabling attacks on voters designed for the purpose of physically preventing them from casting a ballot. As journalist William Shawcross recounts,

In February 1996 hundreds of Sierra Leoneans had their fingers, hands, arms, noses, or lips chopped off with machetes in the cause of democracy. They were being punished either for voting in, or for the mere fact of, the first round of the country's first multi-party election in more than twenty-five years. The assaults carried out by men in uniform, often very young men at that. They were teenagers or younger, members of the world's fastest-growing army—children.³⁷

Variation D – Perpetrators deliberately disable voters to physically prevent them from walking to polling places or holding ballots.

Jamaica

The Jamaica case study demonstrates that electoral violence can extend

outside of the election calendar. In the 1970s and 80s, criminal gangs were employed by the two major political parties to rustle up votes. Although recently these gangs have been more involved in illicit narcotics than politics, they maintain political loyalties through “garrison” districts, party strongholds where votes are delivered through threat and violence.

As The Carter Center stated in its 1997 election observation report on the parliamentary elections,

One unique and most disturbing feature of Jamaican politics is the number of “garrison” communities, mostly in the urban area of Kingston, each of which is totally dominated by one of the two major political parties. Within them, opponents can enter only at the risk of

³⁷ Shawcross, William, *Deliver Us From Evil*, Simon & Schuster, 2000, page 193.

being attacked. In many cases in these areas, votes are tabulated several hours before the polls close, 100 percent of those registered having “voted” for the dominant party – no matter how many have actually come to the polling site. The two major parties have accepted this arrangement, each struggling to carve out garrison communities for themselves. In the past, most of the massive violence has occurred when political adversaries entered the territories or there were battles over votes along the border separating two garrisons.³⁸

A 2001 police raid on gang operations in a Labour Party garrison district incited three days of gun battles that left 28 people dead. The opposition party leader stated that the raids were intended to hurt his supporters; and the BBC characterized the gun battles as violence between government security forces and opposition party members.³⁹

Variation E – Voter intimidation is intended to produce a self-imposed loss of freedom on the victim. If intimidated, the victim will vote or behave in a certain fashion. However, in the Jamaica case, electoral intimidation takes on a real property dimension, with hired thugs enforcing electoral behavior in recognizable physical districts.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

“It is now agreed that fresh elections will be held in St. Vincent and the Grenadine in March next year,” the country’s Prime Minister James Mitchell said. The early 2001 elections in St. Vincent and the Grenadines were organized to quell street protests and forestall political violence. The elections were part of a political agreement, the Grand Beach Accord, between the major parties and the Organization for Democracy and Development (ODD). The ODD had been spearheading political unrest in an attempt to force the Mitchell administration to resign.

Variation F – Avoiding further street demonstrations and a potential no confidence vote, an incumbent uses early elections as a conflict resolution tool.

³⁸ Carter, Jimmy, *The Carter Center*, “Trip Report, Jamaica Election, December 18, 1997/

³⁹ *BBC News*, “Rights group condemn Jamaica police,” July 12, 2001.

Guyana

The 1992 General Election in Guyana were regarded as the most free and fair since the 1960s. These elections also saw the worst spate of violence since the same period. The Election Commission Headquarters was attacked by a stone-throwing band of People's Nation Congress activists discontent with voter registration lists. This group took on mob proportions and later that day stormed the office of the People's Progressive Party candidate Cheddi Jagan, the eventual winner in the presidential campaign. Widespread looting in downtown Georgetown ensued for several days.

The 1997 also saw post-election violence in the form of PNC protesters contesting a perceived "early" certification of the election by the Guyana Elections Commission of Cheddi Jagan's widow, Janet Jagan, as President.

By comparison, the elections of 2001 were relatively incident free. Instead of resorting to street violence, the political parties engaged in intense court battles over technical difficulties in the process, subjecting it to exceptional legal scrutiny.

Variation F – Election litigation is employed as a substitute for election conflict and violence.

ELECTION SECURITY

Election organizers protect the electoral process from conflict and violence through security planning and implementation using established and ad hoc security instruments. Post-conflict elections have attracted substantial election security resources from the international community. In such cases as Bosnia and Herzegovina, East Timor, and Kosovo, international military and civilian police security forces, in partnership with local authorities, have been deployed to provide protection to people, facilities, materials, and data. In national elections, the national and local security forces have the responsibility to keep the peace.

Through experience, the international community is developing a methodology for response to potential electoral violence in elections under its supervision. The methodology commences with a threat analysis to ascertain the scale, locations, and types of threats that may impact the electoral process. Such threats include ethnic retaliation, existence of paramilitary groups, and land mines inhibiting freedom of movement. These threats play out in different ways in the electoral chronology of voter registration, the political campaign, Election Day, and the installation of the newly elected officials.

Election security has been most effective when it has been a civil-police-military partnership of equals. Obstacles must be overcome for a mutual understanding of respective corporate cultures to be accomplished. Military and police planners must remain sufficiently flexible to react to the realities and requirements of post-conflict politics and civilians must understand the structures within which disciplined services' function. In addition to security, the military and police must also provide communications, intelligence, logistics, transport, video production, office services, and training in support of electoral processes.

Ad hoc security structures can be established in order to develop, resource, and implement an election security plan. Two examples of these ad hoc structures include Joint Election Operations Centers, which are combined military-police-civilian communications and coordination centers. In addition, joint political violence committees have been established that share information across agencies and organize combined security actions or responses.

KOSOVO 2000: CASE FOR PREVENTION

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 provides wide authority to the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in post-conflict Kosovar governance. It is the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK) to establish interim structures and govern the province until a

status resolution is determined. The institutions of governance that have been established are transitional in nature and their design was largely been the responsibility of the international community. In partnership with Kosovars, these governance structures are currently functioning.

The Kosovo election process has undergone two electoral events without major Election Day incidents. Special features were built into the process that were intended to reduce friction among the political players and to prevent electoral conflict.

These features included the following ones:

Registration

Individuals who were displaced by the conflict were permitted to register to vote so that their political exclusion did not become a point for future conflict. Registration was conducted for displaced persons within Kosovo, for refugees outside of Kosovo, and in 35 countries with known populations of Kosovars.

Albanian political prisoners who obtained freedom from Serbian imprisonment were permitted to register and vote past the cut-off deadlines for other registrants so that their political imprisonment did not become a factor in their disenfranchisement fueling further resentment against the jailers.

Voter registration lists were open to confirmation and challenge. However, the public copies of these list showed limited personal data and could not be copied in order to reduce the opportunities for retaliation against individuals or communities who chose to participate.

A registration service was devised whereby 125,000 individuals were able to re-establish their official identities after being “identity cleansed” by Yugoslav authorities. With over 10% of the population lacking personal

documentation, this service prevented the identity conflict and fraud that could emerge from such circumstances.

Candidates and Campaigns

In order to reduce the opportunities for intimidation by established political interests, numerous official options for participation were open to Kosovars including political parties, non-partisan citizens alliances, and independent candidacies. Further, an Election Complaints and Appeals sub-Commission was established with penalizing authority so that election disputes could be resolved in a timely, fair, and transparent manner.

So that two or more political parties would not attempt to hold events at the same times and locations, a advance notification was required to be given to the UNMIK Police for every public campaign rally.

Voting

Individuals who were displaced by the conflict were permitted to vote so that their political exclusion did not become a point for future conflict. Voting was conducted for displaced persons within Kosovo and for refugees outside of Kosovo and in 35 countries with known populations of Kosovars.

For minorities residing in enclaves or in isolated dwellings, the legal criteria for a voting option of “homebound by fear” were created. In exercising this option, the voter could request a ballot to be voted under international supervision at their home and avoid any conflictive travel to a polling station. In order to prevent the potential intimidation of military-style uniforms at polls, members of the Kosovo Protection Corps (TMK) were not afforded special military voting privileges and voted, out of uniform, on Election Day at their normal polling station.

Vote Reporting

In order to prevent targeted community retaliation, one ethnic community petitioned not to report the results of their Polling Center alone, but rather, to blend it with that of an adjacent center so that the political judgment of that community would not be self-evident.

Representation

The systems of representation for both the municipal assemblies and the transitional Kosovo-wide assemblies were designed as proportional systems to include gender and ethnic set-aside seats for wide representation in Kosovo governance.

Other Considerations

These conflict prevention features were coupled with security supervision provided by Kosovo Force (KFOR), the UNMIK Police, and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) and this model was employed for both the October 28, 2000,

municipal elections and the November 17, 2001, assembly elections. Although there were incidents recorded during the political campaign, on Election Day 2000, the KFOR Liaison to the OSCE Election Unit, Col. Camilo DiMilato (Italy) stated in a news conference that Election Day was so peaceful, KFOR would invite the OSCE to hold elections every day. Similarly, there were no incidents on Election Day 2001 and its campaign period was virtually incident free.

PROGRAM RESPONSES

Having identified a range of motives, victims, and perpetrators, program responses can be developed to reduce, prevent, or resolve conflicts in elections. The institutional partners for such programming include election

management bodies, election courts, political parties, NGOs, and media organizations.

The programmatic responses to the conflict scenarios identified in this paper can be grouped according to three thematic areas: 1) institutional capacity; 2) information resources; and 3) monitoring.

Institutional Capacity

The capacities of national and local institutions to effectively prevent and resolve election conflict has not been an area of focused project activity. Under this theme, election management bodies (EMBs), security forces, election courts, and political parties become the focus of integrated programming initiatives such as the following ones:

EMBs and Security Forces – an election security tool kit can be developed to support the planning and implementation activities of national and local locals. This tool kit can be devised from surveying the international and national practices in election security and distilling the best practices for this tool kit.

Election Courts – election dispute resolution models should be analyzed for their effectiveness and public confidence in them. This analysis can reveal the specific forms of technical assistance that can promote the timely, fair, and transparency adjudication of disputes; and the access to justice for electoral plaintiffs.

Political Parties – in countries where political parties engage armed groups in campaigning, demobilization programming can be undertaken. Such programming should adapt the technique employed in disarmament exercises or other policing programs.

Information Resources

The connections between elections and conflict have not been studied in a systematic fashion using a generally accepted framework of analysis. Such a framework would serve to marry the insights of the researcher with the requirements of the practitioner. In developing such a framework, the following issues and questions can be addressed:

What is the evidence on the relative level of conflict among different types of elections – local, provincial, or national?

What trends can be tracked on a country or regional basis as indicators of the motives, victims, and perpetrators of electoral conflict?

How does election sequencing and scheduling impact potential conflict and violence?

Do the number and nature of political parties impact the prospects for a peaceful election?

What is the evidence on the impact of the system of representation on the potential for conflict?

Does the presence of international observers prevent violence or simply delay it until the observers depart?

By examining these questions and others, a framework can be devised so that electoral violence can be discussed with some consistent assumptions, terms, and understandings; and programming can be developed whose impact is measurable.

Monitoring

Monitoring electoral conflict and violence provides both transparency and a means of tracking incidents. Such monitoring is a product of both local data collection initiatives and regional/global comparative analysis.

NGOs can play a role in this monitoring process. NGOs such as the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (Sri Lanka) serve a technical role in recording the circumstances and cases of election violence in that country. Such capacity can be established in a number of like-minded NGOs and regional networks employing similar methodologies can be informally organized.

Although country-based NGOs serve as valuable resources in providing transparency and accountability in election violence, the transborder nature of corruption and its relationship to electoral violence must be viewed as a threat that can be monitored through information sharing networks.

Media organizations, coupled with the NGO community, can also serve educational purposes with messages and programs to stem cultures of electoral conflict.

CONCLUSION

The international community has played a significant role in promoting standards and best practices in election administration. These experiences have established benchmarks for performance that can guide policy-maker in further programming initiatives.

The early stages of technical assistance to electoral processes focused on legal, procedural, educational issues in order to establish some viable electoral infrastructure and build institutional capacity. Poor election administration, chaotic Election Day experiences, and the resulting loss of public confidence were the immediate threats to the process that received attention.

As certain technical assistance programs become less relevant, new threats to developing electoral processes become more visible. Electoral conflict can become one such threat. Greater knowledge is needed to understand the causal links between conflict and elections so that new program responses can be devised. With such links organized into a framework for analysis, international support for electoral conflict prevention can be fashioned into structured program response.

It is essential that such programming be undertaken. If elections devolve into scheduled street fights, then the essence of the electoral process is destroyed and violence becomes a viable means of achieving governance.

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