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Media release

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In Search of Lasting Security: An Assessment of Armed Violence in Nepal

In the wake of a decade-long civil war that claimed more than 13,000 lives, Nepal's uneasy peace has been plagued by uncertainties, tied to the volatile political environment, the gridlocks over the drafting of the new constitution, and the reported proliferation of criminal activities. This rapid succession of changes has raised new questions about the overall security situation in the country.

In response to this call for information, the Small Arms Survey has released a new report, *In Search of Lasting Security: An Assessment of Armed Violence in Nepal*.

This study, conducted together with its Kathmandu-based partner, Interdisciplinary Analysts, presents original research based on a national household survey covering more than 3,000 respondents as well as focus group discussions and key informant interviews in Nepal's Hill and Terai regions, as well as data collected from official, non-governmental, and international sources.

Since the end of the conflict Nepal has seen fluctuation in the incidence and severity of violence, with relative calm punctuated by bouts of violence in response to political events. While data shows several improvements in the security landscape, Nepal continues to be plagued by high volatility and uncertainty related to political and ethnic crises.

The *Special Report* finds that:

- Despite persistent volatility, a majority of survey respondents were confident that security situation had recently improved in their area.
- Property crime was identified as the most common concern, across surveyed areas. Those with a steady source of income, or those carrying money or valuables were more likely to fall victims.
- Urban spaces and the Kathmandu Valley display higher concentrations of insecurity.
- Armed violence in Nepal is generally low-tech, using crude or makeshift weapons, such as bicycle chains or sticks, as well as traditional bladed weapons, improvised explosive devices, and home-made firearms.
- Based on self-reported and perceived ownership, between 41,000 and 84,000 households in the surveyed districts are estimated to own firearms.
- Overall police performance, accountability, and responsiveness were rated fairly high, with more than 80 per cent of respondents stating that they would seek help



from the police in the event of an attack. However, many interviewees expressed concerns about police efficiency, citing lack of training, political interference, and a lack of standardized service as key issues.

A brief overview of this study and its findings has also been published as a Research Note, titled ***At War's End: Armed Violence in Nepal***. This is also available in Nepali and English.

Two ***Issue Briefs***, discussing the prevalence of firearms and the phenomenon of armed groups in Nepal respectively, were also released.

The Missing Middle: Examining the Armed Group Phenomenon in Nepal reports on the history of the country's armed groups, their initial proliferation following the signing of the CPA, their development and overlap with other societal groups, the reasons behind their recent decline, and their relationship to the state. It finds that, despite continuing political instability, overall number of armed groups in has decreased in recent years

Legacies of War in the Company of Peace: Firearms in Nepal explores the scale and distribution of firearm ownership in post-conflict Nepal. It estimates that there are 440,000 privately owned firearms, with roughly one-eighth (55,000) believed to be legally registered. Most are unregistered craft weapons, referred to as country-made or *katuwas*, of which there are an estimated 330,000. The Nepal Army has about 160,000 small arms, and law enforcement agencies have roughly another 74,000.

These publications are available in both Nepali and English. They can be downloaded at www.nepal-ava.org. Print copies are available from the Small Arms Survey.

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