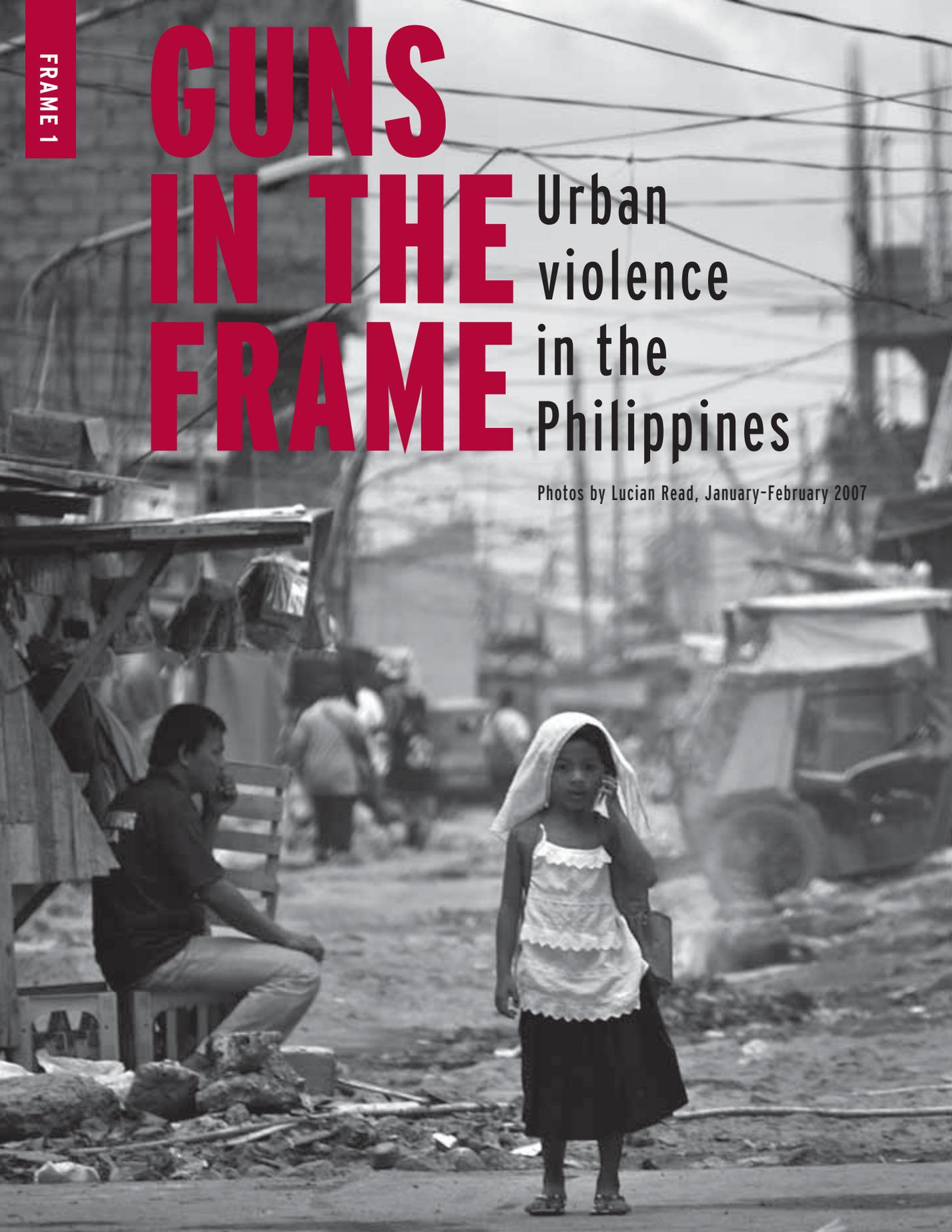


FRAME 1

GUNS IN THE FRAME

Urban
violence
in the
Philippines

Photos by Lucian Read, January-February 2007





Lucian Read's images of Basilan Island, Cotobato, Danao, Davao, and Manila in the Philippines capture a fast-growing population in overdrive, caught between sectarian conflict and abject poverty.

With more than 10 million residents, Manila has one of the world's highest population density rates. Oblivious to the rubble and tangled cables of her makeshift environment, a young girl wanders through Baseco, one of Manila's largest slums (Frame 1).

According to official police figures, civilians throughout the country own 1.1 million licensed firearms and 100,000 unlicensed weapons, probably a serious underestimate of actual holdings (CIVILIAN FIREARMS). A thriving craft weapon industry supports several thousand families in Danao, 550 kilometres south-east of Manila. Inside the grimy Danao workshops, a gunsmith scrutinizes a weapon he is crafting (Frame 2, left) and men who apply chrome to replica guns wear particle masks in a feeble attempt to shield their lungs from fumes (Frame 2, centre right).

High crime rates, political violence, and a protracted separatist war fuel demand for weapons. In conflict-ridden Mindanao province, a merchant displays part of the 50-strong gun collection he has amassed to protect his family and businesses in downtown Cotabato (Frame 3).

Neighbours of a murdered soldier prepare wreaths for the funeral on the island of Basilan, south-west Philippines (Frame 3, right). On a nearby bridge, his blood dries on the asphalt, the spot marked by white candles (Frame 4, left). At another funeral in Davao, Mindanao, mourners encircle the coffined body of a former gang member (Frame 5, left), the victim of a vigilante killing. The friend who carried him to hospital was murdered days later.

The Filipino justice system struggles to keep pace with escalating gun crime. In Quezon City Hall, Metro Manila, witnesses swear an oath (Frame 5, top right) before testifying against the man in the foreground, who is accused of shooting a petrol station attendant. In an adjacent room, a young man listens as he is charged with shooting a friend after a night of drinking (Frame 5, inset).

A tattered poster calls for a week of peace in Cotabato in the run-up to national elections, typically a period of heightened violence (Frame 6, top left). Elsewhere in the city an armed soldier studies the crowd at the site of a failed grenade attack on a police commander (Frame 6, top right).

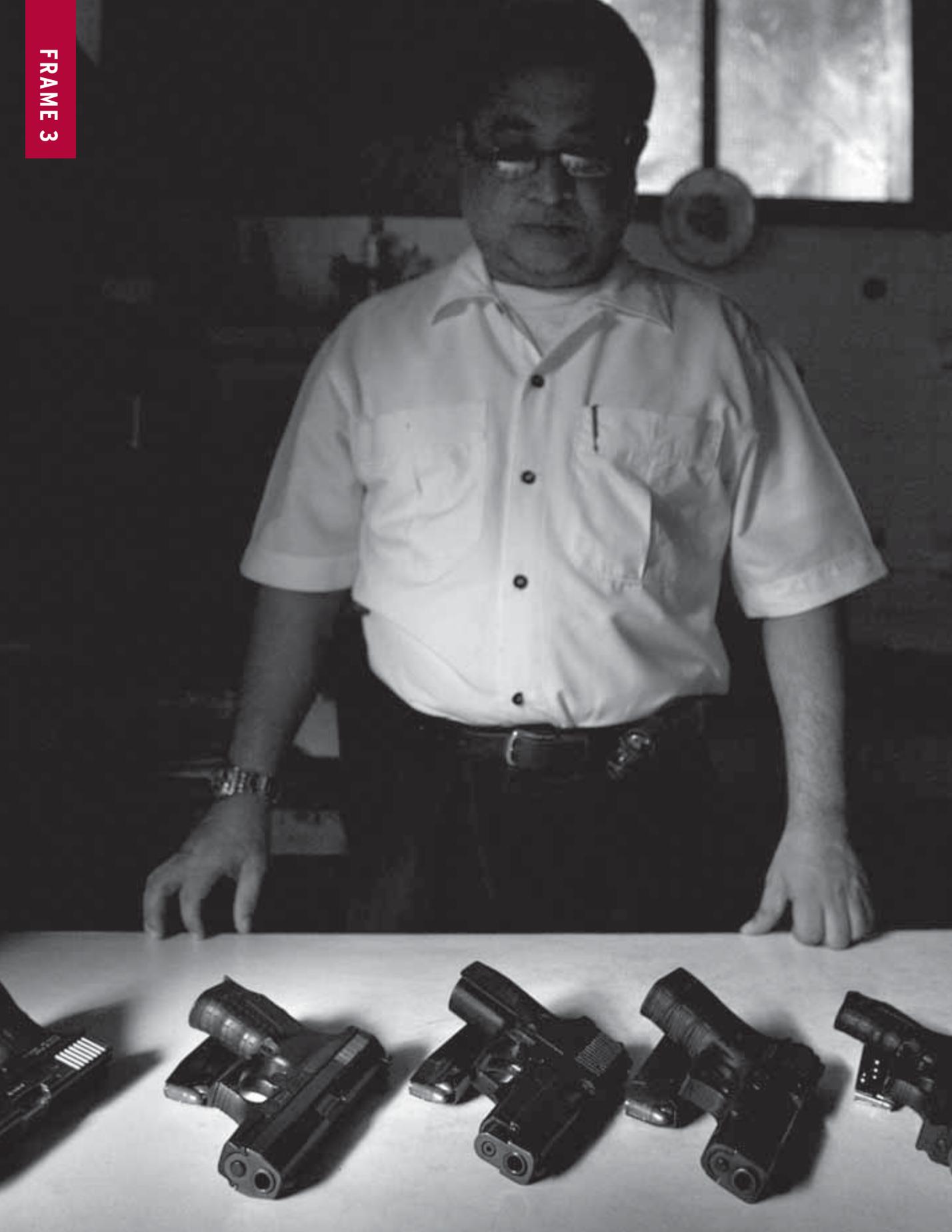
Children from Maluso, a fishing village in Basilan, pass a police sign warning of a five-month, pre-election weapons ban (Frame 7, left), enforced in Manila (Frame 7, top and bottom right). Only the most obsolete of confiscated guns are reportedly stored at police warehouses in Manila (Frame 6, bottom left and centre); the more modern types are refurbished for use by security forces.

At least 25 journalists have been murdered since 2000, making the Philippines the most dangerous country after Iraq for those in the profession. Reporters who advocate carrying guns for self-defence practise at a police shooting range in Manila (Frame 8, left). At another range, a Catholic priest trains impoverished youths to become security guards (Frame 8, bottom right). 📄

FRAME 2









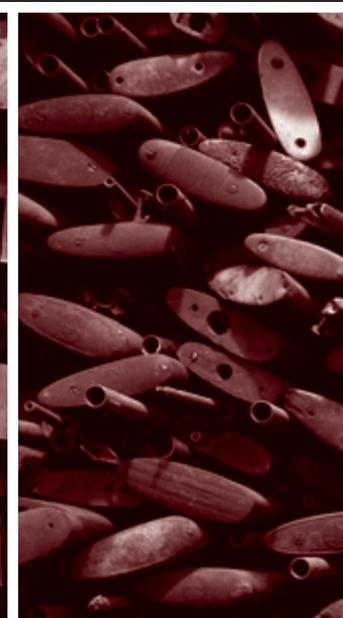
FRAME 4

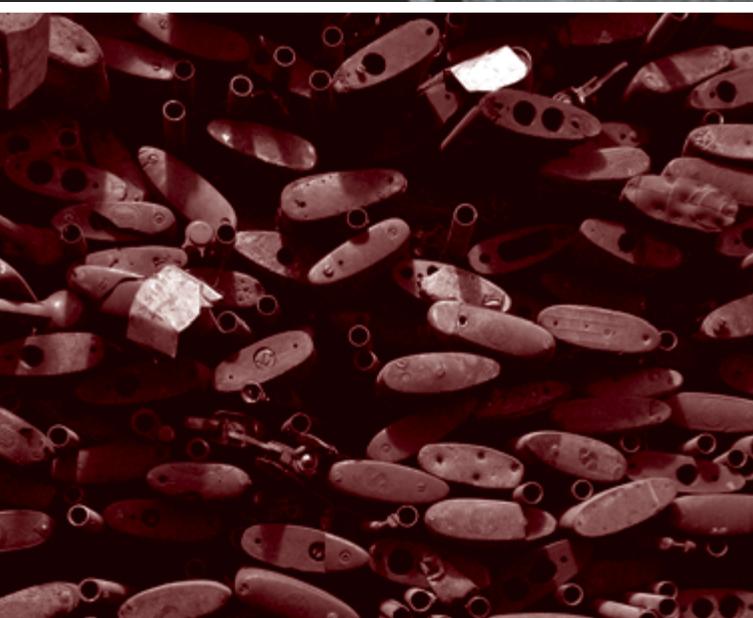












FRAME 7





FRAME 8



