

Reading between the Lines

Crime and Victimization in Liberia

Eight years after the end of the civil war in 2003, Liberia witnessed large improvements in security. As highlighted in the first *Issue Brief* of this series, people in Liberia generally feel much safer than in previous years, and many Liberians consider development issues a more pressing concern than security threats (Small Arms Survey, 2011). At the individual household level, however, the picture is somewhat less positive. Despite the overall national improvement, many Liberians still worry that someone in their household may become the victim of a crime.

Patterns of victimization in present-day Liberia largely involve criminal violence rather than war-related deaths or injuries. In particular, insecurity is characterized by violent armed robberies and attacks on households, clashes between the police and criminals, rapes and other sexual assaults against women, theft, and sporadic episodes of land-related conflict.

A decade of war left Liberia's public and private infrastructure and human capacity debilitated, with surveillance and data collection capabilities severely impaired. It is therefore difficult to generate a comprehensive longitudinal understanding of trends and patterns regarding incidents of crime and victimization. The same applies to population statistics: 'Even the most basic demographic data are hard to find in Liberia: prior to 2008, no census had

been conducted for over two decades' (Blair, 2011, p. 5).

Together with local partners, the Small Arms Survey conducted a nationwide household survey in 2010 to fill some of the data gaps and to generate an evidence-based understanding of violence in post-war Liberia. This second *Issue Brief* of five relies on the survey findings, key informant interviews with local representatives—including city mayors, police officers, religious leaders, students, elders, and heads of grassroots organizations—and background papers produced by researchers in Liberia (Shilue, 2010;

Blair, 2011; Dziewanski, 2011a). It considers information on the types of violence reported, how violence is perpetrated, where it takes place, when it occurs, and who represent the main perpetrators and victims. The *Issue Brief* also presents examples of programming efforts prevent and reduce crime and violence. The main results of this study are:

- Almost one in seven households (13.5 per cent) reports that at least one household member was the victim of an act of violence or crime between mid-2009 and mid-2010.



Ex-combatants face police during a demonstration to demand back payments from the government, Monrovia, February 2007. © Christopher Herwig/Reuters



A UN peacekeeper patrols a street in Monrovia, April 2007.

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- Crime and violence are more common in Monrovia than in the rest of the country. In the counties, 8.1 per cent of respondents reported a crime, whereas around one-fifth (20.3 per cent) of Monrovians reported a member of their household having been victimized.
- By far the most frequent crime and act of violence is *robbery and theft*, accounting for just over 40 per cent of all crimes reported to this survey. This category is followed by *threat and intimidation* (13.8 per cent) and *fighting* (12.4 per cent).
- Men and women are almost equally victimized by crime and violence. More than two-thirds of all crimes reported in the national household survey involved male victims (68.6 per cent, ± 6.05 per cent), whereas almost as many involved

female victims (63.3 per cent, ± 6.28 per cent). A significant number of these violent acts targeted more than one person.

- In more than one-third of cases, the victims declare they knew the perpetrator beforehand (36.7 per cent). They identify the most common perpetrators somewhat ambiguously as *criminals* (38.6 per cent), followed by *youths* (18.9 per cent), and *ex-combatants* (9.2 per cent).

Divided into five sections, this *Issue Brief* first describes the state of surveillance and data collection on crime and violence in Liberia. The next three sections present the findings of the survey, highlighting patterns of crime and violence, the victims of violence, and the perpetrators. The last section presents examples of violence prevention

and reduction efforts of the Government of Liberia and the international community as well as local non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Surveillance of crime and violence in Liberia

A number of official sources collect data on crime and violence in Liberia. With more than 15,000 personnel distributed throughout the country, the United Nations has amassed a wealth of information (UNMIL, n.d.). The records of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) are based on incident reporting, mainly through the UN's Civilian Police (CIVPOL), but they are confidential and unavailable to researchers outside the UN system.

Beyond the UN, the most extensive surveillance of crime and violence in

Liberia is undertaken by the Liberia National Police (LNP). The LNP serves as a clearinghouse for data collected by a variety of government agencies, including the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation as well as the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, both of which are active along Liberia's porous borders.

The incidence of violent acts, as measured by the LNP, is one of the most widely publicized yardsticks by which the Government of Liberia gauges its own progress towards stability. Yet LNP data is prone to a number of deficiencies. For one, it is vulnerable to bias as a result of underreporting on the part of victims, especially in cases of domestic violence. If people do not trust the police, they are unlikely to report the crime. This limitation also holds true for data reported through CIVPOL. As a result, police data is not generally representative of a particular population or a particular crime.

Another challenge for data collection is that the LNP operates under crippling logistical and financial constraints, with a nationwide force of just 5,000 officers for a population of more than 3.7 million residents. The consequences are glaring:

Across Liberia police officers, government representatives, and citizens widely agree that the LNP has funding and logistical problems. It is not uncommon to walk into a police depot and find that there are no radios, computers, office supplies, toilets, or electricity. Officers do not have batons, gas, or handcuffs, and many use their personal mobile phones to communicate with each other and with police headquarters. Vehicles are scarce, as is fuel (Kantor and Persson, 2010, p. 16).

Unless UN escorts are available, victims must often bear the costs of transporting officers to and from crime scenes for purposes of investigation. These obstacles are especially onerous in the country's far-flung hinterland, where distances are long, cell phone coverage is unreliable, and roads are rough and often impassable in the rain. As summed up by the city solicitor of Gbarnga, Bong County: 'Crime is being committed in the bush and nobody knows about it' (Blair, 2011).

Each LNP station reports statistics to its county hub on a monthly basis; in the vast majority of cases, officers handwrite or use typewriters to produce reports. County hubs then transmit statistical reports in hardcopy to Monrovia (Blair, 2011, p. 6).¹ Owing to the cumbersome and low-tech process by which information is delivered from the counties to the capital, data inevitably gets lost.

Given the overwhelming logistical constraints under which the police operate, it is remarkable that LNP data is as comprehensive as it is. In fact, most of the incidents recorded by the LNP include important details, such as the sex of the victim and the perpetrator or their age. Only a few reports are missing such details (Blair, 2011).

Table 1 provides a glimpse into incidents of violence recorded by the LNP in 2009 and 2010. While these statistics offer some insight into the dynamics of crime and violence in Liberia, they defy easy interpretation. In recent years, the LNP has grown significantly and has thus increased its data gathering capacities. To a certain extent, the swell in aggravated assaults, armed robberies, gang rape, and other forms of violent crime apparent in Table 1 probably reflects improved methods of data collection within the LNP. Yet since this data only covers a short period of time and information gaps

persist, it is not yet possible to identify trends in the overall security situation.

The Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) collects data on sexual and gender-based violence against women based on reports from domestic and international NGOs. Between January 2009 and June 2010 alone, a total of 1,763 rapes were reported to the MoGD, which is significantly higher than the number recorded by the LNP. Since the MoGD collects data from numerous sources, it runs the risk of overcounting (Dziewanski, 2011b). A recent validation of the statistics estimates that around 10 per cent of cases might be duplications, partly explaining why the MoGD reports

Table 1 **Number of violent crimes reported to the LNP, 2009-10**

Source: LNP (2010)

Violent crimes	2009	2010
Accidental homicide	1	0
Aggravated assault	819	934
Armed robbery	366	428
Arson	61	47
Assault on a peace officer ²	23	18
Attempted murder	2	0
Attempted suicide	3	2
Corruption of a minor ³	66	87
Cruelty to animals	11	5
Felonious restraint ⁴	9	14
Gang rape	1	7
Gross sexual imposition ⁵	14	18
Hit and run	8	2
Human trafficking	3	4
Kidnapping	44	26
Manslaughter	17	8
Murder or homicide	73	75
Negligent homicide	11	6
Rape	312	521
Rioting	51	7
Robbery	230	321
Sexual assault	67	31
Simple assault	1,667	1,714
Statutory rape	3	87
Total violent crimes	3,862	4,362

Box 1 The nationwide household survey

The survey was designed to produce sub-national data that differentiates between counties and urban and rural areas. It used a two-stage sampling design that was nearly identical to the one used in Liberia's 2009 Malaria Indicator Survey and very similar to the one employed in the Demographic and Health Survey (LISGIS, 2007). The first stage involved selecting 119 clusters among Liberia's 15 counties and the greater Monrovia area based on the 7,012 enumeration areas identified by the Liberian government during the March 2008 census.⁶

Through a partnership with the Liberian Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), the Small Arms Survey and AOA were able to obtain reliable location and population data for each enumeration area. Within each county, surveys were stratified among urban and rural areas. This stratification was guided by urban-rural population size in each county, but the low urban population outside of Monrovia required that urban areas be over-represented in most counties. Enumeration areas were then selected with probability proportional to their population (see Map 1).⁷

In the second stage, 24 households⁸ were selected randomly within each enumeration area. To select households, a sampling interval was computed based on the number of households in the enumeration area; the interval was then divided by 24 and a 'random start' was selected through the drawing of a random number between one and the sampling interval. The survey was conducted by LISGIS in the counties and by AOA in Monrovia. They provided the enumerators, supervisors, and data entry persons,

who were trained by the Small Arms Survey and AOA.

In each enumeration area, surveys were carried out according to the gender balance recorded in the census. Each survey was marked as either 'male' or 'female', and enumerators were instructed to select an adult member of the household of the indicated sex. At the conclusion of the survey, the sex distribution of the sample was balanced (50.1 per cent female and 49.9 per cent male respondents). The vast majority (87.8 per cent) of respondents were Christian, while 11.4 per cent were Muslim, and 0.3 per cent of respondents were practising animists.

In order to ensure the validity, reliability, and ethical scoring of the data, a rigorous cleaning and validation procedure was executed prior to analysis.⁹ A total of 1,900 questionnaires from the counties were entered into the preliminary database. During the cleaning and validation process, a total of 196 questionnaires were removed, and an additional five questionnaires were removed because they had been entered twice, leaving a final total of 1,699 questionnaires. For the Monrovia questionnaires, 1,000 questionnaires were originally collected; 137 questionnaires were removed as they were deemed unreliable or invalid. Twelve questionnaires were incomplete, resulting in a total of 851 questionnaires representing the Monrovia sample.

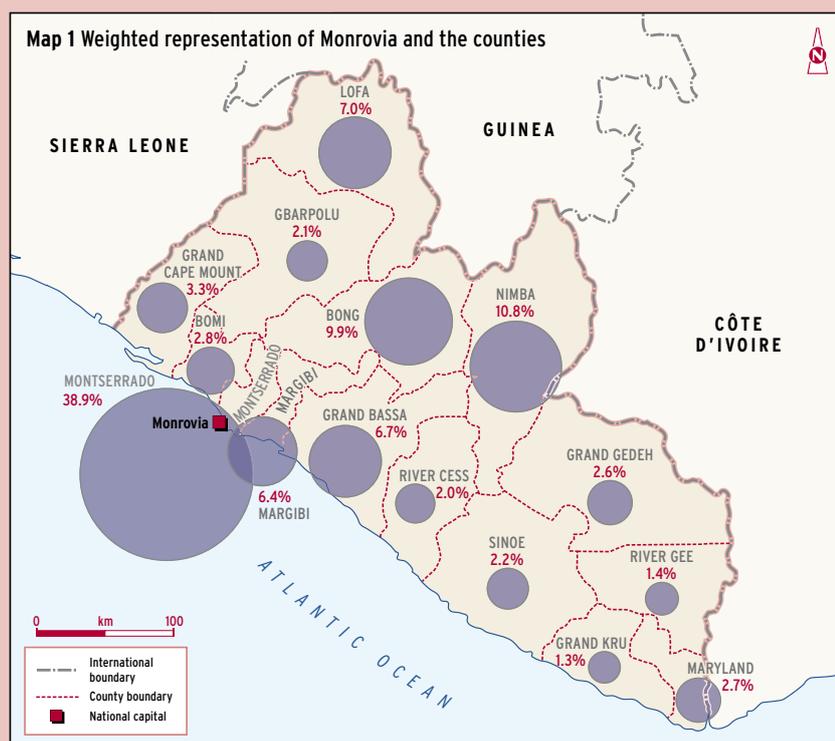
Once the data was deemed cleaned and validated, weights were applied to individual cases in order to create a representative proportion of the entire population. The weights take into account county location, tribal membership, sex, religious affiliation, and age.

significantly more incidents of violence against women than does the LNP (p. 8).¹⁰

Apart from the LNP and MoGD's ongoing surveillance of violence and crime, record-keeping capacities in Liberia have yet to be strengthened. Hospitals and clinics do not systematically record the cause of injury for victims of violence. One example relates to John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital, known as JFK Hospital, in Monrovia, which 'collects information on sources of trauma, but has no systematic way of reporting data' (Dziewanski, 2011a, p. 4). Details can thus remain unreported:

In some cases a stab wound will be reported simply as a laceration, while in others it will be explicitly stated that the laceration is the result of a stabbing. In other health facilities, especially in rural areas, no references to armed violence are made (Dziewanski, 2011a, p. 4).

To fill the information gap, governmental bodies, NGOs, and academic institutions have undertaken a number of large household surveys to assess the state of security, crime, violence, and small arms in Liberia. For example, in 2007 the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms began a nationwide survey on gun ownership and the availability of small arms in Liberia. The findings have yet to be published (LiNCSA, 2010). Meanwhile, UNMIL has conducted a household survey on the prevalence of rape and the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley, has undertaken a survey assessing needs, views, and priorities of Liberians regarding post-war recovery, sources of insecurity, and dispute resolution (UNMIL, 2008; Vinck, Pham, and Kreutzer, 2011).



This *Issue Brief* is based on findings from a household survey administered by the Small Arms Survey—in collaboration with Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)—in all 15 counties in early 2010 (see Box 1).¹¹ Like surveillance data, victimization surveys also tend to suffer from underreporting,¹² however, analysis on the basis of survey data offers an alternative avenue for obtaining information on crime and violence in otherwise data-poor settings. Data on the type and location of crime and violence and information on perpetrators and victims is critical to informing public health, crime prevention, and peace-building responses.

Patterns of crime and violence

The findings of the household survey indicate that more than 10 per cent of all respondents report a household member being the victim of a crime in the 12 months between mid-2009 and mid-2010. In comparison to the results of victimization surveys that have been conducted in other post-conflict settings, the number of respondents who suffered from victimization as a result of crime and violence in Liberia is low.¹³ Violence immediately after the end of a war typically remains high;¹⁴ however, at the time of the survey, the end of the armed conflict was already some seven years back, and significant progress had been made in Liberia's security situation. In fact, Liberians consider safety and security to have improved remarkably (Small Arms Survey, 2011).

Figure 1 highlights the geographical distribution of crime and violence in Liberia. Weighted by population, crime and violence remain significantly more common in Monrovia compared to the rest of the country. In the

counties, on average, 8.1 per cent of respondents reported a crime, while almost one-quarter of all Monrovians (20.3 per cent) reported that a member of their household had been victimized. Weighted by population, this means that Monrovia alone accounts for more than half (58.4 per cent) of all reported incidents of crime. To emphasize this difference further, statistical analyses show that respondents in Monrovia were more than three times more likely to have experienced a crime over the previous 12 months than county respondents.¹⁵

The LNP confirms the concentration of crime in Monrovia, reporting that in 2009 the incidence of crime and violence in Montserrado County, the seat of Liberia's capital city, was higher than that of all other counties combined. Although this disparity seems less grim when weighted by population, the concentration of crime and violence in Monrovia remains apparent (Blair, 2011). It is important to note that part of this pattern might be related to better reporting of crimes in Monrovia than in the remote hinterlands.

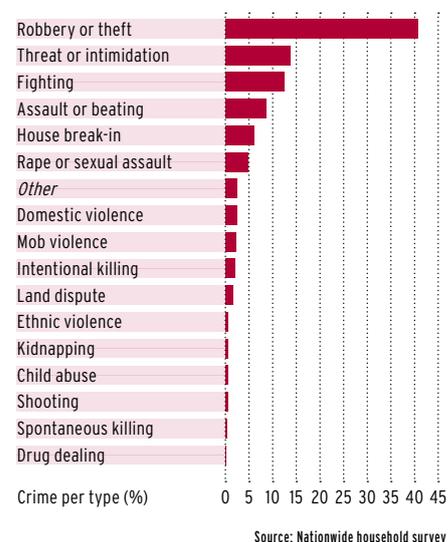
A number of general social macro factors—including rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, social inequality, the availability of weapons, and the quality of law enforcement and the administration of justice—increase the risk of crime and violence in post-conflict and developing countries (van Dijk, 2008, p. 277). Many of these risk factors are present throughout Liberia but are amplified in the capital. The availability of weapons, a large influx of ex-combatants, and uncontrolled urbanization, alongside youth unemployment and weak law enforcement systems, combine to form a particular set of security threats in Monrovia.

Based on this national distribution of reported crimes, crime and violence

Figure 1 Percentage of crimes reported in Liberia, per county (n=392)



Figure 2 Total crime reported, by type, 2009-10 (n=386)¹⁶



seem to be more prevalent in urban than rural areas; this pattern also emerges within the counties. Specifically, residents of county capitals were 1.54 times more likely to experience a violent crime than their rural counterparts.¹⁷

Figure 2 highlights that *robbery and theft* (40.7 per cent) are by far the most common types of reported crime. *Threat and intimidation* (13.8 per cent) and *fighting* (12.4 per cent) follow as the most frequent crimes reported. *Assaults and beatings* account for another 8.7 per cent and *house break-ins*

represent roughly 6.1 per cent of the total number of crimes reported.

Respondents of the household survey reported incidents of *rape and sexual assault* in 4.8 per cent of the cases. Echoing an assessment made by many of the respondents across Liberia, a 21-year-old woman working in a market in Bomi County called [armed] robbery, rape, and petty stealing ‘the common crimes’ (Shilue, 2010). With regard to violence against women, a city mayor in Grand Kru County noted:

People usually beat on the women, especially their wives. This has caused women to mostly not take part in community discussions from fear that if they say anything that displeases their men, they will beat them at home (Shilue, 2010).

The low figures for *rape and sexual assault* as well as *domestic violence* (2.4 per cent) are most certainly a result of undercounting. Despite the international community’s massive awareness campaign regarding violence against women, victims often do not recognize themselves as such, especially when the perpetrator is an intimate partner.¹⁸ A 2008 UNMIL survey on rape in Liberia confirms that among women, ‘forced sex in non-marital relationships is often not labeled as rape’ (UNMIL, 2008, p. 52). Furthermore, and as a result of the ongoing stigma, many Liberians prefer not to disclose themselves as victims of sexual and gender-based violence. The same UNMIL study finds that only 65 per cent of rape victims told someone about their victimization: ‘Parents and friends were the most likely people to be informed. Only 12.5% of the incidents were reported to the police’ (p. 7).¹⁹

The survey finds that 2.4 per cent of respondents who witnessed a crime reported that a household member was killed between 2009 and 2010. Overall, this translates into 0.3 per cent of all households having witnessed a *killing* of a household member in a one-year time span. Due to the different interpretations of the size of a household,²⁰ it is not possible to translate this response rate into a nationwide number of homicide victims per year. Nevertheless, based on the household survey findings, there are strong reasons to assume the number of people killed in Liberia must be higher than the 75 annual murder and homicide victims reported by the LNP in 2010 (see Table 1).

Intentional killings in Liberia are sometimes associated with ritualistic killings. According to the statement of a UN Police policy adviser in an interview with the Institute for Security Studies in 2008, the incidence of ritualistic killings in Liberia is increasing (Mbadlanyana and Onuoha, 2009, p. 9). According to a recent report by the US Department of State, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf also confirmed that ritualistic killings are on the rise (USDOS, 2009). However, apart from these statements and some anecdotes,²¹ little is known. There is no information on the number of ritualistic killings, nor is there evidence which can confirm that they are on the rise.

The household survey does not differentiate between simple robbery, armed robbery, and theft, which partly explains why this category accounts for an overwhelming proportion of total victimization. LNP statistics, on the other hand, do not include theft as a category. It is well possible that a significant part of *robbery or theft* actually refers to theft. Indeed, the findings from the 360 key informant interviews specifically identify theft and burglary

Figure 3 **Crime per type in Monrovia (n=228) and in the counties (n=157)²²**

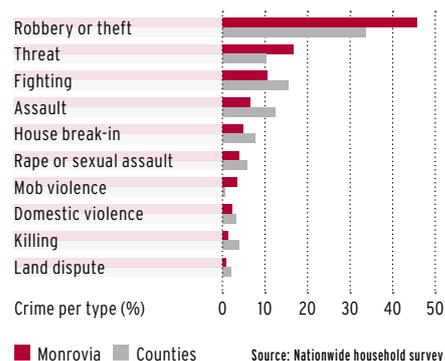
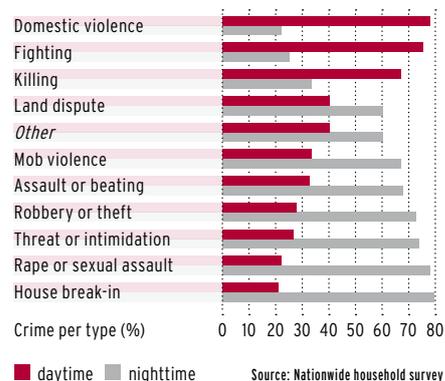


Figure 4 **Percentage of reported crime per time of day (n=374)**



as ‘the most frequent criminal actions in the communities’ (Shilue, 2010).

Yet robberies are still very frequently mentioned with regard to victimization patterns in Liberia. As a 55-year-old female city mayor in Grand Gedeh confirmed: ‘My impression of the security situation in my community is fairly good except with armed robberies. I experienced once or twice an attack on my own house.’²³ UNMIL reports armed robberies to be widespread in Liberia. In fact, since 2007, every UNMIL report has identified armed robberies as one of the major security concerns.²⁴

Notwithstanding the predominance of *robberies and theft* in all regions, they are more common in Monrovia than in the counties (46.6 per cent in Monrovia, 34.2 per cent in the counties). More specifically, among respondents who reported a crime, Monrovia were

almost twice as likely to report a robbery or theft than county respondents (see Figure 3).²⁵ A 63-year-old Liberian who lives in Montserrado County and works as a consultant with the Ministry of Justice put it clearly: ‘Armed robbery is the main crime in our community’ (Shilue, 2010). The media also frequently report activities of armed robbers in Monrovia. For example, a 2010 article in the *Daily Observer* quotes a 58-year-old businessman and resident of Gobachop Market, an area in Monrovia, as saying that the community was ‘constantly terrorized by armed gangsters and our properties are looted’ (*Daily Observer*, 2010).

The time of day when crimes and incidents of violence occur sheds further light on their characteristics (see Figure 4). Nationwide, significantly more respondents reported crimes that occurred at night (63.9 per cent) than during the day (36.1 per cent). Indeed, a shortage of electricity ‘facilitates criminal activity during the night, especially because police officers are not adequately equipped with flashlights and bicycles for evening patrols’ (Gompert et al., 2007, pp. 9–10). More than 70 per cent of all robberies and theft occur at night; many of these are probably armed robberies. A 2007 report by the UN Panel of Experts confirms that ‘the typical armed robbery is committed between 1 and 3 a.m. by a group of two or more individuals who target a private residence’ (UNSC, 2007b, p. 31).

It comes as no surprise that respondents in Monrovia—which has a higher incidence of armed robberies—were more than twice as likely to report a crime occurring at night than county respondents.²⁶ Monrovia point out that there is no light at night because of the absence of an electrical power grid; they emphasise that darkness enables not only armed robberies but

also sexual assault (ICG, 2009, p. 5). The household survey confirms these findings; 77.8 per cent of all rapes and sexual assaults reportedly occurred at night.

In contrast, the household survey findings reveal that *fighting* (75.0 per cent), *domestic violence* (77.8 per cent), and *killings* (66.7 per cent) take place primarily during the day; however, there are too few responses in the latter two categories to allow for an assessment of patterns of domestic violence and killings in Liberia.

Overall, these survey findings highlight that Monrovia is significantly more affected by crime and violence than the rest of the country. The capital is thus in need of special attention with respect to violence prevention and reduction programmes. The household survey does not assess trends, and it is thus not possible to evaluate whether crime in Liberia is increasing or decreasing. Nevertheless, key informant interviews suggest that crime in general, and armed robberies in particular, are decreasing, thanks to various awareness-raising efforts undertaken by the Government of Liberia, NGOs, and the international community (Shilue, 2010). Examples of such campaigns and other initiatives to prevent and reduce armed violence are discussed further below.

Victims of violence

The nationwide household survey asked respondents to state whether they or anyone in their household had been the victim of a crime and to identify the sex of each victim. More than two-thirds of all crimes reported in the survey involved male victims (68.6 per cent, ± 6.05 per cent), while almost as many involved female victims (63.3 per cent, ± 6.28 per cent). A significant number of these crimes

Figure 5 Victimization rate by sex and type of crime (n=376)²⁷

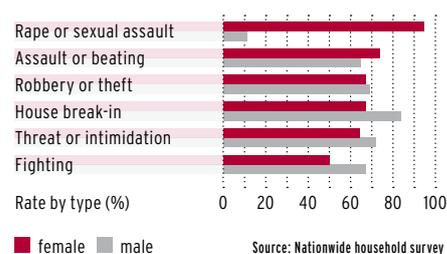


Figure 6 Age of victim per type of crime (n=518)



targeted more than one person at a time, which explains why the percentages add up to more than 100 per cent.²⁸ Figure 5 presents the percentage of reported victims, per sex and type of crime. Not surprisingly, a far greater proportion of women than men were reportedly victims of *rape or sexual assault* (94.4 per cent vs. 11.1 per cent). With respect to other crimes, the proportion of men and women who were reportedly victimized is nearly equal.

Figure 6 reveals that the mean age of the victims is 29.2 years (± 13.5 years). The overall reported age of female victims is 27.0 years (± 11.4 years), which is slightly lower than the mean age of male victims at 31.1 years (± 13.9 years). The mean age of female victims is lower than that of men because women are frequently victims of rape and sexual assault, a crime that typically targets young girls. MoGD data indicates the average age of rape victims is 16 years (Dziewanski, 2011b, p. 17). The UN underscores that the high number of reported rape cases continues to be a

serious concern, indicating that the majority of victims are under the age of 15 (UNSC, 2010a, p. 3).

The household survey findings confirm that most victims of rape and sexual assault tend to be younger than victims of other crimes. Although the mean age of a reported rape or sexual assault victim is 18.7 years (± 9.28 years), which is higher than the MoGD and UN estimates, it is still significantly lower than the mean age of victims of threat or intimidation (32.4 years), robbery or theft (30.8 years), or assault or beating (29.2 years), crimes that target men and women in similar ways (see Figure 5).

The household survey demonstrates that in 38.0 per cent of all reported cases the victim was injured, while in 4.4 per cent of all cases the violent event resulted in the death of the victim. Figure 7 shows that women are more likely to survive victimization without a physical injury, whereas men are more likely to be injured or killed.

While they may be able to avoid physical injury, women—who represent the vast majority of victims of sexual violence and rape—may suffer from psychological and social scars long after abuses are committed. Their victimization can also result in the ‘transmission of sexually transmitted infection, unwanted pregnancy, divorce or partner abandonment for the survivor and heavy stigmatization

by the community and families’ (Dziewanski, 2011b, p. 5).

Getting medical treatment for the injured victims of armed violence in Liberia can be challenging. Liberia’s health infrastructure was all but flattened by civil war, with an estimated 95 per cent of health facilities destroyed or rendered non-functional (IRIN, 2009). Since war’s end, the Government of Liberia has made considerable efforts to improve access to services at health facilities in Liberia. In 2008, 66 per cent of households reported having a health facility in their communities, and 86 per cent of households reported that a clinic was less than one hour away (Republic of Liberia, 2008c, pp. 31–32).

The Basic Package of Health Service (BPHS) identifies health services that are guaranteed to be available free of charge to each citizen (Republic of Liberia, 2008a, p. 2). In relation to treating injured victims of armed violence, the BPHS guarantees mental health services and emergency services (Republic of Liberia, 2009). The BPHS also requires basic pharmaceutical drugs—such as painkillers, anti-inflammatory medication, and antibiotics—to be available for free. As part of its response to the dramatic problem of sexual and gender-based violence, the Government of Liberia has also ruled that all treatment related to such acts is to be provided free of charge.

Challenges remain, however, and patients and providers are seldom aware of what types of health care may be accessed free of charge under the BPHS. As a result, patients are often charged for services that they are entitled to receive for free under the BPHS; consequently, people are more likely to self-medicate at pharmacies. In key informant interviews, a senior health manager of Africare, an NGO

working on health and agriculture issues, referred to one case in which a man was struck by his wife with a *cassava* mallet—a long, rounded plank used for mashing *cassava*. Although the assault produced a dent in his skull, he forwent medical treatment and purchased painkillers at a local pharmacy ‘because there was no blood’.³⁰

In addition, many Liberians prefer to go to traditional healers rather than health clinics. When it comes to treating fractures, for example, traditional healers are generally considered more effective than health facilities. In fact, some NGO clinics and hospitals actively pursue a strategy of referring patients to traditional healers for the treatment of fractures.³¹ Typically, traditional healers use a combination of natural medicine and spirituality to treat wounds. To treat a fracture, a traditional healer may charge about LRD 100 (USD 1.40), a chicken, and a rooster at the start of treatment, and a bundle of roofing zinc at the end of treatment.³²

More complicated procedures, such as the removal of bullets, are not covered by the BPHS and carry fees (IRIN, 2009); several governmental facilities provide such services for free, however. For instance, Redemption Hospital in Monrovia is government-run, subsidized by an international NGO, and thus completely free. In other government-run facilities, patients who cannot pay for services are to be provided with treatment anyway; in practice, however, patients who are unable to pay have reportedly been turned away from government hospitals.³³

Table 2 provides cost information for the treatment of injuries. The figures are drawn from key informant interviews and pricing sheets of five different hospitals across Liberia: Ganta United Methodist Hospital, JFK

Figure 7 Percentage of victims injured or killed in an act of violence, by sex (n=502)²⁹

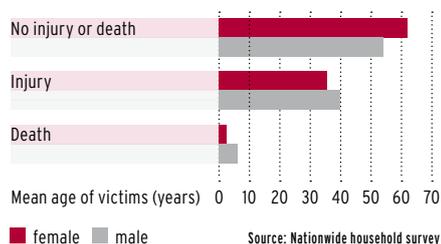


Table 2 Core costs at selected facilities, by treatment type³⁴

	Ganta United Methodist Hospital ^a	JFK Hospital ^a	Phebe Hospital ^b	Redemption Hospital	St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital
Type of facility	Private	Government-run (autonomous agency)	Government-run	Government-run	Private
Minor or superficial injury^c					
Cuts and bruises	LRD 1,160-1,360 (USD 16-19)	LRD 905-1,105 (USD 13-15)	LRD 100-275 (USD 1-4)	Free	LRD 2,375 (USD 33)
Moderate injury^d					
Sutures	LRD 1,510 (USD 21)	LRD 1,205 (USD 17)	LRD 600-775 (USD 8-11)	Free	LRD 1,675 (USD 23)
Fractures	LRD 4,310-5,810 (USD 60-80)	LRD 2,955-3,105 (USD 41-43)	LRD 800-975 (USD 11-14)	Free	LRD 2,660 (USD 37)
Removal of bullets	LRD 3,310 (USD 46)	LRD 9,455-9,605 (USD 131-133)	LRD 2,000-2,175 (USD 28-30)	Free	LRD 2,560 (USD 36)
Severe injury^e					
Intensive medical or surgical management	LRD 8,910 (USD 124)	LRD 20,305 (USD 282)	LRD 11,399-11,675 (USD 158-162)	Referral to JFK Hospital	LRD 5,775 (USD 80)

Notes: Source: Dziewanski (2011a, p. 13)
^a Prices are for an adult Liberian national.
^b Prices are for a Category A (lower class) patient.
^c Costs associated with cuts and bruises: registration, doctor's consultation, admission, cleaning of cuts and abrasions, immobilization, paracetamol, TAT, and penicillin.
^d Costs associated with moderate injuries: 1) sutures: registration, doctor's consultation, admission, cleaning of cuts and abrasions, paracetamol, TAT, penicillin, and sutures; 2) registration, doctor's consultation, admission, cleaning of cuts and abrasions, paracetamol, TAT, penicillin, X-rays, and casting; and, 3) removal of bullets: registration, doctor's consultation, admission, paracetamol, TAT, penicillin, X-rays, sutures, and minor surgery.
^e Costs associated with severe injuries: registration, doctor's consultation, admission, paracetamol, TAT, penicillin, X-rays, sutures, major surgery, seven nights in the hospital, and anaesthesia.

Hospital, Phebe Hospital, Redemption Hospital, and St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital. The estimates presented in Table 2 do not include other costs potentially associated with surgery, such as intravenous treatment and specialized medication, nor do estimates account for long-term costs associated with years of treatment and the use of pharmaceuticals.

Very severe cases, such as those requiring surgery to repair damage to internal organs, will typically be referred to JFK Hospital in Monrovia, which is widely considered the best health facility in the country. Though it is government-run, JFK Hospital has the status of an autonomous agency that charges for services (Dziewanski, 2011a). Major surgery can cost more than LRD 20,000 LRD (USD 280). Given that the gross domestic product per capita in Liberia is LNP 15,746 (USD 220), major surgery conducted

at JFK Hospital may cost more than the patient's yearly earnings (UNdata, n.d.).

Portrait of the perpetrator

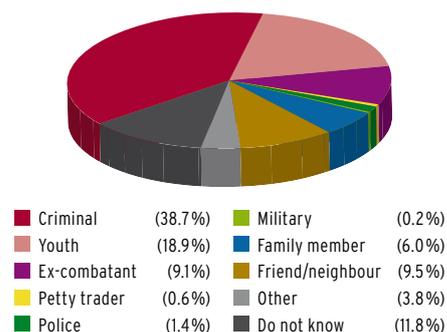
Official data provides some insight into the characteristics of perpetrators. According to LNP data, 86 per cent of suspected perpetrators are men. Data from the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation confirms the overwhelming predominance of men as perpetrators. It reveals that 1,512 prisoners were housed in 15 facilities across the country as at 25 October 2010, the majority of them (836) in Monrovia Central Prison (Blair, 2011, p. 7). This prisoner population comprises 1,476 men and 36 women.³⁵ These figures must be interpreted cautiously, however. The disparities in incarceration rates may also be a function of differential treatment of men and women by the police and the courts.

The household survey did not ask whether the perpetrator was male or female. Instead, it focused on the type of perpetrator. Figure 8 highlights that the most frequently identified type of perpetrator was a *criminal* (38.7 per cent). This label is ambiguous, as any individual violating the law would be a criminal. Yet this ambiguity may simply reflect the fact that neither the victim nor the respondent actually knew who the perpetrator was. Nevertheless, slightly more than one in ten respondents (11.8 per cent) specifically said they did not know the type of perpetrator.

Survey respondents are likely to refer to a perpetrator as a *criminal* to describe any person who does not belong to another specific social group, such as youths, ex-combatants, police, family, friends, or neighbours. Criminals in Liberia today rarely seem to be linked to a particular social identity; rather, they tend to be identified as individuals who have become criminals as a way to escape poverty (McCormack, 2010).

Youth is the second most common label placed on a perpetrator (18.9 per cent). An increasing amount of literature analyses potential risks presented by Liberia's youths with respect to national stability (Adolfo, 2010; Maclay and Özerdem, 2010). Yet the fact that fewer than one in five perpetrators was identified as a youth runs contrary to

Figure 8 Types of perpetrator (n=390)³⁶



Source: Nationwide household survey

the popular perception of youths as agents of crime and violence. Further, it is important to note that:

*the term youth in Liberia is usually a marker of social status, not necessarily an indicator of empirical age. It is not unusual to come across 40-year-olds who are described as youths.*³⁷

Also contrary to popular perceptions, *ex-combatants* were identified as attackers in fewer than one in ten cases (9.1 per cent).³⁸ A UNDP official points out that, while nearly any crime that was committed immediately after the war was linked to *ex-combatants*, 'today, *ex-combatants* are hardly mentioned or singled out with reference to criminal activities' (McCormack, 2010).³⁹

The type of attacker differs according to the type of crime (see Figure 9). Most of the crime in Liberia involves robberies or theft, threats or intimidation, or house break-ins. In these cases, the perpetrator is likely to be identified ambiguously as a *criminal*. *Youths* are specifically mentioned in relation to the few incidents of mob violence, killings, and violent land disputes. One incident of mob violence occurred on 27 February 2010, when:

an off-duty police officer was set ablaze in Monrovia by an angry mob after he shot a man for undisclosed reasons. An Armed Forces of Liberia soldier, who attempted to rescue the officer, was attacked by the mob and subsequently died of his injuries (UNSC, 2010b, pp. 3–4).

Incidents such as this one, though rare, have the potential to be very violent, which may explain the general perception of Liberia's youths—the predominant perpetrators mentioned in connection with mob violence—as a risk factor for national peace and stability.

In more than one-third of all cases (36.8 per cent), respondents declared that the victim knew the perpetrator beforehand. In smaller and rural communities, people may have greater knowledge of other community members. Indeed, as Figure 10 highlights, county residents who reported a crime were twice more likely to state that the victim was acquainted with the attacker than Monrovia respondents.⁴¹ Overall, the statistical analysis shows that crimes which were most likely to be perpetrated by someone familiar to the victim were *killings, assaults or beatings, rapes or sexual assaults, domestic violence, and fighting*. Not surprisingly,

in the case of *domestic violence*, all respondents reported that the victim knew the attacker. Yet in the main category of crime—*robbery or theft*—as well as in cases of *threat or intimidation* and *house break-ins*, the victim tended not to know the perpetrator.

The findings of the household survey reveal that perpetrators tend to attack in groups of two or more (50.5 per cent), with an overall median number of two perpetrators per crime. One observer notes:

*What we see in Liberia today are not groups with permanent or semi-permanent structures and identities, but rather small groups of individuals that sometimes work together to perpetrate a crime. Typically, they get together periodically to rob or thief.*⁴²

Figure 11 highlights how many perpetrators were involved in violent events, disaggregating by type of crime. *Robberies or theft* ranks highest with an average of more than four perpetrators. In Monrovia, with its higher incidence of robbery and theft, almost three-quarters (72.1 per cent) of respondents report a crime with a median number of three attackers. In other words, violence in Monrovia is

Figure 9 Type of perpetrator per type of crime (n=363)⁴⁰

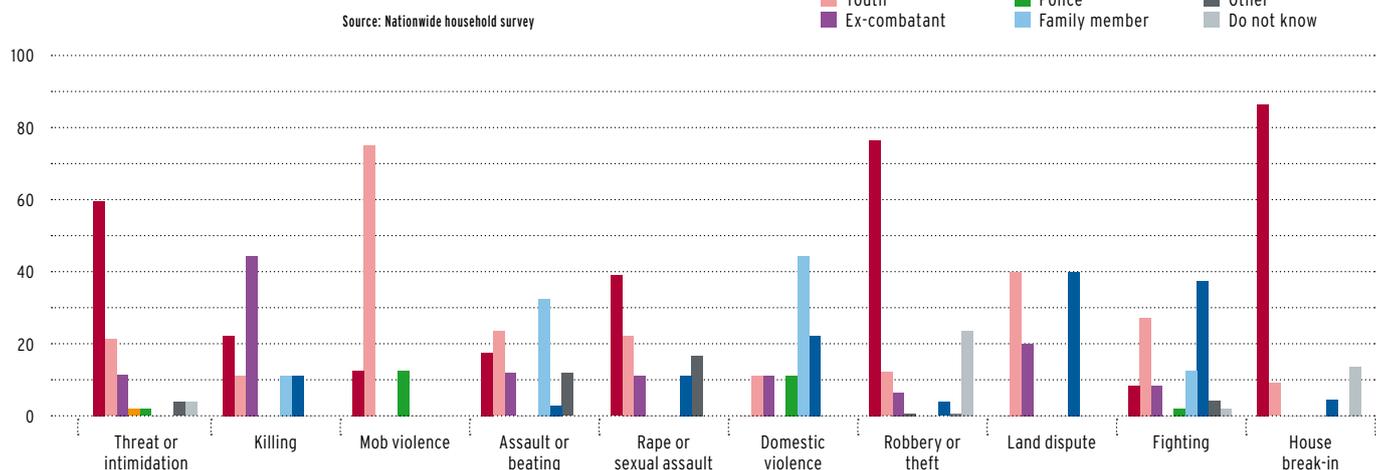


Figure 10 Percentage of responses to 'Did the victim know the attacker?' in Monrovia (n=228) and in the counties (n=161)

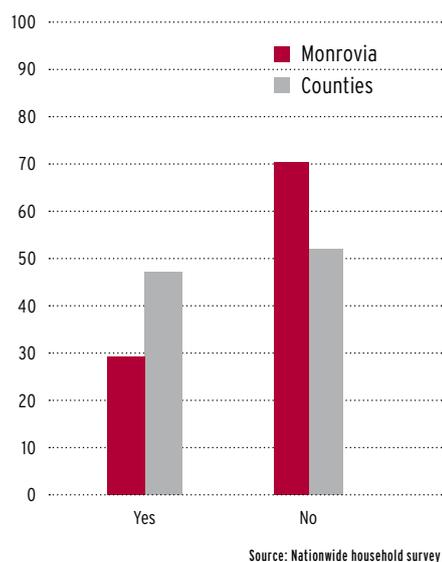
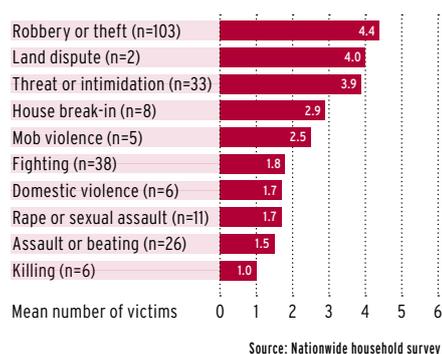


Figure 11 Number of attackers by type of crime (n=297)⁴³



almost 3.5 times more likely to be perpetrated by more than one attacker compared to violence in the counties.⁴⁴ Conversely, fewer than half (43.5 per cent) of county respondents report more than one attacker.

Not only the mean number of attackers but also the mean number of victims is higher in Monrovia than in the counties. More specifically, Monrovia shows a mean of 2.58 victims per incident (± 3.02) and a mean of 4.05 perpetrators per incident (± 3.68). County-wide data shows a mean of 1.74 victims per incident (± 1.98) and a mean of 2.25 perpetrators (± 4.32). Monrovia thus typically experiences crimes—mostly robberies or theft—

that involve a group of four perpetrators who attack and rob a smaller group of two victims, usually at the victims' home.⁴⁵

Overall, the survey findings show that the character of violent acts has changed significantly since the war. During the war, violence was collective and politically motivated. Violence in Liberia today is mainly characterized by economically motivated acts of crime, such as armed robberies. Organized armed groups have disappeared as the main group of perpetrators; rather, crime is now being committed by small groups of individuals.

Addressing these contemporary challenges requires comprehensive armed violence reduction and prevention (AVRP) efforts that address underlying risk factors, such as the lack of economic opportunities, unemployment, the ineffectiveness of security forces, and widespread impunity. That said, some violence prevention programmes in Liberia take into account that today's security threats revolve predominantly around economically motivated crime, such as robberies, theft, and attacks on households.

Crime and violence prevention and reduction efforts

Post-conflict Liberia has seen some relatively large-scale conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and peace- and state-building efforts, such as the formal disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and rehabilitation programme, the establishment of the new Armed Forces of Liberia, security sector reform (SSR), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia.⁴⁶

Some of these programmes, such as the SSR efforts, are ongoing.⁴⁷ The security sector in Liberia includes the

LNP, the Emergency Response Unit, the Armed Forces of Liberia, the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the judicial system, and others. UNMIL and the US government largely funded the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process. Both are still heavily involved in funding the current efforts to reform the police as well as the military (Mehler, 2010, p. 12). On the one hand, the Armed Forces of Liberia have been dismantled and around 2,000 new recruits have been selected and trained with substantial assistance from the United States (Adolfo, 2010; Cook, 2010, p. 21); on the other hand, certain security sector institutions, such as the criminal justice system, are still in need of reform. The UN confirms that, 'there is growing recognition that rule-of-law issues, especially an efficient criminal justice system, need to be addressed comprehensively, including in the context of security sector reform' (UNSC, 2011, p. 5).⁴⁸

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recently identified 44 concrete AVRP programmes in Liberia (OECD, forthcoming). An analysis indicates that these programmes remain heavily focused on core SSR capacities, with less of a focus on building community security and resilience. That said, as part of broader SSR efforts, the donor community is increasingly interested in promoting community-oriented policing programmes to facilitate communication and coordination between the police and the community. To this end, Community Policing Forums (CPFs) were set up; however, research on the CPFs shows mixed results:

Many argue that the CPFs are not sufficiently supported by the police. In some cases, criminals identified

by community members are not dealt with. Additionally, CPF members complain that the forums are run on a completely voluntary basis with little or no assistance from the government—members must also pay for their own stationery, mobile phones, flashlights, etc. (Kantor and Persson, 2010, p. 17).

Despite these shortcomings, CPFs have become important tools for AVRP, especially in Monrovia (Kantor and Persson, 2010, p. 17). The Liberian *Poverty Reduction Strategy* of 2008 forms the backdrop to current and prospective AVRP efforts. The first of four main components focuses on ‘consolidating peace and security’.⁴⁹ A key goal of this first component is to build public confidence in the effectiveness of the security forces to combat domestic and transnational crime. It calls for the adoption of a community policing concept that is sensitive to marginalized groups, such as women and youths (Republic of Liberia, 2008b, p. 50).

The international community is central in supporting these efforts. UNMIL provides support through an awareness-raising campaign using UNMIL Radio, community-level meetings, and the local media (UNSC, 2010b, p. 13). Further, UNDP runs a Community Security and Social Cohesion programme together with international partners, such as the Economic Community of West African States and UN Police; national agencies, including the Ministry of Justice, the LNP, the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization; and local partners, such as the Liberia Action Network on Small Arms. UNDP also supports the community policing efforts of the LNP through awareness-raising campaigns (UNDP, n.d.).

In addition to SSR efforts, AVRP activities in Liberia place a strong thematic focus on violence against women. People interviewed for this research confirmed that, thanks to the efforts of the international community, the government, and local NGOs, the situation with regard to violence against women seems to have improved. As a local fisherman in Maryland put it: ‘theft, rape, and beating on women has reduced because of the constant awareness by the Ministry of Gender and Development’ (Shilue, 2010). Youths also attract considerable attention from AVRP programming that targets both perpetrators and victims of violence.

Table 3 highlights the most common direct and indirect programme elements that are included in the 44 AVRP interventions identified by the OECD (OECD, forthcoming). A number of interventions combine direct and indirect elements.⁵⁰ Direct AVRP

approaches focus largely on the perpetrators of violence, improved law enforcement, and arms control; indirect AVRP activities address the underlying risk factors of crime and violence and include elements such as job creation and employment programmes, community empowerment, education, and youth programming.

The *Poverty Reduction Strategy* formulates six main causes of armed conflict that require focused attention:

- land conflicts;
- the condition of youths, especially with regard to employment;
- political polarization;
- mismanagement of natural resources;
- the relationship between the state and its citizens; and
- a weak and dysfunctional justice system (Republic of Liberia, 2008b, p. 171).

Table 3 **The most common direct and indirect AVRP programme elements in Liberia**

Direct interventions	Responses	Indirect interventions	Responses
Instruments		Voluntary	
Voluntary gun-free zones	3	Media and awareness-raising campaigns	28
Weapons amnesties and buyback	1	Community empowerment interventions	22
Weapons collection and destruction	1	Educational interventions	19
Perpetrators		Enforced	
Informal mediation	11	Youth programming activities	16
Education	6	Skill development programmes	14
Neighbourhood watch	2	Job creation and employment programmes	10
Checkpoints	1		
Institutions		Enforced	
Better law enforcement	8	Better security monitoring	7
		Justice and penal reform	7
Improved local, urban, and national governance	7	Reducing availability and consumption of alcohol	4
Local or traditional dispute resolution and courts	6	Community prohibition and ordinances	4
Justice and security sector reform	5	Mine action	1

Source: OECD (forthcoming)

Although it focuses more on armed conflict than on crime, the *Poverty Reduction Strategy* highlights that beyond restructuring and reforming security institutions, efforts must also be made to mitigate the underlying risk factors of crime and violence in Liberia.

Conclusion

While violence during the war in Liberia was collective and politically motivated in nature, incidents of crime and violence today are largely economically motivated, such as robberies and theft. Organized armed groups are no longer the main group of perpetrators; crime is now being committed by small groups of individuals, often referred to as 'criminals'.

In Monrovia, levels of crime and violence are significantly higher than in the counties. In the capital, armed robberies that occur during the evening or at night are committed by two or more criminals and are likely to involve two to three victims. Apart from armed robberies, theft, and burglary, attacks on households and assaults are reported frequently in Liberia. In addition, rape and sexual violence are of major concern.

Crime runs the risk of having a destabilizing effect on overall peacebuilding in Liberia, especially if victims who report crimes lose trust in the police and justice system. In a recent survey conducted by the United Nations Office for Project Services, many Liberian communities indeed expressed great concern about the perceived ineffectiveness of the Liberian government in combating crime and the resulting impunity:

In many parts of the country, communities decidedly expressed that unless their security and justice

needs are effectively addressed by national authorities, they will have to take justice into their own hands (UNOPS, 2010, p. 7).

The erosion of trust in governmental institutions and the reliance on vigilante justice and mob violence goes hand in hand with a government's loss of the monopoly on violence.

Given this context, the Liberian government, together with its international and national partners, is devoting considerable investment and energy to AVRPs initiatives. LNP statistics are currently not comprehensive enough to analyse trends or whether crime is increasing or decreasing. While effective monitoring of crime and violence relies first and foremost on quality data, 'LNP data will remain unreliable as long as the police are underpaid and sparsely dispersed, transportation is unavailable, and corruption is endemic' (Blair, 2011, p. 13).

Requirements for better data are concomitant with the capacity building in the area of data collection, storage, and statistical analysis. The potential exists to implement violence surveillance systems at medical facilities across Liberia; indeed, information is already being collected in some facilities. Standardizing and expanding the data collection efforts of the police and public health institutions can go a long way towards improving the understanding and tracking of crime and violence in Liberia over time.

A study by the OECD reveals that donor interest in AVRPs is fading in view of Liberia's successful path to stabilization and recovery, the overall improvement of the security situation, and the growing perception that large-scale collective violence has become less of a threat (OECD, forthcoming). Nevertheless, since the capacity and infrastructure for effective post-war

crime prevention and reduction are not yet fully established, the need for continued investment in AVRPs efforts remains undeniable. ■

Endnotes

The author thanks Oscar Bloh, Freida McCormack and Richard Panton for the substantive background papers they contributed on motorcycle taxi unions, chains of command among ex-combatants, and land disputes, respectively. Special thanks go to Jimmy Shilue for conducting nationwide key informant interviews.

- 1 This system has important implications for confidentiality as well; ostensibly confidential records are often transported across the country in officers' backpacks via commercial taxi or motorbike.
- 2 This category includes any assault—which may involve a threatening physical gesture without actual physical contact—on any uniformed military or security officer (such as the Special Security Service, the LNP, or firefighters).
- 3 This category involves an adult coercing a minor to engage in sexual activities or to commit violent acts. Interview with the LNP conducted by Dariusz Dziewanski, Monrovia, 23 May 2011.
- 4 A person commits felonious restraint by hiding a suspected criminal in his or her home and preventing the arrest of the suspect. Interview with the LNP conducted by Dariusz Dziewanski, Monrovia, 23 May 2011.
- 5 The category refers to a man who has forced sexual intercourse with a woman who is not his wife and who has a 'mental disease', is unaware that sexual intercourse is taking place, or is compelled to submit due to a threat that leaves her incapable of resisting (in contrast, rape includes physical restraint and submission). Interview with the LNP conducted by Dariusz Dziewanski, Monrovia, 23 May 2011.
- 6 Due to budget and time limitations, 119 clusters were selected. Limiting the number of clusters facilitated work for the six survey teams, especially in view of required transportation time and the number of days available for the project.
- 7 Due to the extremely small urban populations in Grand Kru and River Cess

- counties, it was not possible to stratify the sample in these areas. Instead, clusters were selected among all possible enumeration areas (that is, urban and rural combined). No urban enumeration areas were selected in either county.
- 8 As there were four enumerators on each team, and each enumerator was expected to complete six surveys per day, 24 households were sampled in each cluster.
 - 9 Valid scoring refers to the quality, coherence, and appropriateness of the responses in the questionnaire, as transcribed by the enumerator. Thus, only responses that are legible, coherent, and in line with the parameters of the question are deemed valid. Reliable scoring, or reliable data in this case, refers to collected data that is free from logical inconsistencies. This means that, similar to a testimony or an avowal, responses should not contradict one another. Finally, ethical scoring signifies that the enumerator has read the respondent the consent form prior to conducting the interview, that there is a clear indication on the questionnaire of the respondent's willingness to participate in the survey, and that the respondent's right to refuse a question at any time was at all times respected.
 - 10 A forthcoming *Issue Brief* will be dedicated to analysing violence against women in Liberia.
 - 11 Liberia is divided into 15 administrative areas called counties, each headed by a superintendent. The counties are Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Lofa, Margibi, Maryland, Montserrado, Nimba, River Cess, River Gee, and Sinoe.
 - 12 In the United States, assessments of the National Crime Survey have found that interviews with victims tend to recover just one-third to one-half of all assaults (Cook, 1985, p. 99).
 - 13 For example, a survey that was conducted in 2009 in eastern Equatoria—in the south-eastern part of South Sudan—reveals that almost one-third of all respondents reported incidents of crime and armed violence against one of their household members in a 12-month time span (Small Arms Survey, 2010, pp. 2–3).
 - 14 See Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008, ch. 3).
 - 15 Monrovia were 3.17 (2.56–3.95; $P < 0.001$) times more likely to have experienced a crime than respondents in the counties.
 - 16 Reports of less than three types of crime were removed from the analysis, as the low reporting could not contribute to a valid or reliable inferential analysis. Those removed were ethnic violence ($n=2$), drug dealing ($n=1$), kidnapping ($n=2$), child abuse ($n=2$), and shooting ($n=2$).
 - 17 The confidence interval is 1.09–2.16; $P=0.013$.
 - 18 Key informant interview with a representative of medica mondiale, Monrovia, November 2010.
 - 19 An upcoming *Issue Brief* on sexual and gender-based violence in Liberia will look specifically at these questions.
 - 20 There is no standard definition regarding the number of persons who make up a household. The 2007 Demographic and Health Survey asked for the persons who usually live in the household and visitors who slept in the household the previous night; it estimates that the average number of household members is 5.2 in urban areas and 5.0 in rural areas. The 2008 census asked the enumerator to list all persons who slept in the household on the night of the census, 21–22 March 2008. According to the 2008 census data, an average of 5.1 persons lives in a household. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Liberians consider this small number of household members accurate; the Survey and census definitions were applied to avoid double counting. It is more likely that people interpret their households as their extended family, especially in rural areas, where families often live in a cluster of several housing structures that share an outdoor kitchen. Given this criterion, household sizes of 12–16 members are not uncommon in rural areas. Communication with Nicholai Lidow and Adam Weiner, statisticians involved in the 2008 census in Liberia, March 2011.
 - 21 See *Economist* (2011).
 - 22 Six respondents' questionnaires relating to these crimes were missing or invalid.
 - 23 Field interview with a Grand Gedeh mayor by James Suah Shilue, programme director, Interpeace, 2010.
 - 24 UNSC (2007a; 2007b; 2008a; 2008b; 2009a; 2009b; 2010a; 2010b; 2011).
 - 25 Monrovia were 1.69 (1.11–2.58; $P=0.014$) times more likely to report a robbery or theft than county respondents.
 - 26 Monrovia were 2.33 (1.53–3.55; $P < 0.011$) times more likely to report a crime occurring at night than county respondents.
 - 27 Six responses relating to the type of crime were invalid. Five types of crime had fewer than three responses, which did not permit enough statistical power to determine differences.
 - 28 LNP data, which confirms near-equal victimization rates across the sexes, shows that 53 per cent of all reported victims are men, while 47 per cent are women (Blair, 2011).
 - 29 Cases in which sex was not specified (that is, 'both' was given as a response) were excluded. In these incidents, there was more than one victim.
 - 30 Key informant interview with a senior health manager, Africare, Gbarnga, 11 October 2010.
 - 31 Key informant interview with a supervisor, Médecins du Monde clinic, Palala, 13 October 2010.
 - 32 Key informant interview with traditional healers, Palala, 14 October 2010.
 - 33 Key informant interview with representatives of the administration, Clinton Foundation, Monrovia, 18 October 2010.
 - 34 Exchange rate as of 24 May 2011.
 - 35 Of the 1,512 prisoners, only 197 had been sentenced, while the remaining 1,315 were listed as 'detainees' awaiting trial. The age breakdown is as follows: adult males: 184 sentenced, 1,234 detained; juvenile males: 5 sentenced, 53 detained; adult females: 8 sentenced, 24 detained; juvenile females: 0 sentenced, 4 detained. Author communication with Robert Blair, 10 January 2011.
 - 36 Two responses regarding the type of perpetrators were missing.
 - 37 Email communication with a social researcher working in Liberia, June 2011.
 - 38 For popular perceptions of perpetrators of violence in Liberia, see Small Arms Survey (2011).
 - 39 Interview with a UNDP official, Monrovia, April 2010.
 - 40 Note that Figure 9 presents only the crimes in which the type of reported perpetrator differs significantly per crime. Moreover, the status *criminal*, *unknown*, and *do not know* have been concatenated, as they both refer to an ambiguous or unknown identity. Sample sizes for each individual type of crime are the following: *threat or intimidation*, $n=52$; *killing*, $n=9$; *mob violence*, $n=8$; *assault or beating*, $n=34$; *rape or sexual assault*, $n=18$; *domestic violence*, $n=9$; *robbery or theft*, $n=157$; *land dispute*, $n=5$; *fighting*, $n=49$; *house break-in*, $n=22$.

- 41 County residents were 2.15 (1.41–3.27; $P < 0.001$) times more likely to state that the victim was acquainted with the attacker than Monrovia residents.
- 42 Email communication with a social researcher working in Liberia, May 2011.
- 43 In response to the question on the number of attackers, 95 responses were missing or invalid. Domestic violence had one outlying report of 15 people involved; it was treated as an outlier and was not included in the analysis.
- 44 Violence in Monrovia is 3.46 (2.15–5.56; $P < 0.001$) times more likely to be perpetrated by more than one attacker compared to violence in the counties.
- 45 According to the nationwide household survey, almost 70 per cent of all crimes took place at the victim's home (66.9 per cent). In Monrovia, this percentage is slightly higher, while in the counties less than 60 per cent of crimes took place in the home (72.8 vs. 58.7 per cent).
- 46 For a discussion of Liberia's peace-building efforts, see von Gienanth and Jaye (2007).
- 47 For a critical review of SSR efforts in Liberia, see Gompert et al. (2007); ICG (2009); Kantor and Persson (2010); Malan (2008); and Mehler (2010).
- 48 A forthcoming *Issue Brief* will be dedicated to security promotion in Liberia and will include a detailed description of SSR efforts in the country.
- 49 The four main components of the *Poverty Reduction Strategy* are: 'consolidating peace and security, revitalizing the economy, strengthening governance and the rule of law, and rebuilding infrastructure and delivering basic services' (Republic of Liberia, 2008b, p. 33).
- 50 Direct programming 'specifically targets the reduction and prevention of armed violence and its effects' (OECD, 2009, p. 86). Indirect programming refers to broader development programmes that do not focus exclusively on reducing or preventing armed violence but that include AVRP sub-goals, such as reducing underlying risk factors.
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About the Liberia Armed Violence Assessment

The Liberia Armed Violence Assessment is an initiative administered by the Small Arms Survey, an independent research project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development studies in Geneva. In collaboration with the Liberian Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) and Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), the Small Arms Survey administered a household survey in all 15 counties in 2010. The survey considered respondents' perceptions of security and victimization, exposure to violence, behavioural responses to threats in communities, and an analysis of instruments of violence. Key informant interviews, as well as background papers conducted by researchers and practitioners in Liberia, completed the research.

The Liberia Armed Violence Assessment will publish five *Issue Briefs* summarizing key findings of the research. The project will seek to consider some of the challenges faced

by Liberia, with a view to supporting the development of appropriate justice and security strategies for 2011 and beyond. All publications will be made available online at www.smallarmssurvey.org.

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