



Public safety and policing in Nepal:

An analysis of public attitudes towards community safety and policing across Nepal



January 2008



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SAFERWORLD

JANUARY 2008

Acknowledgements

This report presents an analysis of primary research commissioned by Saferworld in Nepal in the spring of 2007. The opinion survey was carried out by Dr Sudhindra Sharma and Pawan Kumar Sen of the Kathmandu-based organisation Inter-disciplinary Analysts (IDA). IDA also provided detailed analysis of the survey results, and contributed enormously to the research process as a whole. The focus group discussions were organised and carried out by Saferworld's Programme Associate in Nepal, Subindra Bogati, with support from Tim Archer, and in co-operation with Shobha Gautam of the Institute for Human Rights Communication Nepal (IHRICON), the Nepal Press Institute, the Regional Media Resource Centre and Women Empowerment for Sustainable Peace and Human Rights. Over 150 in-depth interviews were conducted by IDA. This analytical report was then written by Duncan Hiscock and Nicolas Benton, with contributions from Rosy Cave, Simon Rynn and Subindra Bogati. It was copy-edited by Robert Long.

Saferworld wishes to thank the Governments of Belgium and the United Kingdom for supporting the process of gathering public perceptions on community safety and policing in Nepal, and for supporting the publication of this document.



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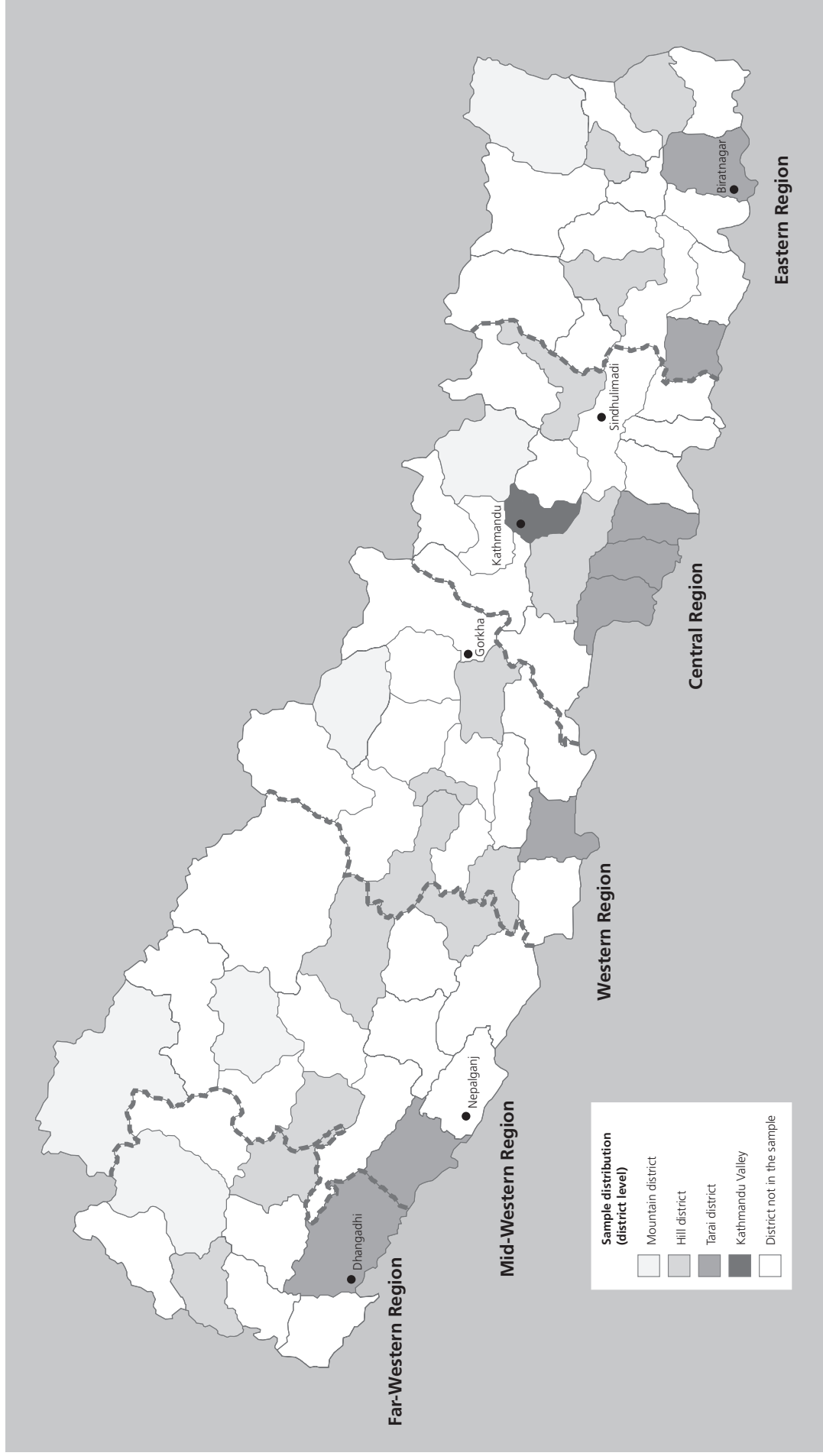
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Nepal



Executive summary

THIS PAPER PRESENTS THE ATTITUDES, expectations and concerns of the Nepali public regarding security and policing. It summarises and analyses the findings of three research methods:

- a questionnaire of with 3,010 respondents;
- in-depth interviews with over 150 people from across Nepal, both of which were conducted between 8 May 2007 and 2 June 2007;
- 12 focus group discussions (6 with men, 6 with women) from the different development regions of the country (East, Centre, West, Mid West and Far West) and Kathmandu Valley, conducted between 26 April 2007 and 1 May 2007.

The purpose of this report, which is available in both Nepali and English, is not to analyse in detail the challenges faced by the Nepali police, nor to recommend specific reforms; rather, it is to highlight some of the most important issues surrounding policing in Nepal, and to place them in an appropriate context. It is hoped that drawing attention to these questions will generate debate within Nepal (and the international community) about policing, which will help to identify priorities for reform and increase momentum towards such reform. It should be stressed however, that the research is specific to the Spring of 2007, a period of cautious optimism for many given the conclusion of a peace agreement shortly beforehand; thus this report serves as a snapshot of public perceptions as Nepali society evolves during the peace process. The key findings of the report are as follows:

A sense of optimism

“I feel a lot safer than last year. I don’t have to worry about being trapped in gunfire between the army and the Maoists.”

In-depth interview, Marwari female, Kalaiya

There is considerable optimism in Nepal following the conclusion of violent conflict between the Maoists and the Government, referred to as the People’s War, and the incorporation of the Maoists into mainstream politics. 57 percent of people believed that things in the country were moving in the right direction, while only 13 percent thought the situation was getting worse. Moreover, 70 percent of people felt safer in their locality than a year ago, and almost the same amount felt safer in their wider community/neighbourhood. However, people still felt slightly less secure travelling around the country or talking to strangers, but even in such cases a majority of people felt safer than before.

Looking towards the future, most Nepalis were hopeful: just over two-fifths of the population believed that law and order would improve and that they would have

greater access to justice in the future, against only one-fifth who expected things to get worse; the other two-fifths of Nepalis remained undecided. Nevertheless, the general perception that security has improved, and will continue in this manner in the future does not mean that the majority of the Nepali public is now living in complete safety. Instead, it indicates that communities, as of Spring of 2007 are enjoying conditions that are more secure, but that they are still vulnerable to evolving threats, such as crime.

Stalled progress and concerns about law and order

“Police still behave as if they are the law and are more into abusing power rather than providing security.”

Focus group discussion, female, Gorkha

Although the situation is undoubtedly better than before the peace agreement was in place, many people felt that progress had stalled. This was reflected in attitudes towards post-conflict developments and law and order. It was argued that the Government has not dealt with the Madhesi issue very effectively and that it had been insensitive to other issues, such as the demands of Janajati (ethnic) groups. There was also concern that the political parties seem more focused on securing their interests, rather than on improving the situation in the country.

Only two-fifths of Nepalis (41 percent) were of the opinion that the present government was able to maintain law and order well or somewhat well; 28 percent declared that it is failing to maintain law and order, while 30 percent were unsure. Similarly, 42 percent of Nepalis were worried that they may become victims of crime, against 33 percent who were not worried (25 percent were not sure). Nonetheless, when asked directly what the biggest security concerns were in their community, over half the survey respondents (57 percent) said that they had no security problems at all.

Insecurity in the Tarai

“The Madhesi issue is still burning. Ethnic groups have their own demands and agendas now, so regional uprisings are on the rise.”

Focus group discussion, male, Sindhulimadi

Unsurprisingly, given that protests surrounding the ‘Madhesi Movement’ occurred during the research phase for this paper, insecurity was much greater in the Tarai, and correspondingly in the Eastern and Central development regions where many of the main population centres of the Tarai are located.

38 percent of survey respondents from the Central Region and 32 percent from the Eastern region reported being ‘very worried’ about being victims of crime, compared with 7 percent in the Western region and only 1 percent in the Far West. Likewise, Tarai castes, Tarai Dalits and Muslims consistently displayed greater perceptions of insecurity than other groups; for example, 38 percent of Tarai castes, 36 percent of Tarai Dalits and 52 percent of Muslims were ‘very worried’ about being victims of crime, against a national average of 22 percent. These three groups were also most likely to support the goals of the Madhesi Movement (over 60 percent support, compared to a national average of 35 percent).

Importantly, however, regardless of whether people support the movement or not, there was consensus that such issues should be resolved by peaceful means, with only 1 percent supporting forceful suppression of protests.

Consequences of insecurity

“Development has been extremely affected because of the insecurity, both in our village and in the whole nation.”

Focus group discussion, female, Biratnagar

Continued insecurity is seen as having three main consequences. Firstly, many Nepalis agreed that insecurity both during and subsequent to the conflict has held back economic and social development. Secondly, ongoing insecurity may continually disrupt the holding of elections to the Constituent Assembly. There were also concerns that if the parties do not gain the results that they want from elections, attempts to resolve problems through democratic means will fail and there will be a return to violence. Thirdly, more people were considering making their own arrangements for security because they do not trust the capacity of the police to be able to do so, so they were turning to their communities for protection. However, only 10 percent of survey respondents said that there were any such security arrangements in their locality.

Some trust in the police but little respect

“Both the law and political parties could make them responsible. Laws have never been implemented, and political parties have always abused the police.”

Focus group discussion, male, Sindhulimadi

Two-thirds of Nepalis (66 percent) stated that they have at least some trust in the Nepal Police, compared to 70 percent for the Nepali Army and only 42 percent for the Maoist People’s Liberation Army (PLA). However, most of these responses indicated that people had only ‘a little’ (50 percent) rather than ‘very much’ (16 percent) trust, suggesting that very few Nepalis are truly happy with the work of the police force.

There also appeared to be little public respect for the police: only 30 percent of survey respondents said that there was some respect for the police in their area, while 55 percent said that they were not respected. The reasons given for the public’s disrespect of the police were as follows:

- bad manners and a lack of respect for members of the public, particularly women;
- corruption;
- partiality;
- a perception that the police are more interested in their own security than that of the public.

The police are ineffective at bringing criminals to justice

“They have failed to provide a satisfactory service. They’re more focused on finding out where the money comes from.”

Focus group discussion, male, Kathmandu Valley

Only 22 percent of people believed that the Nepal Police is reliable or very reliable at bringing those who commit crimes to justice, against 42 percent who rated the police as not very or not at all reliable. Only a third (32 percent) of those who were aware of crime in their area believed that the police had taken some action in response to these crimes. This suggests either that the police are not taking action or that their work is not visible to the public and thus does not reassure them. This is linked to public concern about police corruption.

The public believed that many policemen could be easily bribed and dispense justice in favour of the most powerful and wealthy. There was also suspicion that politicians manipulate the police and prevent them from investigating criminals who have links to political parties.

Given the perception that the police are not able or are unwilling to effectively provide law and order, all participants of the public opinion survey were invited to offer suggestions as to how the police can win the trust of the public. Common responses included: the police should eliminate discrimination (30 percent), help those in need of assistance (24 percent) and be empowered to arrest criminals (15 percent).

Discrimination and the police

“When the general public go to a police post and request the police to come to the place where an incident has taken place, the police say ‘ok’, but they don’t turn up. However, if a person with money or power phones them from home, the police come to the venue quickly.”

Focus group discussion, male, Biratnagar

The general consensus was that the police are becoming gradually more representative of different ethnic/caste groups, but there is still a long way to go. 62 percent of Nepalis did not believe that the Nepal Police treat different caste/ethnic groups differently; while only 19 percent believed that they do. However, this latter figure was slightly higher among Dalits, with 32 percent of Hill Dalits and 28 percent of Tarai Dalits believing there to be some discrimination against them.

The Nepali public thought that discrimination was less to do with ethnicity/caste than people’s level of wealth, power and education. Nevertheless, certain castes and ethnic groups have traditionally had more resources and greater influence within the state, therefore the distinction is a subtle one.

Many members of the public, both male and female, believed that a lot of policemen are not treating women with enough dignity and respect. This has had a severely negative effect on the image of the police in many people’s eyes. This is one reason why over three-quarters (77 percent) of Nepalis thought there should be more women in the police.

Changing expectations, a challenge for the political parties

“They have to make us feel that they are for security. There should be no discrimination even with the poor and lower-caste people. Whatever they do, they should do it to win the trust from society.”

Female, Dhangadhi

The research also shows that public expectations of the Nepal Police are changing. On the one hand, the threats to security have evolved since the end of the war, becoming less severe overall but more diverse. On the other hand, hopes raised by the democratic movement mean that people expect the police and other security actors to work in a more democratic way, which means treating people equally and with more respect.

Ultimately, it is up to politicians, as the final decision-makers within the state, to fulfil the public’s demands for improved, more democratic policing. There is a strong perception that the police have been manipulated in the past by both the monarchy and by politicians, and people expect this to change.

Future role of the Nepal Police

“We would be happy if our problems were heard and solutions were implemented.”

Focus group discussion, female, Gorkha

Probably the most important underlying questions with regard to policing in Nepal relate to how the role of the police is perceived – not only by the police themselves, but also by the state and by the public. Although the public were quick to criticise the police, people still believed that the police have an important role to play in the state. From the focus group discussions it was possible to identify a number of characteristics that the public would like to see in its ‘ideal’ police service. The majority view was that the police should:

- serve society;
- uphold the law;
- work with the community;
- protect human rights;
- be co-operative and communicative;
- be polite and respectful;

- be competent, responsible and accountable;
- treat everyone equally;
- represent all communities;
- be apolitical.

This signals that the cessation of conflict in Nepal requires a different approach to policing and the broader provision of security and justice. Extensive national debate among all strata of Nepali society now needs to take place in order that politicians, the Nepal Police and donors can meet public expectations through enacting suitable reforms. This involves considering the following questions:

1. What should the role of the police be in post-conflict Nepal?
2. What would a truly democratic police force look like?
3. What types of security should the police be responsible for?
4. What are the biggest threats to public security and community safety in Nepal (both at the national and local level) at the moment?
5. What can be done to strengthen law and order in Nepal?

Reforming the Nepal Police

It appears that the majority of Nepalis wish to co-operate with the police. The main political parties have also mentioned the importance of police reform, but there is still a lack of clarity about what this means in practice.

Police reform however, cannot be an entirely internal process, both designed and implemented only by the police themselves. Others also have crucial roles to play. This relates both to those in positions of power, who must make crucial decisions about the future of the police, and also to other stakeholders who are affected by how the police operate. These decisions would need to take into account the following questions:

1. What should political parties and policy-makers do to improve policing in Nepal?
2. What should be the key principles guiding police reform?
3. How can more women be brought into the police and what challenges might there be?
4. How can the police be made more representative of all caste/ethnic groups at all levels?
5. What can be done to prevent corruption within the police?
6. What kind of training system would a reformed police require? What should new recruits learn? And what kind of re-training is required for more experienced officers?
7. What resources will be needed to ensure that police reform can be successful?
8. How can civil society organisations and the broader public become involved in this issue?

Links between policing and other processes

The police force does not operate in a vacuum – it is highly affected by other processes that are going on in the country and internationally. The security situation will depend strongly on how the political situation develops and the impact of political developments on the country. The post-conflict resolution process will also be very important, particularly in terms of promised disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), which would have a major impact on the whole security sector. Among the key questions in this regard will be the following:

1. How should the police respond to the security challenges surrounding future elections?
2. How might the election results and political developments affect the future of the police and any plans for police reform?
3. How is police reform linked to the proposed DDR process for former Maoist fighters?

4. How is police reform linked to the broader process of justice and security sector reform? How will changes in other parts of the security sector (the Armed Forces, the Courts, political oversight bodies, etc) affect policing?
5. How is police reform linked to overall reforms of the country aimed at making the country more democratic and economically stronger?
6. How is the security situation in Nepal affected by events in India, China and further afield, and what does this mean for policing?

Conclusion

The research findings demonstrate how, despite the end of the conflict, ensuring safety still needs to be prioritised in order to achieve development. A balance will therefore need to be struck between the urgent need to provide basic security during a period of transition, and preparing for the longer-term endeavour of reforming Nepal's security system.

It was also apparent that there was very limited understanding among Nepalis of what security sector reform really means and how it can be carried out – a fact which the international community must take into account. In this context, the generation of more informed and inclusive debate within Nepal on the country's security needs is essential to improve access to security and justice for all. In accordance with this, it is crucial that international support for security sector reform (SSR) be delivered in line with international best practice and in accordance with the following guiding principles:

1. **Locally owned** reform programmes should be led by Nepalis, not by external actors. Ownership must also be broad-based. Civil society and parliamentarians should be brought into consultations and decision-making processes as well as senior members of the security forces or government officials. Time and effort should be put into conducting an inclusive societal debate to happen on the direction of reforms.
2. **Conflict-sensitive** programmes should be based on an analysis of how to approach the range of different interest groups in a fragile post-conflict scenario so that SSR can positively contribute to peace and not exacerbate tensions.
3. **Co-ordinated** the progressive reform agenda will be undermined if the Government of Nepal receives divergent forms of support and inconsistent messages from the international community
4. **Comprehensive** where possible, international actors should encourage and support comprehensive rather than piecemeal reforms which embrace the range of institutions responsible for providing security and justice in Nepal.

1

Introduction

NEPAL IS IN A PERIOD OF TRANSITION. In April 2006, mass protests led to the end of direct rule by the King and the reinstatement of the House of Representatives. A few months later, in November 2006, a Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed between the Prime Minister, G. P. Koirala, and the Maoist leader Prachanda, formally bringing an end to the so-called 'People's War' fought by the Maoists against the state since 1996. These two events have raised hopes for a more lasting peace and greater, more representative democracy. The elections to a planned Constituent Assembly will be an important step in this direction if they are held successfully without widespread violence or fraud.

As the political and social circumstances in Nepal have changed, so too has the security situation. Furthermore, public demands for greater democracy do not relate only to elections, but also to the way in which the state is run. The potential impact of this evolution on the security sector is large as security institutions may have to reconsider their role and responsibilities in order to ensure that they are capable of enforcing laws, creating a safe environment and improving their relationship with the public.

Nepal's foremost public security organisation is the Nepal Police. Yet for most of its history, the Nepal Police has served the interests of the ruling elite. The organisation was consequently a key target for the Government's military opponents, the People's Liberation Army, during the recent conflict. The intensity of the conflict resulted in the capacity of the police being significantly reduced, as the police were forced to abandon over 1,000 police posts because of the threat of Maoist aggression.¹ From 2001 the Nepal Police were supported by the newly established Armed Police Force and the Royal Nepalese Army; nevertheless the integrity of the police continued to be weakened.

With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the reform of the police, based upon a service provision mandate, has been enabled. However, since November 2006 no specific measures have been introduced to negate the legacy of misuse, and consequently the police remain under-equipped, overstretched and susceptible to corrupt practices. At present the police is organised under the Home Ministry, with 50,000 officers divided among the 5 development regions, 14 zones and 75 districts.

Policing is a key issue for any state, and it is particularly important in post-conflict situations, where one form of insecurity (conflict) is often replaced by others, such as the rising strength of criminal groups, increasing violence at the community level, and public mistrust of the police. The problems of crime and violence are regularly raised

¹ Kumar, Dhruva, 'Police reform and military downsizing' in Saferworld (2007), *Policing in Nepal: A collection of essays* (Saferworld), p.15

in the Nepali media, and it is clear that these concerns are shared by many Nepali citizens. Yet although there is some awareness of this shifting security context, there has been relatively little discussion of what exactly is changing or how to address these new challenges.

As far as the authors are aware, this is the first large-scale public opinion survey to focus on issues of public safety and security in Nepal. Security policies are sometimes written by a small number of influential people, based on assumptions about public security that have not been adequately tested. This research, gathered through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, allows decision-makers to understand much better how the Nepali public perceives security; this is vital for any policy or strategy that seeks to ensure that policing responds to the needs and attitudes of the public.

The purpose of this report, which is available in both Nepali and English, is not to analyse in detail the challenges faced by the Nepali police, nor to recommend specific reforms; rather, it is to highlight some of the most important issues surrounding policing in Nepal, and to place them in an appropriate context. It is hoped that drawing attention to these questions will generate debate within Nepal (and the international community) about policing, which will help to identify priorities for reform and increase momentum towards such reform. It is thus only the first step in a much larger process.

Methodology

This report presents the authors' analysis of three key sources of primary research commissioned in Nepal by Saferworld in Spring 2007. A nationwide public opinion survey of 3,010 respondents was carried out between 8 May and 2 June 2007 by the Kathmandu-based organisation Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA). Random sampling techniques were used to ensure that the respondents adequately reflected the demographic composition of Nepal in terms of place of residence, ethnic/caste group, sex, age group, educational status (for a fuller description of the methodology see Annex 1). In-depth interviews were also conducted with over 150 informants from across Nepal. The interviewees represent the perceptions of several different social, geographical and ideological groups (see Annex 2). In these interviews, most of the questions asked in the survey were discussed in more detail; this allowed the researchers to look at public attitudes to security and policing in more detail and explore the reasons behind the answers that were given. Lastly, twelve focus groups were held (six with men, six with women) in Biratnagar; Dhangadhi; Gorkha; Nepalganj; and Sindhulimadi, as well as Kathmandu Valley. These explored many of the same issues, but also generated wider discussion about community safety and allowed the researchers to understand the differences and similarities in the responses of different community groups; special efforts were made to ensure that the voices of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, such as lower-caste groups, were heard (see Annex 3). Further information on the data utilised in this report is available from Saferworld on request (subject to maintained confidentiality of interviewees and respondents).

It is noticeable that for many of the survey questions, 'do not know/cannot say' was a common answer. Several reasons could explain this including: fear, lack of experience of Nepal outside of a local region or that public security and community safety are not issues which many of the respondents were used to discussing.

A summary of preliminary findings from this research was also presented at a small expert meeting in Kathmandu on 20 August 2007 and to a group of senior police officers and Chief District Officers on 21 August 2007. These meetings provided an opportunity to validate findings and discuss their interpretation; the final report reflects these discussions. In addition, between September 2007 and November 2007 Saferworld in collaboration with Interdisciplinary Analyst (IDA) and Institute for Human Rights Communication Nepal (IHRICON) convened a series of validation

workshops in the five development regions, to disseminate and validate the findings of the research (see Annex 4). The participants to this process included representatives from the police, local government authorities, political parties, the business community, civil society and the local community (which included some of those that participated in the previous focus group discussions).

Structure of the paper

The report begins with a brief overview of the political and social background in Nepal, outlining the main factors influencing security in recent years and how the situation was changing in the run-up to the implementation of the research in spring 2007, and just prior to the publication of this document in December 2007. Chapters 3–5 then analyse the primary research in detail, looking at public perceptions of security and safety, attitudes towards the police, and expectations and hopes for the future. A brief conclusion summarises the key findings of this analysis and suggests some possible ‘ways ahead’ in terms of future debate and discussion.

2

Political and social background

THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, following a wave of street protests known as the *Jana Andolan II* or *Loktantra Andolan* (Democracy Movement) in April 2006, has resulted in a marked evolution to the political and social environment of Nepal. As a direct consequence of this progression, in November 2006 a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed between the Government of Nepal and the Maoists. This document articulated that the decade long ‘People’s War’ was to be concluded, affirmed the intention to conclude the ‘progressive restructuring of the state to resolve existing problems in the country, based on class, caste, region, sex’, and established that elections be held to form a representative constituent assembly.²

The People’s War has greatly weakened the capacity of public security institutions, such as the police and the army, to ensure safety and stability. Exposure to the violent conflict has shaped these institutions in counter-productive ways, including the negative developments of militarising law and order and increasing acceptance of the use of force in defence of a particular regime rather than the wider population. Moreover, the institutional capacity of the under-resourced police has been further devalued by the destruction of police posts in formerly Maoist held territory. As a consequence, the police force is having to re-establish its authority slowly in large areas of Nepal.

Despite considerable progress achieved in 2006, the optimism generated by the end of the conflict has become tempered, by the realisation that Nepal is still faced with many other problems. In particular, there has been an upsurge of political discontent in the east and central Tarai, where the so-called ‘Madhesi Movement’ has grown quickly. The word ‘Madhes’ is almost synonymous with ‘Tarai’, but has distinct social and political connotations, since although most people living in the Tarai identify themselves as Madhesis, not all do so.³ The ‘Madhesi Movement’ is not a fully co-ordinated political movement, but rather a short-hand way of describing the protests led by a number of organisations that feel that Madhesi people are under-represented, and that their concerns are not adequately addressed by the central government. Although these organisations differ both in their goals and methods, their chief aim is to achieve greater political representation through proportional representation, the redrawing of electoral districts on the basis of population, and the establishment of a federal structure. Protests grew rapidly in January–February 2007, fuelled by an ineffective

² Comprehensive Peace Accord Concluded Between the Government of Nepal and The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), 21 November 2006, http://www.peace.gov.np/admin/doc/CPA_eng-ver-corrected.pdf

³ The connotations of the word ‘Madhes’ and ‘Madhesi’ are explained more fully in International Crisis Group Asia Report No. 136, ‘Nepal’s Troubled Tarai Region’. The report explores the current political situation in detail, examining the causes of the current insecurity and the options for resolving this tension.

police response that left around 30 people dead and 800 injured.⁴ Eventually, the Government was forced to acknowledge the severity of feeling in the region and made some concessions, stating that it was committed to federalism and promising to establish a commission to resolve these issues. However, these promises have been treated with suspicion by many Madhesis, and protests in the region have continued sporadically, resulting in ongoing instability.

The example set by the Madhesi Movement has been recognised by various other groups that have specific grievances or feel generally under-represented. Several *Janajati* ethnic groups have also demanded federalism and have used *bandhs* (strikes) to put pressure on the government. The constant threat of disruptive protest emanating from various groups has thus contributed to an underlying sense of instability within the country at the present time.

This has been compounded by a broader perception among many Nepalis that there is insufficient law and order in the country and various forms of crime are on the rise. The media regularly reports stories of theft, robbery and extortion in urban settings, while in the countryside, where there is often little state presence, the impression generally given is that villagers are at the mercy of criminal elements. Furthermore, there have been concerns that despite formally renouncing violence and entering mainstream politics, the Maoists are a continued source of insecurity. Of particular concern, is the Maoist youth wing, the Young Communist League (YCL), which is perceived by some as being merely a way for former Maoist combatants to continue intimidating opponents and extorting money.

Partly as a result of this perceived insecurity, particularly in the Tarai, elections that were originally scheduled for June 2007 have not been held (although other factors, such as insufficient organisation and general political manoeuvring between the main parties, have also played a part). The threat of violence could mar elections by discouraging people in certain areas from voting. As in many post-conflict countries attempting new democratic elections, there is also a possibility that the election could act as a focal point for further unrest, especially if there are suspicions that the election was not truly free and fair or that the voices of certain groups have not been adequately represented. In the near future, therefore, questions about security and community safety are likely to become increasingly important.

⁴ The ICG report 'Nepal's Troubled Tarai Region' notes that there is no overall agreement on the number of people shot by the police, but suggests these figures as approximately correct.

3

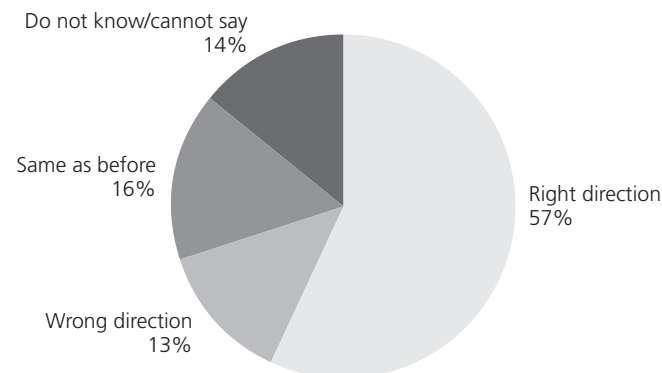
Public perceptions of security and community safety

ANY TRULY DEMOCRATIC SECURITY POLICY must take due account of the attitudes, expectations and concerns of the public that the state is representing and protecting. It is therefore vitally important to have a thorough appreciation of what the public thinks about these issues, so as to complement the view and analyses of security experts, policy-makers and officials.

This section presents the responses to the relevant questions within the opinion survey and considers the reasons for these answers, as explored within the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. In a number of cases, responses have also been disaggregated according to area of residence, caste/ethnic group or other factors as appropriate to gain a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences between the hopes and fears of different sections of the population.

3.1 General perceptions of security

Figure 1: Do you think the changes in Nepal since the signing of the peace agreement between the Government and the rebels are moving in the right direction?
(base no. = 3010)



Opinion survey respondents were asked several questions relating to their overall perceptions of the security situation both in the country as a whole and within their area. As a whole, their responses were generally extremely positive, with signs of

progress being perceived by virtually all groups, regardless of gender, level of education, ethnic/caste group, or location. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions also reflected an overall optimism, though more negative voices and comments were heard once it became possible to delve into issues more deeply.

At the most general level, 57 percent of people thought that changes in Nepal since the signing of the peace agreement were moving in the right direction, in contrast to only 13 percent who thought that the situation was getting worse (Figure 1). These figures however, when disaggregated, illustrate that there are some marked differences in the perceptions of rural/urban and ethnic/caste respondents. While all groups remained encouraged by developments, with at least 43 percent regardless of distinction supporting developments, participants from urban areas acknowledged significantly more concern with progress made than their rural counterparts (Figure 2). Moreover, Tarai caste, Tarai Dalit and Muslim respondents were more cautious in their optimism than Hill and Tarai Janajatis (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Do you think the changes in Nepal since the signing of the peace agreement between the Government and the rebels are moving in the right direction?

(rural/urban, base no. = 3010)

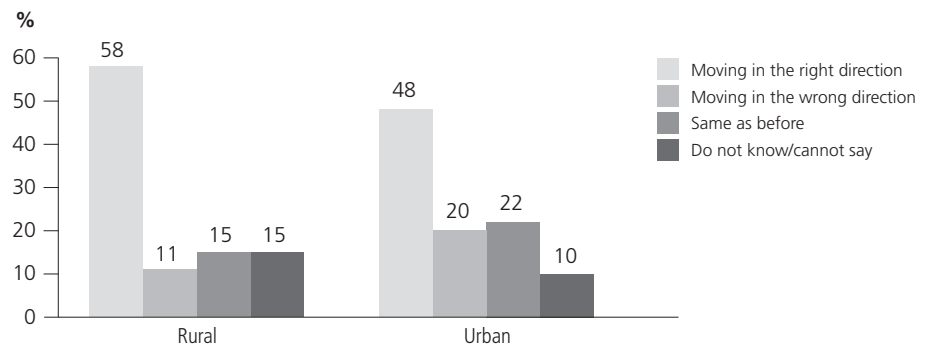
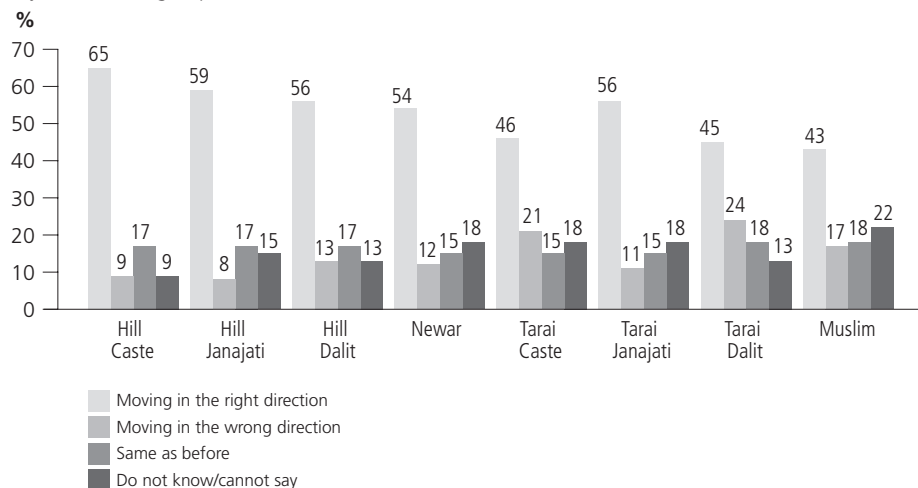


Figure 3: Do you think the changes in Nepal since the signing of the peace agreement between the Government and the rebels are moving in the right direction?

(by ethnic/caste group, base no. = 3010)



It was also evident that the vast majority of people felt safer than a year before both at home and when travelling, and were now more prepared to talk to strangers. Overall, 70 percent of people felt safer in their locality than they did a year ago, with only 2 percent identifying a deterioration. It should be noted, however, that while this national average is reflective of the East, West, Mid West and Far West, it provides only an abstraction of the findings from the Centre (Figure 4). Like the rest of the country, only a very small number of respondents from the Centre attested to there being a decline in feelings of local safety, but in contrast over half the respondents perceived their environment to be as safe as before (47 percent) or neither safe nor unsafe

(7 percent). Participants from the focus group discussion held in the Centre raised significant concern on subjects of personal and communal safety.

With regard to ethnic/caste divisions, Tarai caste, Tarai Dalit and Muslim respondents similarly expressed feelings divergent from the national average, with each group indicating extensive feelings of insecurity (Figure 5).

High national averages were also documented with regard to perceptions of safety when travelling around the country or talking to strangers. Nevertheless, comparable geographic and ethnic/caste differences were also apparent, with lowest perceptions of safety among Tarai Caste, Tarai Dalit and Muslim respondents. Therefore, notwithstanding the general feelings of optimism, significant feelings of fear are common for many Nepalis, particularly the most vulnerable.

Figure 4: How safe do you feel compared to a year ago?
(by region, base no. = 3010)

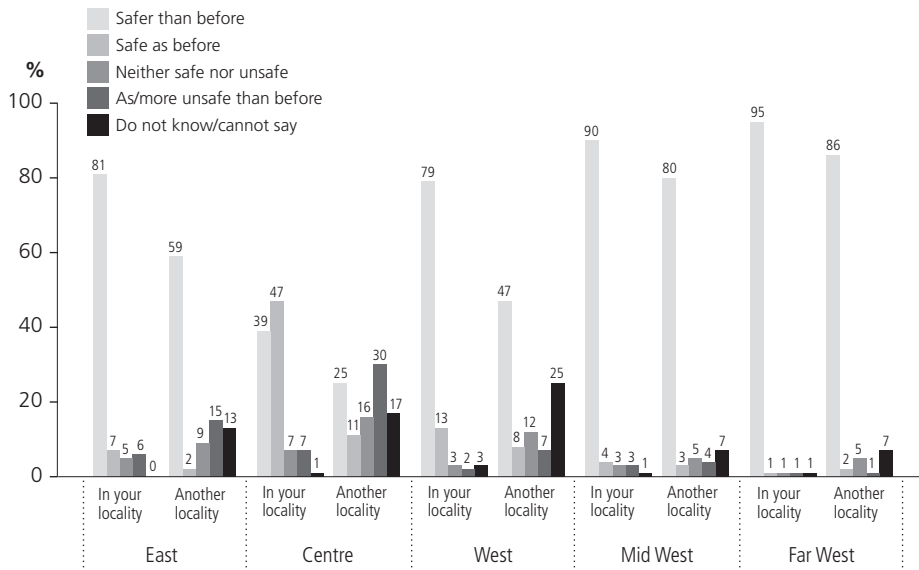
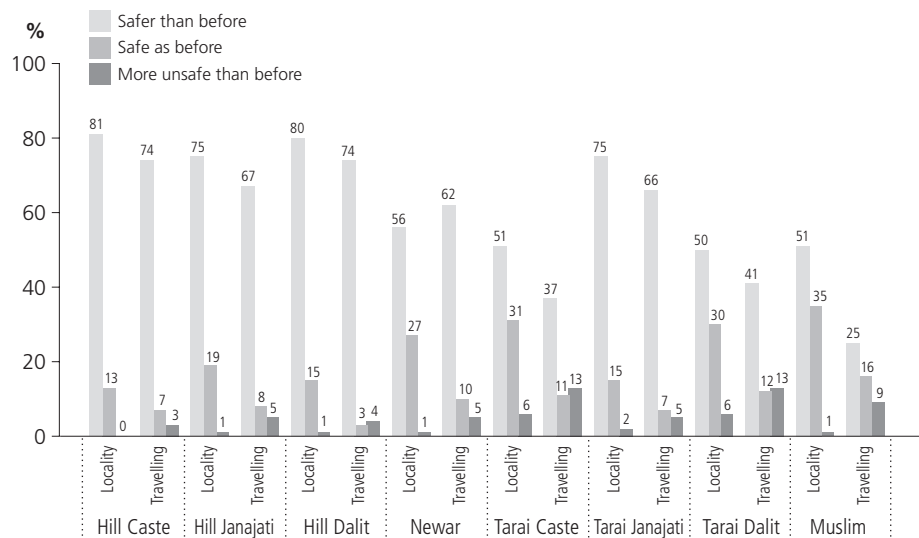


Figure 5: How safe do you feel in your locality/travelling compared to a year ago?
(by ethnic/caste group, base no. = 3010)



It is not hard to identify the main reasons for this optimism: the end of violent conflict symbolised by the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement; the integration of the Maoists into the political mainstream; and the transition to a more democratic system. The coming of peace had removed various threats that had been causes of great insecurity. People are no longer afraid of being caught up in the armed clashes between the Maoists and the Government, and do not have to suffer long hours of

curfew. Other threats such as intimidation, extortion and the need for villages to ‘welcome’ Maoist cadres into their villages had also reduced:

“I feel a lot safer than last year. I don’t have to worry about being trapped in gunfire between the army and the Maoists.”

In-depth interview, Marwari female, Kalaiya

“Last year I had to pay the Maoists Rs 5000. I had earned the money working as a labourer in India. All my sweat and toil amounted to Rs 5000 and the Maoists took it away from me. At least such things do not happen today.”

In-depth interview, Hill caste male, Jumla

However, when more time was given to consider the current situation, interviewees were also quite ready to express their concerns. A common sentiment was that while things were undoubtedly better than they had been, progress had stalled.

“There seem to be slight improvements but in totality everything is not as positive as it should be. A lot needs to be done. But the Maoists have stopped their rebellion so some progress has been achieved.”

In-depth interview, Tarai caste female, Siraha

Many respondents felt that the government had not dealt with the Madhesi issue very effectively (see Section 3.3), while others also felt that issues, such as the demands of Janajati (ethnic) groups would prove equally intractable (5 percent). A significant minority of people (20 percent) were disappointed that political wrangling between the main parties was distracting the country’s leaders from making progress, and felt that the fact that the elections had not been held did not bode well for the future.

Focus group respondents were generally more negative, and opinions were also expressed to the effect that there had been no change, or that one form of insecurity had been replaced by others. Numerous participants did say clearly that things have got better. However, many presented their reasoning for this belief in a way that suggests that they are still very sceptical of the ability of the state to protect them:

“No, I do not feel secure. Maoist atrocities have gone down but police are still the same.”

Focus group discussion, male, Nepalganj

“It was worse during the civil war. We were scared of getting raped by the police or army at that time. It is better now as the police and army are not in the villages.”

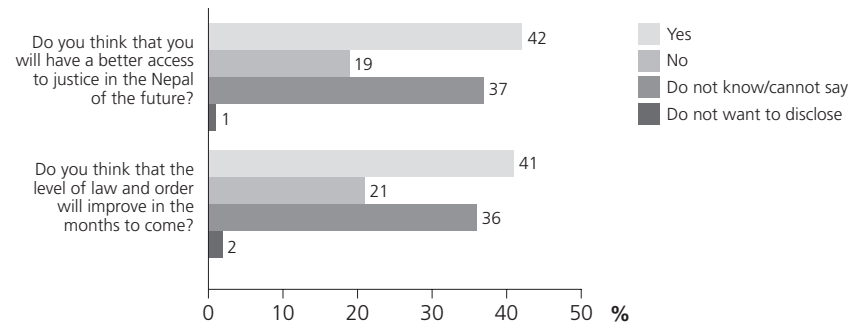
Focus group discussion, female, Sindhulimadi

For many of these focus group participants, feelings of insecurity were evident both towards the Maoists and towards parts of the state, in particular the police. Public attitudes towards the police are explored more fully in Chapter 4. It must be noted, however, that while the more negative voices heard in the focus groups must be heeded, by their nature they are not representative of the whole country since they looked specifically at certain areas, many of which have been particularly affected by insecurity in the Tarai.⁵

While the majority of Nepalis thought that things have improved over the last year, perhaps a more revealing indicator of the overall level of optimism within the country is the percentage of people who felt that this trend would continue. Just over two-fifths of the population believe that law and order would improve and that they would have greater access to justice in future, against only one-fifth who expect things to get worse; the other two-fifths of Nepalis remained undecided (Figure 6). This suggests that most Nepalis were hopeful for the future, even if not all of them are certain that real progress will be achieved.

⁵ Further information about the focus groups can be found in Annex 3.

Figure 6: Will access to justice and law and order improve in future?
(base no. = 3010)



Nevertheless, the general perception that security has improved, and will continue in this manner in the future, should not be interpreted that the majority of the Nepali public is now living in complete safety. Instead it indicates that communities, as of Spring of 2007, are enjoying conditions that are more secure, as conflict related threats have been removed, but that they are still vulnerable to evolving threats, such as crime. Unless sufficient law enforcement provision can be developed in this post-conflict environment, feelings of insecurity may return as safety could be threatened.

3.2 Law and order and security threats

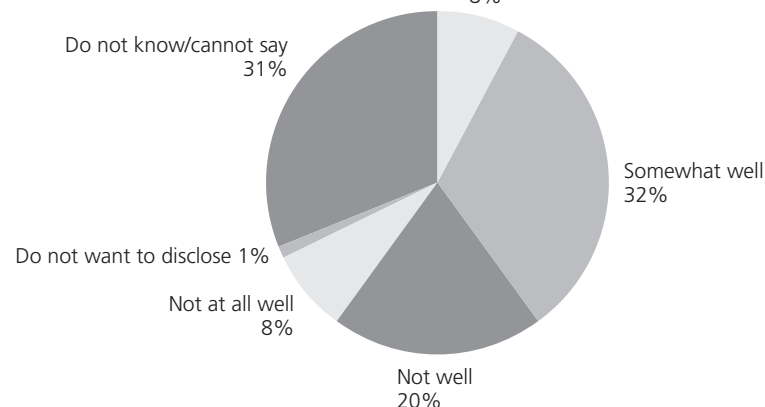
Although most Nepalis were certain there have been major improvements in security compared to what went before, there was growing concern across much of Nepal about the quality of law and order in the country. Only two-fifths of Nepalis (40 percent) considered the present government to be able to maintain law and order well or somewhat well (Figure 7); while over a quarter of respondents (28 percent) said definitively that the Government was not maintaining law and order well. The overall accuracy of these figures as a representative guide to national perceptions is, however, limited, as nearly a third of respondents did not give a clear answer (30 percent replied that they do not know/cannot say). The reasoning behind this is difficult to interpret, and should not be taken to indicate any particular view. Nonetheless, the fact that three-fifths (59 percent) of respondents did not directly say that Government is able to maintain law and order suggests a considerable degree of public concern in this area.

“If there is law and order you can believe you will be safe. But where is the law and order in this country?”

In-depth interview, Brahmin male, Arghakhanchi

Figure 7: How well do you think the present government has been able to maintain law and order in the country?

(base no. = 3010)



Regionally, all areas showed some backing for governmental endeavours, with participants from the West and Mid West exhibiting particular support. The greatest

discontent was exhibited in the Centre with 22 percent of the participants declaring that the government was not able to maintain law and order well, and 14 percent not at all. The East was also above the national average, with 10 percent of respondents believing that activities were not at all sufficient (Figure 8).

In total 38 percent of respondents from urban areas voiced concern with the government in contrast to 26 percent from rural (Figure 9). Therefore, despite the government’s efforts to maintain law and order being somewhat well received, insecurity remains a significant problem across much of the country.

Figure 8: Do you think that the present government has been able to maintain law and order in the country?

(by region, base no. = 3010)

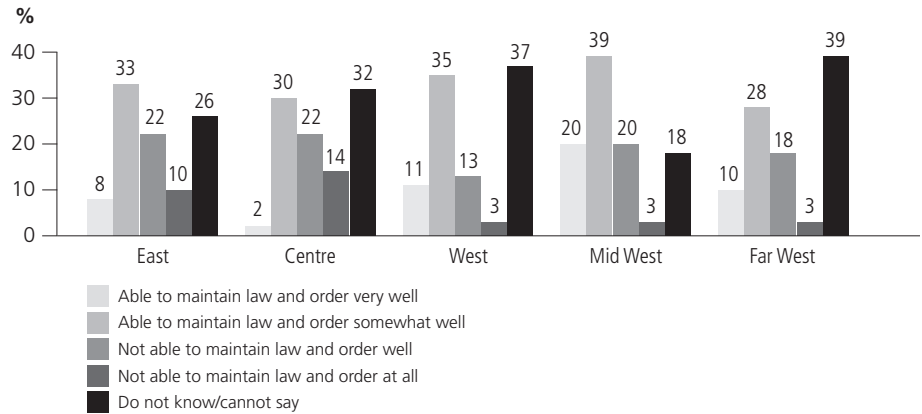
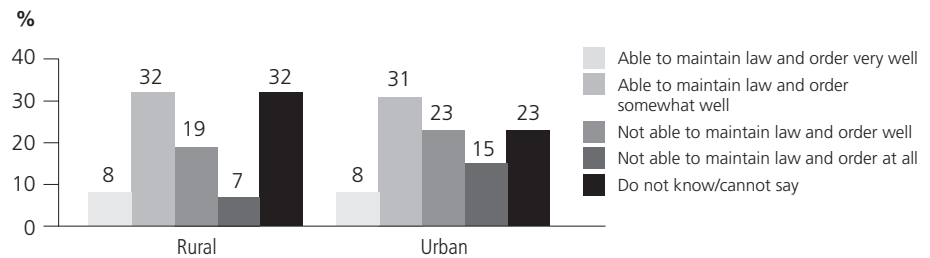


Figure 9: Do you think that the present government has been able to maintain law and order in the country?

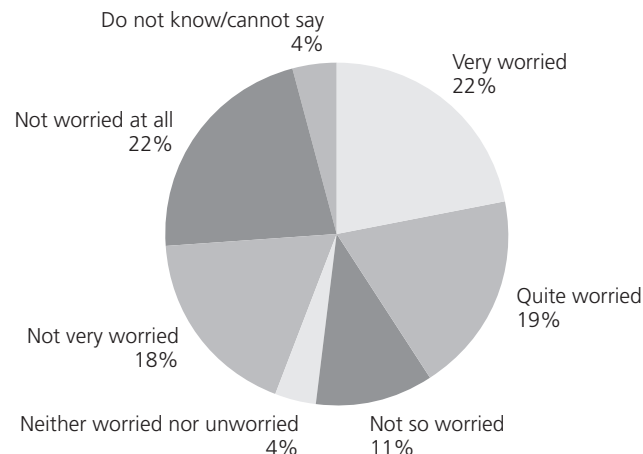
(rural/urban, base no. = 3010)



Public concern was further reflected in a question asking whether people were worried that they and their family may become victims of crime. Only 33 percent were not significantly worried, while 42 percent reported that they were either very worried or quite worried. Again, however, a significant proportion of respondents (25 percent) did not give a firm answer (Figure 10).

Figure 10: How worried are you that you and your family may become victims of crime?

(base no. = 3010)



The highest levels of concern were recorded in the East (with 56 percent responding that they were very worried or quite worried) and the Centre (57 percent). In contrast, the West, Mid West and Far West indicated the highest levels of satisfaction in their safety: 52 percent, 59 percent and 62 percent respectively (Figure 11). This question elicited high levels of concern from all ethnic/caste groups, but it is noteworthy that over half of the respondents from Tarai Caste (57 percent), Tarai Dalits (53 percent) and Muslims (64 percent) were at the very least quite worried (Figure 12).

Figure 11: How worried are you that you and your family may become victims of crime? (by region, base no. = 3010)

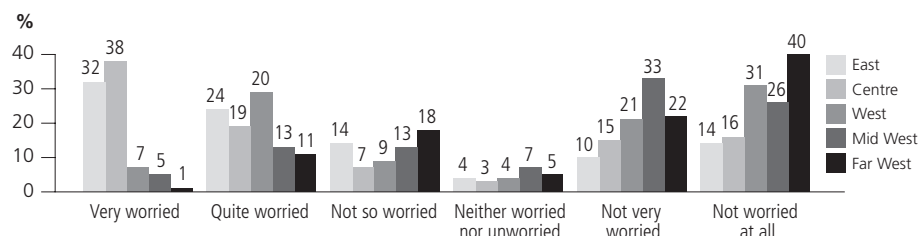
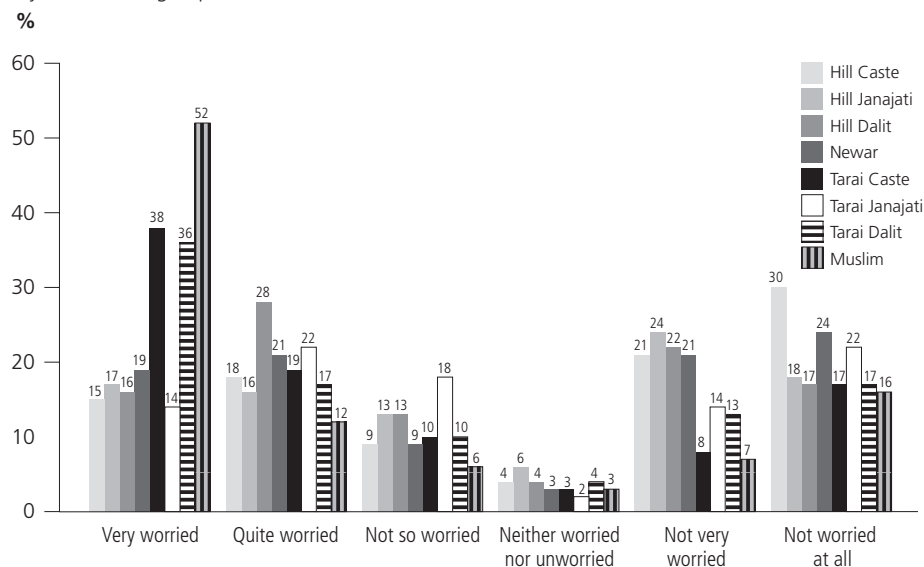


Figure 12: How worried are you that you and your family may become victims of crime? (by caste/ethnic group, base no. = 3010)



In response to a follow up question asking what are the most serious problems relating to crime facing their community, high proportions of those interviewed from all geographical areas indicated that they faced no specific problems. Only 33 percent of respondents were aware of crime in their community in the year prior to the public opinion survey.⁶ However, it was also clear that a significant minority were able to identify a particular cause of concern. The persistence of insecurity, despite the end of violent conflict, appeared to be closely linked to crime. This is because incidence of theft, vandalism and assault were all perceived to be growing, while other forms of insecurity, such as extortion, had reduced but not disappeared. In the Tarai, for example, 29 percent of respondents articulated that their community suffered from theft and a further 14 percent from robberies. Moreover, in the mountains, threats (10 percent) and extortion/forced donation (9 percent) were perceived to be significant problems.

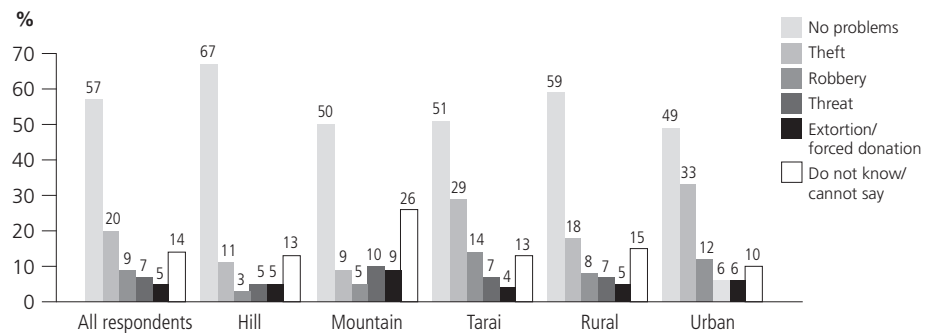
It was also clear that vulnerability was not limited to either rural or urban areas, as both illustrated similar concerns in most categories. However, in urban areas theft appeared to be a considerable problem as it was identified by a third of all respondents.

⁶ Types of crime identified relate to: theft, robbery, extortion/forced donation, drug abuse, threat, physical assault/beatings, murder, kidnapping, violence related to smuggling, political violence, shootings/fighting with guns and sexual assault/rape.

This suggests two things. Firstly, it is likely that certain forms of crime, such as thefts, robbery and kidnapping are indeed more prevalent in Nepal's towns than in the countryside. Secondly, urban residents are likely to have wider horizons than those living in rural areas, interacting with a greater number of people and possibly being more aware of the overall security situation. Urban residents may thus be more likely to feel *directly* affected by various forms of crime, whereas villagers may think that security is a problem in the country as a whole but still feel relatively secure in their own neighbourhood (Figure 13).

Figure 13: What are the most serious problems relating to safety and security that your community faces?

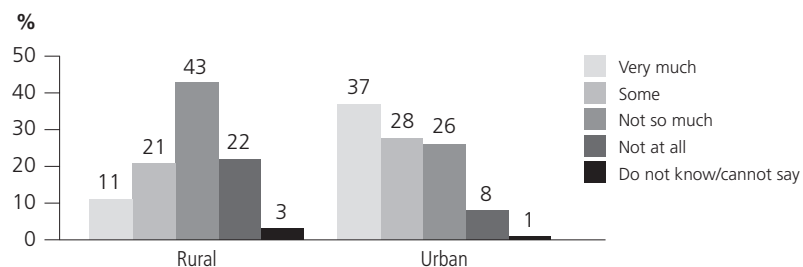
(by region, base no. = 3010)



Related to the insecurity felt in urban areas, it is worth noting that whereas rural respondents largely felt that *bandhs* (strikes) had become less of a problem, residents of urban areas thought the opposite (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Compared to one year ago, how many *bandhs* have been organised in your locality recently?

(rural/urban, base no. = 3010)



In consideration of these perceptions, Nepal appears to be in danger of developing a security vacuum, often typical for post-conflict states. This is formed when the insecurity caused by the conflict is eliminated but 'legitimate' (state or non-state) actors do not step into the resulting gap, allowing criminality the space it needs to flourish:

“Social crimes were dramatically lower when the police and Maoists were initiated in war. At that time, the police and army terrified people a lot.”

Focus group discussion, female, Sindhulimadi

One reason for this may be that the state security sector, and its infrastructure, has been weakened by the conflict. However, this is only one reason among many, and was not one that was frequently advanced by focus group participants and interviewees. It was much more common to hear complaints either that the Nepal Police were powerless to prevent crime, they were not effectively communicating with decision makers, or even that they were a source of insecurity in themselves (see Section 4 for a deeper analysis of public attitudes towards the police):

“I think the government is too weak to provide security. The police have just come back to the villages, but we know they have little sense of morality. We are concerned about anti-

social activities like thefts. The police seem to be occupied with their own security rather than ours.”

Focus group discussion, male, Dhangadhi

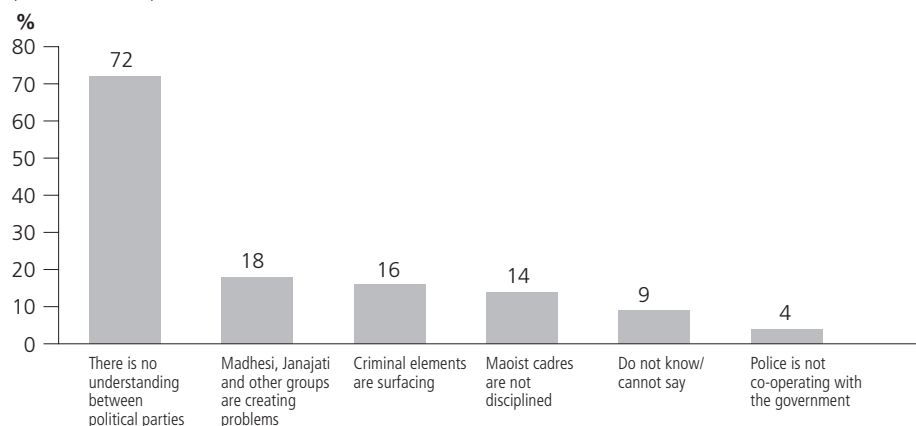
“Police still behave as if they are the law and are more into abusing power rather than providing security.”

Focus group discussion, female, Gorkha

Other reasons proffered during the public opinion survey included a conviction that the government was unable to provide sufficient support and guidance because the eight political parties spent too much time arguing and were thus not paying enough attention to security matters; also problems associated with Madhesi, Janajati and other minority groups were limiting opportunities for co-operation. (Figure 15).

Figure 15: What do you think is the reason for the present government not being able to maintain law and order at all or not well?

(base no. = 841)



The apparent political responsibility associated with the vacuum in law enforcement was shared by many of the informants, who stated that unity among political parties would enable reform of government institutions. Moreover, during a workshop held with 12 Superintendents of Police and Senior Superintendents of Police and 3 Chief District Officers, on 21 August 2007, it was revealed that the police are in part prevented from providing effective law enforcement, as without governmental support, police officers are reluctant to prosecute criminals with political connections for fear of reprisals.

In addition, many of the women interviewees from the focus group discussions, especially in rural settings, identified unemployment and alcoholism as key underlying problems. Many youths are unemployed, and it is common for them to turn to alcohol, which leads to vandalism and community safety problems.

3.3 Insecurity in the Tarai

At the time of the survey, April to June 2007, both local residents and those in other areas identified the Tarai as the area that is currently most insecure. Responses to the opinion survey demonstrated that people living in the Tarai felt more insecure than those from other areas. This can be demonstrated both by geographical region (for example the Central and Eastern development regions, where the majority of recent disturbances occurred – see Figures 4 and 11) and by ethnic/caste group (Figures 5 and 12). The Central Development Region appears to be the most insecure both in terms of fear of crime and feelings of safety. Likewise, Tarai castes, Tarai Dalits and Muslims consistently displayed lower perceptions of security than other groups. It is interesting to note, however, that Tarai Janajatis appeared much more secure, and their responses appear to differ little from those of Hill Janajatis. It should be underlined, however,

that although levels of insecurity are higher in these areas than elsewhere, the overwhelming majority of respondents feel as safe, or safer, than they did a year ago.

The reasons for this insecurity in the Tarai are obvious enough. The upsurge of the Madhesi Movement has been accompanied by protests and strikes, some of which have turned violent. Furthermore, it has been shown that the state does not have full control over the region, which may have allowed criminality more space to develop. Some focus group participants said that things were better in their area than during the ‘People’s War’, but others were less sure, or thought that things were becoming more unstable:

“The Madhesi issue is still burning. Ethnic groups have their own demands and agendas now, so regional uprisings are on the rise.”

Focus group discussion, male, Sindhulimadi

“We often hear about fights between hill people and Madhesis. Many people from the area are involved in such communal fighting, but it is only the men who participate.”

Focus group discussion, female, Biratnagar

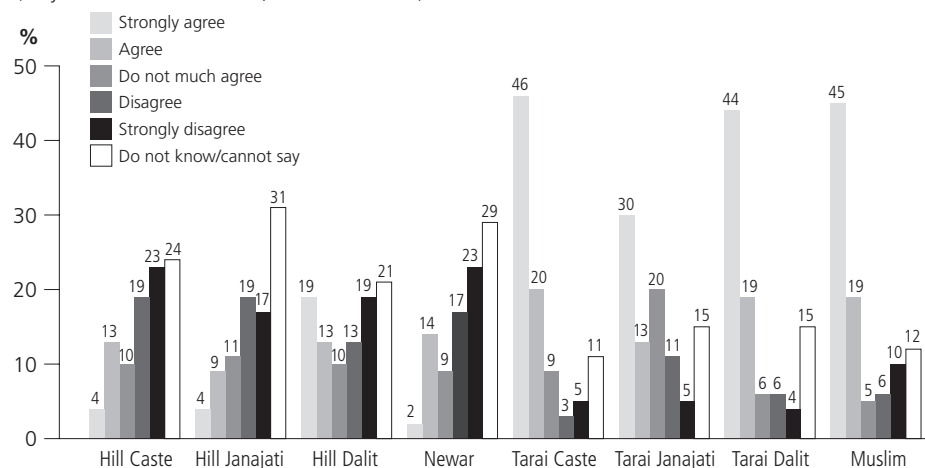
It may be the case, however, that the main factor fuelling this insecurity was not necessarily crime, but the fragmentation of a previously polarised political environment into a variety of different interest groups – each with the ability to undermine stability and safety. The unrest in the region is generally referred to as the ‘Madhesi Movement’, yet it is made up of different groups with different methods of expressing their discontent. In particular, although strikes are a common means of protest in Nepal, they emerged in many areas in an unco-ordinated fashion. This made moving around the region complicated and potentially dangerous:

“First we had one group only, the Maoists – today there is the Madhesi Forum, Chure Bhavar, Jwala Singh group, Madhesi Tigers and the Janajatis. I don’t feel safe travelling anywhere.”

In-depth interview, male, Siraha

Despite this sense of insecurity, many respondents in the Tarai supported the goals of the Madhesi movement. Again, support was stronger among Tarai castes, Dalits and Muslims than among Tarai Janajatis (Figure 16). With regard to the remainder of Nepal, expressed opinions were generally strongly opposed to the movement, with significant proportions of Hill Caste (42 percent), Hill Janajati (36 percent) and Newar (40 percent) respondents declaring that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The significance of the movement outside of the Tarai can however, be questioned as a quarter of the interviewees from the West, 41 percent from the Mid West and 52 percent from the Far West could not, or did not want to, say that they were aware of the Madhesi movement.

Figure 16: Do you agree or disagree with the demands of the Madhesi Movement?
(only if aware of movement, base no. = 2365)



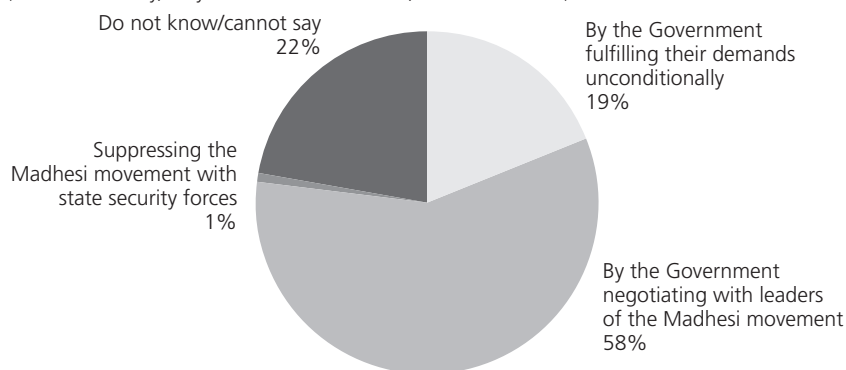
Regardless of whether people had sympathy with Madhesi demands or not, there is unison across the country on how to handle the Madhesi movement (Figure 17). Only one percent of Nepalis believe that the movement can be forcefully suppressed. By far the most popular way of resolving these issues is through negotiation, which is by supported by nearly three-fifths (58 percent) of the population.

“The police should peacefully defuse such activities and talk to them about the inconvenience faced by others.”

In-depth interview, Marwari female, Kailali

Figure 17: How can the Madhesi Movement be resolved?

(one answer only, only if aware of movement, base no. = 2365)



3.4 Consequences of insecurity

The opinion survey was unable to look in detail at the possible consequences of insecurity on the lives of ordinary Nepalis. However, this was considered in some detail in the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, during which three main issues arose:

- the impact of insecurity on economic and social development;
- the potential for disruption of elections to the Constituent Assembly;
- the possibility that people would make their own arrangements for security since they no longer trusted the police to do so.

Economic and social development

There was widespread recognition within the focus groups that insecurity has held back social and economic development in the past, and is still continuing to do so:

“Development has been extremely affected because of the insecurity, both in our village and in the whole nation.”

Focus group discussion, female, Biratnagar

“Peace and prosperity go together. We have not been able to think of anything other than our security, so our minds are not working to create new ideas.”

Focus group discussion, male, Kathmandu Valley

It was also suggested that insecurity had caused many people to leave villages where they felt unsafe, meaning that in some areas agricultural and/or business development was suffering. More broadly, it was felt that considerable resources had been spent on the conflict and on maintaining security which it would have been better to spend on education, economic programmes, healthcare and other development programmes. It was thus hoped that the end of the conflict would provide better conditions for economic development, which would in turn ensure that more people were employed and were productive citizens; however, the insecurity in the Tarai meant that they were unsure whether these hopes would be realised.

Disruption of elections to the Constituent Assembly

Over the long term, free and fair elections should help to reduce tension in Nepal, since they would entrench the Maoists within the political system and ensure that political grievances are addressed through peaceful, democratic means. The same would also be true of the Madhesi movement, providing that the overwhelming majority of Madhesis believe that they are able to make their views heard within the electoral system. Furthermore, as highlighted by section 3.2, political co-operation and endorsement is perceived to be essential for the provision of effective law enforcement. Accordingly, the holding of elections to the Constituent Assembly is arguably the most important challenge confronting Nepal; continued postponement of elections would therefore be a significant cause for concern.

Prior to the latest postponement of the elections, interviewees declared that they perceived electioneering to be a potential source of tension because there is a risk that the elections will become a focal point for increased insecurity and violence. When asked whether they were going to vote, most people said they would, but several expressed fears for their safety.

“I don’t think I will feel safe. There will be danger involved. I will decide to go to the polling station only when I am assured that there would be enough security.”

In-depth interview, Muslim female, Siraha

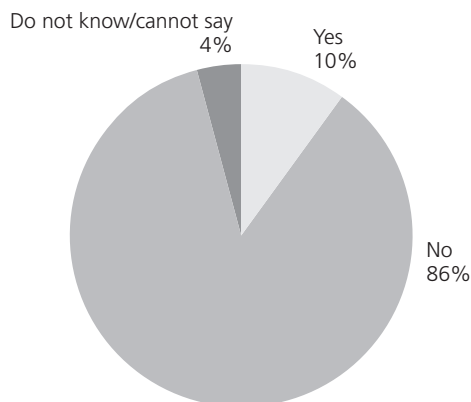
“Safety depends on how the eight parties behave during the campaign, on how free and fair their publicity is, and on how healthy the competition among parties is during the campaign period. So I cannot tell whether I will vote or not.”

In-depth interview, Mache male, Jhapa

Alternative arrangements for security

In many countries, one consequence of continued insecurity is that the public increasingly believes that it is necessary to take the provision of security into its own hands. There has been more talk in Nepal recently about local communities attempting to protect themselves through local safety committees, but it has been unclear just how widespread or how effective these are. The opinion survey asked all respondents whether they were aware of any security arrangements established by the public in their locality (Figure 18); only 10 percent said that there were, three-quarters (235 respondents) of which were local security committees; a further 54 respondents identified community security guards and 15 noted community policing.

Figure 18: Is there any security arrangement established by the public in your locality?
(base no. = 3010)



During the in-depth interviews and focus groups, some people also said that their communities had similar security committees, while others said that they had considered it but had not acted yet:

“As Maoist excesses still continue, we have discussed how to deal with them. We have formed a committee that deals with security and includes other social issues. We have built a home for our security.”

Focus group discussion, male, Dhangadhi

“We do have local safety committees. We blow a whistle when we have a thief in our village. All the villagers come out and try to catch the thieves. We have a collective attitude. We have private security guards as well.”

Focus group discussion, male, Kathamandu Valley

Informants indicated that independent security arrangements have become more popular in recent times because people did not trust either the police or the Maoists to provide security and had decided to take matters into their own hands, since they trusted their local community members more than outsiders. Such methods were perceived to be quicker and more effective than involving the police: with the community itself responsible for security, small incidents could be prevented from magnifying unnecessarily. However, some negative aspects of such arrangements were also mentioned, especially by some of the female interviewees, who warned of the stress and fatigue of men staying awake at night and leaving their wives and children at home. There was also concern that some of these groups lacked proper leadership, which could lead to disputes among various local groups for dominance and control, thus making the committees ineffective.

4

Attitudes towards the police

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER presented the opinions of ordinary Nepalis about security and community safety. It was noted that concerns about security and insufficient provision of law and order were often linked to attitudes towards the state security forces, and in particular the police. Policing plays a central role in the security sector because of its fundamental role in maintaining day-to-day security, and because it is the part of the sector that the public is most likely to come into contact with and form opinions about. Policing is a crucial element of post-conflict peacebuilding, but its development must often overcome mistrust. This analysis of public attitudes towards the police is therefore extremely important for Nepali decision-makers seeking to strengthen democracy and build a long-lasting peaceful state.

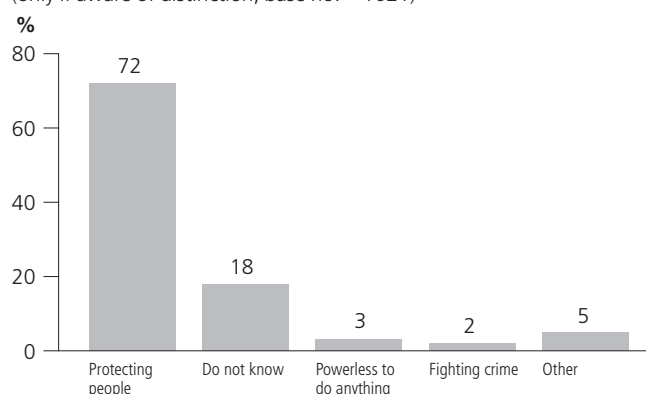
4.1 Knowledge of the police

During the conflict, the three distinct institutions of the Nepal Police (referred to below also as the civil police), Armed Police and the Nepal Army were all charged, in part, with the responsibilities of providing security and law enforcement. While there is a clear distinction between the Nepal Army and the two police forces, the public opinion survey sought to investigate the extent to which participants were able to distinguish between the Nepal Police and the separate security-orientated Armed Police. Overall, it was found that only half of the respondents were aware of the distinction. The most knowledgeable were men with at least some education.

Those that were able to distinguish between the two police forces were asked what the perceived role of the civil police was. Three quarters of the respondents noted that the police were responsible for protecting people. It is significant to note that 18 percent were ignorant of the primary role of the police and were therefore unable to respond; moreover, 50 interviewees were of the opinion that irrespective of the specific role of the civil police, it is powerless to achieve anything.

Figure 19: What role do you believe best describes the Nepal Police?

(only if aware of distinction, base no. = 1621)



A similar question, addressing perceptions of the Armed Police was asked of this same group, and it was notable that while protecting people scored highly (42 percent), 29 percent of people saw the primary role of the Armed Police as fighting crime. This is significantly higher than the two percent that attribute this role to the civil police. This indicates that, in spite of both institutions possessing the power to arrest criminals and fight crime, the civil police are not perceived to be as effective or trusted at fulfilling this role (see sections 4.2 and 4.3).

4.2 Trust and respect

One of the most revealing measures of police effectiveness in a democratic society is the extent to which they are trusted and respected, especially relative to other institutions. The opinion survey revealed that the police are roughly as trusted as the Nepali Armed Forces, and considerably more so than the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) (Figures 20 and 22). Two-thirds of Nepalis (66 percent) state that they have at least some trust in the police, compared to 70 percent for the Nepali Army and only 42 percent for the PLA.

Looking at these figures more deeply, however, the picture appears less optimistic. Firstly, although two-thirds of respondents said they had some trust in the police, they were considerably more likely to answer 'trust a little' (50 percent) than 'trust very much' (only 16 percent). This suggests that very few Nepalis are truly happy with the work of the police force. It should also be noted, that roughly one in nine Nepalis do not trust the police at all. Moreover, when asked on a scale of one to ten how secure or insecure various organisations made them feel, the civil and armed police scored 5.1 and 5.0 respectively (Figure 22). This relatively low figure is, in part, explained by the finding that only 30 percent of interviewees perceived any respect for the police in their area, while 55 percent stated the opposite opinion. (Figure 21).

In response, police participants from the validation workshops noted that due to the face to face nature of policing they are vulnerable to being made into scapegoats, while other security forces do not face similar problems as a result of their withdrawal from general public interaction. It was also noted that the media are quick to draw attention to the failings of the police, but do not balance this with their positive impacts. Thus the police do not receive the praise that they may deserve.

Figure 20: What is your level of trust towards the following organisations?
(base no. = 3010)

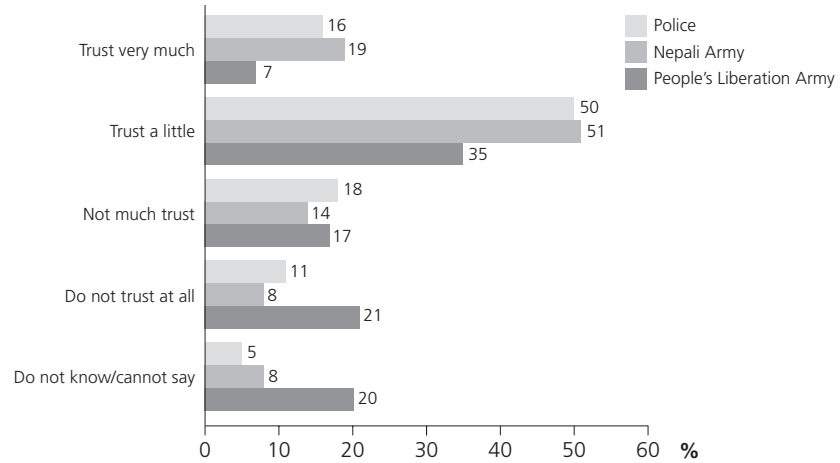


Figure 21: Do you think that police officials are respected in your area?
(base no. = 3010)

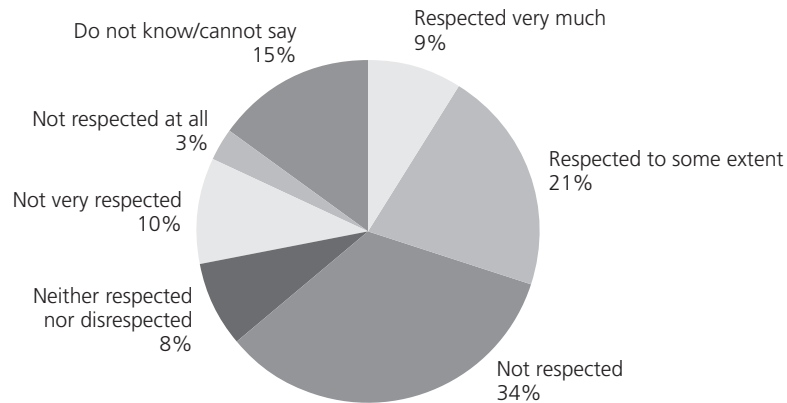


Figure 22: Public ratings of security/insecurity towards institutions/groups
(10 = very secure; 0 = very insecure)

Institution/Person	Score
Nepali Army	5.5
Religious organisations	5.4
Ethnic organisations	5.3
Nepal Police	5.1
Armed police	5.0
Another community	4.2
Maoist's PLA	3.8
YCL/Maoist cadres	3.3
Strangers	3.2
Criminal gangs	3.1

Across the focus groups and in-depth interviews, a wide range of opinions towards the police were heard. Some were quite positive, recognising the difficulty of the job and the courage of many police officers, while others were extremely critical:

“The bravery displayed by the Armed Police during the conflict was commendable, and the receptiveness of the Civil Police – although somewhat slow – is also praiseworthy.”

In-depth interview, Magar female, Pyuthan

“I get angry when I see the police. I feel like beating them.”

Focus group discussion, male, Nepalganj

However, perhaps the most common response was a kind of cautious acceptance. People did not necessarily respect the police, but they were still glad that there was at

least some police presence in their area and wanted the police to protect them:

“I don’t trust the police, but I do pin hope on them.”

Focus group discussion, female, Dhangadhi

“We will go to the police again as there are no other state places to get justice.”

Focus group discussion, male, Gorkha

Various reasons were given for the public’s lack of respect for the police. One of the most frequent was a feeling that many policemen do not deal with people in a polite and respectful manner. This was particularly true with regard to the way police interacted with women, with both men and women expressing concern. However, complaints about their behaviour were also aimed more broadly to the general manner in which they treated local communities:

“They tease girls and speak in a very rude way. We would like it if they were polite.”

Focus group discussion, female, Biratnagar

“They threaten us, they are rude, they speak only the Nepali language. In fact, the language is not that serious a problem, but their attitude is.”

Focus group discussion, male, Nepalganj

It appears that the police are endeavouring to limit the negative impact of this behaviour by re-training police officers. Participants in the validation workshops held in the Centre and the West noted that new recruits are now trained in public speaking and human rights. It was also said that the anti-social behaviour practiced by some is only representative of a minority of individuals and does not fairly represent the police as an institution.

Other criticisms of the police included:

- a failure to act fairly and impartially;
- widespread corruption;
- unreliability and slow response rate;
- general ineffectiveness in terms of bringing criminals to justice (see Section 4.2 below);
- the police sometimes seem more interested in their own security than in protecting all citizens.

Of these concerns, corruption was seen to be particularly important. This was not explored in detail, but it was still possible to distinguish between two types of corruption. The first is ‘personal’ corruption, where individual officers are prepared to take bribes in order not to investigate certain crimes or come to favourable conclusions in certain situations. It was repeatedly alleged that people with money found it easy to escape prosecution. One educated key informant stated that, while the police may be capable of bringing criminals to court, most are receptive to bribery, and as a consequence “real criminals never get to court” (see Section 4.3). The second form of corruption is ‘political’ corruption, which may be much harder to deal with. Respondents from the key informant interviews noted that police capacity is limited by the intervention of political actors. There was a strong feeling that having power and influence allowed people to escape punishment. This may mean either that people in positions of authority may be committing illegal acts, safe in the knowledge that they will not be punished, or that criminals are being protected by political contacts who prevent the police from investigating their activities.

“Both the law and political parties could make them responsible. Laws have never been implemented, and political parties have always abused the police.”

Focus group discussion, male, Sindhulimadi

The influence of political parties appears to be significant in limiting the capacity of the police to provide effective law and order. Respondents in all the workshops to validate the research findings provided the opinion that the police lack sufficient autonomy to prosecute those that have broken the law; this is because the police are

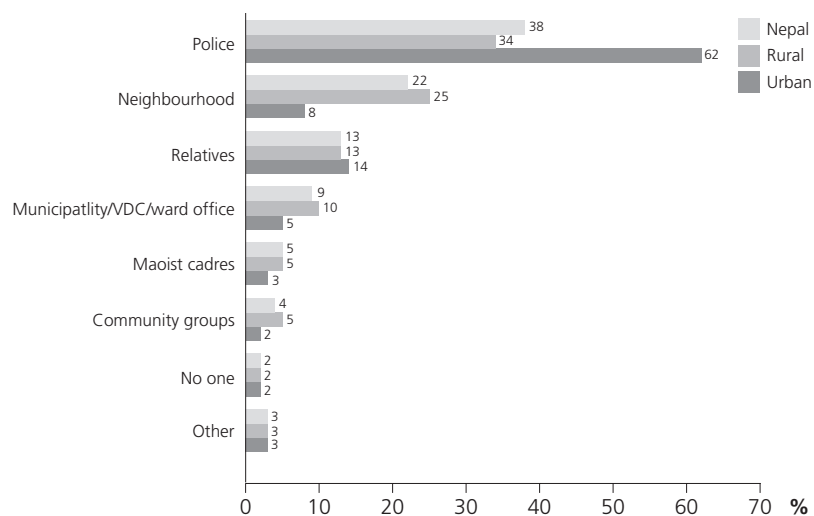
nervous of arresting a suspect without first seeking the permission of political parties. In light of this limitation, respondents from the workshop held in the Central Region proffered the opinion that an Officers' Bill of Rights should be introduced so that police feel empowered to act independently, and any complaint can be dealt with in an official manner.

“One of my colleagues was a newly recruited officer. He was young and wanted to make a difference. When there was political pressure from above he just ignored it. His response was – ‘everyone is equal in the eyes of the law’. Within two days he was transferred to the remotest parts of the country.”

Validation workshop, Kathmandu Valley

This lack of respect for the police complicates the process of policing on a day-to-day basis, because it means that the police cannot tap into vital information known by members of the public and cannot count on the public to co-operate with them in a range of situations. Indeed, some types of crime might remain largely unreported because the public do not expect or do not wish the police to be helpful in solving the crime and achieving justice. Alternative mechanisms for protection and justice are more common in rural areas (where the vast majority of the population live) than in towns, where people are much more likely to turn to the police when threatened with violence (Figure 23). Almost one in two of all the rural participants preferred to seek support from informal local sources, including: relatives, neighbours and community groups.

Figure 23: Who would you call first if you or your family were threatened with violence?
(rural/urban, base no. = 3010)

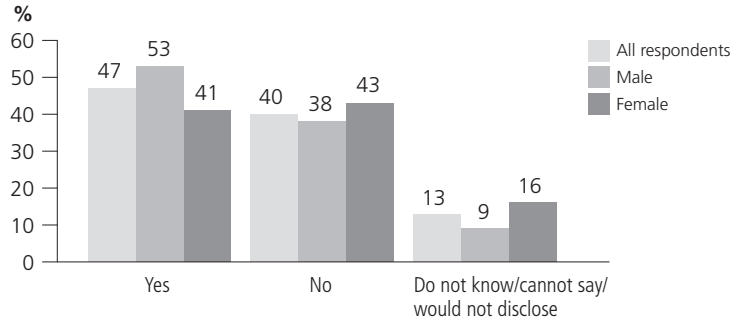


One difficulty that the police may face on a longer-term basis, in relation to public perceptions, is that it may become harder to recruit the most competent and appropriate staff. Currently, nearly half (47 percent) of Nepalis would be happy for their child to become a police officer (Figure 24). However, 40 percent of interviewees would not want their children to join the police, with opposition rising to over 50 percent in urban areas. This opposition illustrates that the police may have some considerable problems in attracting recruits in the future, as 22 percent of respondents identified the lack of respect for the police as the main reason behind their opinion. In addition, 17 percent noted that there were better jobs available. Perhaps unsurprisingly, more men would want their children to become policemen than women. The most frequent reasons for approving of such a career choice were: to serve the country.

“If the police force becomes respectful in future, I want my children to be in the police. But looking at the present public perception of the police, I don’t want my children to be one of them.”

Focus group discussion, female, Sindhulimadi

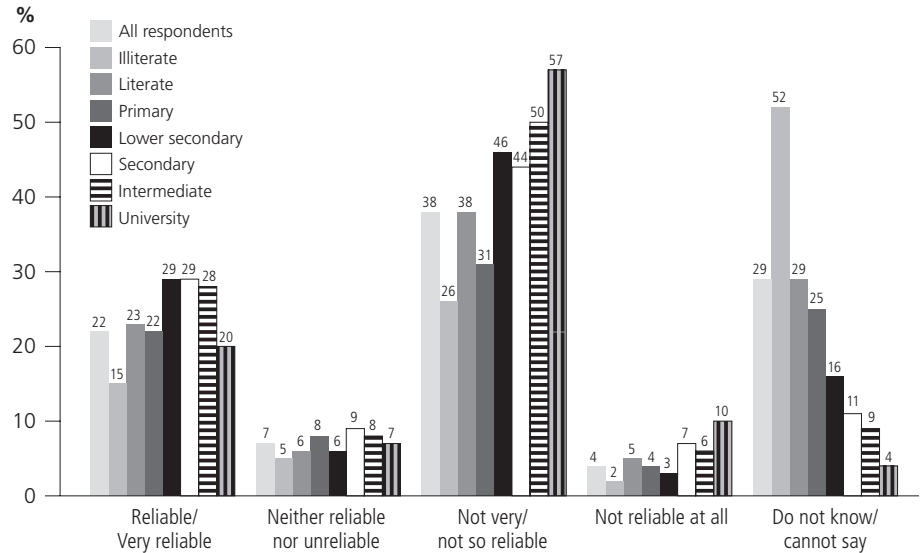
Figure 24: Would you want your child to become a police officer in the future?
(by gender, base no. = 3010)



4.3 Police responsiveness

One common complaint in the focus group discussions was that the police do not do enough to investigate crimes and bring criminals to justice. This was corroborated by the findings of the opinion survey, which showed that only 22 percent of people believe that the police are reliable or very reliable at bringing those who have committed a crime to justice, against 42 percent who rate the police as not very or not at all reliable. It is notable also that there is a strong correlation between a respondent’s level of education and their views on this subject. While over 50 percent of illiterate respondents say that they have no opinion or cannot say whether the police are effective in this respect, respondents become more certain of their answers and are more likely to judge the police negatively as their level of education increases (Figure 25).

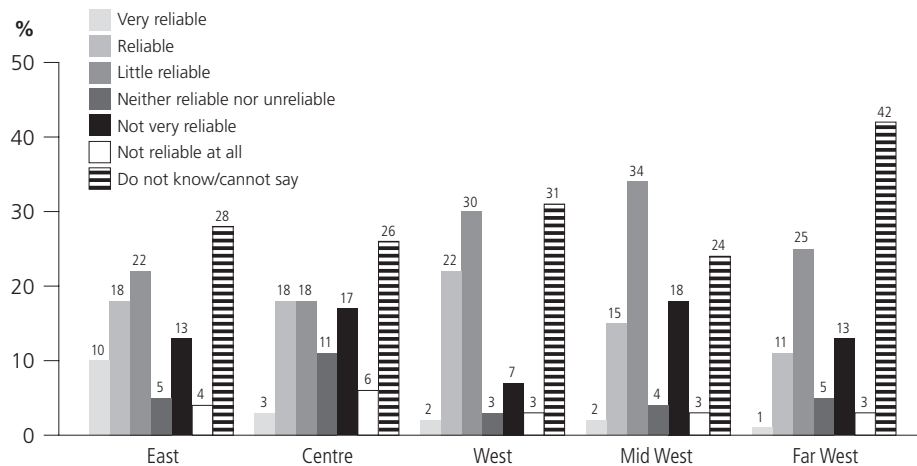
Figure 25: In your opinion, how reliable are the police at bringing those who have committed a crime to justice?
(by education, base no. = 3010)



With regard to regional variations, participants from the Centre and Far West had the lowest opinion as to the reliability of the police, with only 39 percent and 37 percent respectively indicating that they thought the police were at the very least a little reliable (Figure 26).

Figure 26: In your opinion, how reliable are the police at bringing those who have committed a crime to justice?

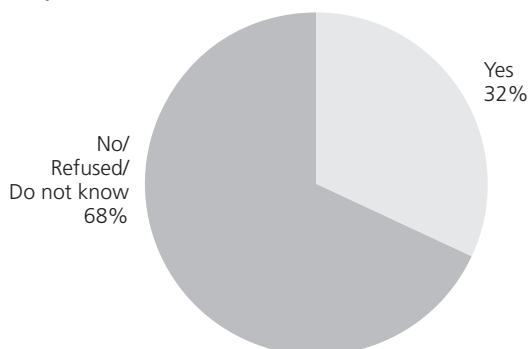
(by region, base no. = 3010)



This perception of police responsiveness was further tested with regard to specific incidences of crime about which the respondents were aware. All respondents were asked whether they were aware of any crimes that had taken place in their locality in the past year; 983 of 3010 respondents (33 percent) said that they were. Only a third (32 percent) of those who were aware of crime in their area believed that the police had taken some action in response to these crimes (Figure 27). It thus appears that in a significant majority of cases, the public does not believe that anything is being done to combat crime. This suggests either that the police are not taking action, or that what they are doing is not visible to the public and thus their action does not help to allay public suspicion of their work.

Figure 27: If there have been criminal incidents, did the police take action?

(only if aware of crime, base no. = 983)



When asked why they believed that the police did not try to bring criminals to justice, in-depth interviewees and focus group participants suggested three main reasons. Firstly, there is a widely held belief that corruption is rife within the police force, and that although there are many good officers serving, there are also many corrupt policemen who are easily bribed and ready to dispense justice in favour of the most powerful and wealthy. A second argument was that the police did not bring people to justice simply because they were not that interested in doing so. Thirdly, it was felt that many policemen lacked proper investigation skills and tended not to examine cases thoroughly, often acting on hearsay rather than facts.

In addition to these perceptions, the police noted that they are unable to provide sufficient law and order provision due to limitations in their mandate and logistical capabilities. Respondents from the Western Region declared that until the police were supplied with the means of reacting to the needs of their communities then insecurity would persist.

“Four years ago, a villager was beaten up by other villagers. He reported it to the police but didn’t get justice. If you don’t have power, the police don’t help you. That is a flaw of the police.”

Focus group discussion, female, Biratnagar

“The police do not investigate crimes. Nepotism is on the rise and the police are here only for money.”

Focus group discussion, male, Nepalganj

“They have failed to provide a satisfactory service. They’re more focused on finding out where the money comes from.”

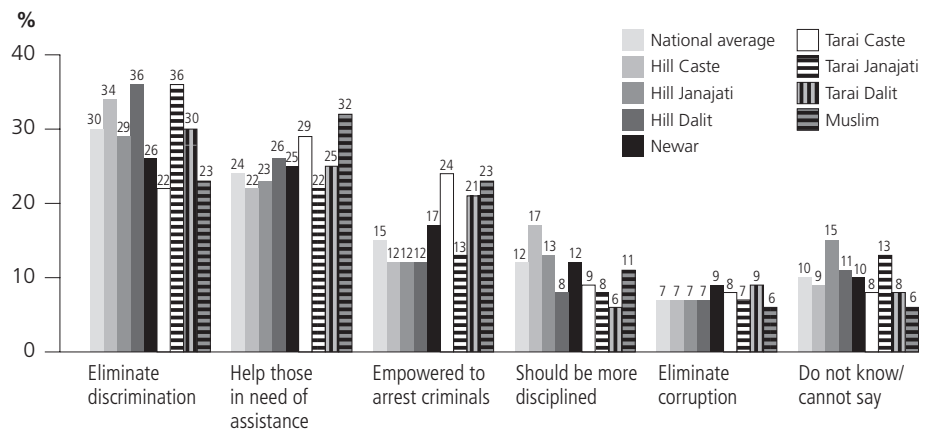
Focus group discussion, male, Kathmandu Valley

“The police have no idea how to solve the problems faced by people. When we go to the police, they send us back to the villages instead.”

Focus group discussion, female, Dhangadhi

Given the general perception that the police are not able or are unwilling to provide law and order effectively, all participants of the public opinion survey were invited to offer suggestions as to how the police can win the trust of the public. Common responses included: the police should eliminate discrimination (30 percent), help those in need of assistance (24 percent) and be empowered to arrest criminals (15 percent).

Figure 28: What does the Nepal Police need to do to win back the trust of the public? (by ethnic/caste group, base no. = 3010)



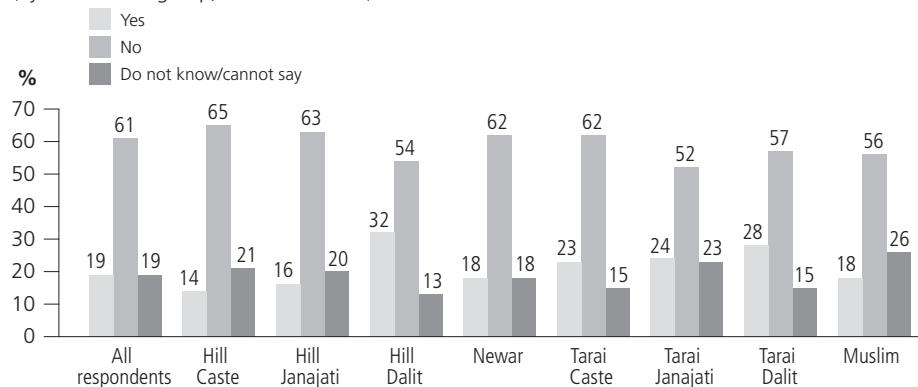
Although all ethnic/caste groups proffered similar opinions as to what the Nepal Police need to do to win back the trust of the public, the perception that the police needs to eliminate discrimination was particularly high for Hill Caste (34 percent), Hill Dalit (36 percent) and Tarai Janajati (36 percent) respondents; while Tari Caste, Tarai Dalit and Muslim respondents emphasised helping those in need of assistance and being empowered to arrest criminals.

4.4 Equality and discrimination: Ethnicity/caste

Issues surrounding ethnic/caste discrimination are obviously very sensitive, but they are particularly relevant to policing. In many countries, ethnic/caste groups that are more generally victims of discrimination in society are vulnerable to law enforcement that is deliberately or unintentionally prejudiced. There are thus two issues relating to ethnicity/caste that are important to consider. Firstly, do people believe that the police treat them fairly and equally? Secondly, do they believe that the police are able to represent their interests, either by employing a representative number of their caste/ethnic group, or at least by being sensitive to these communities through knowledge of the local language and customs, and of the challenges they face?

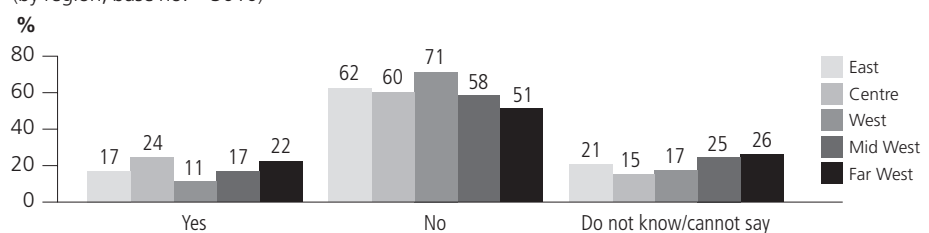
In general, it appears from the public opinion survey that the majority of Nepalis do not believe that the police treat the various ethnic/caste groups differently: 62 percent of respondents said that there was no such discrimination, while only 19 percent believed there was; a further 19 percent were not able or willing to answer this question. Thus despite the majority of people voicing the belief that the police are not discriminatory, almost two in five Nepalis did not support this sentiment. It was also notable that the figure for those that were of the opinion that the police did discriminate against ethnicity/caste was slightly higher among Dalits, at 32 percent among Hill Dalits, and 28 percent among Tarai Dalits. Similarly, almost a quarter of Tarai Castes and Tarai Janajatis shared this judgement (Figure 29).

Figure 29: Do the police treat different caste/ethnic groups differently?
(by ethnic/caste group, base no. = 3010)



With regard to geographic perceptions of discrimination, in the West development region, it appears that the police are generally considered to be sensitive, with 71 percent of the respondents declaring that caste/ethnic groups are not treated differently from each other. While this positive outlook is common across most of Nepal, when compared with the national average, it is noteworthy that in the Mid West (58 percent) and Far West (51 percent), fewer respondents felt able to report that the police did not discriminate between caste/ethnic groups (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Do the police treat different caste/ethnic groups differently?
(by region, base no. = 3010)



Moreover, in the focus groups and interviews, where many of the participants were from more marginal backgrounds, it was more common to hear accusations that the police did discriminate on the grounds of caste/ethnic group. Thus, it is clear that significant proportions of respondents were cautious as to the neutrality of the police:

“A Dalit woman was raped in Sunsari. The police did not follow up on the case even though she reported it to them. I’m sure that if she’d been from an upper caste, the police would have punished the guilty.”

Focus group discussion, female, Biratnagar

“I was only accompanying a friend and I had no involvement in the case, but the police hit me and spoke to me very rudely.”

In-depth interview, Tharu female, Bardiya

Survey respondents who did believe that there was some discrimination were asked whether this discrimination would be likely to work in their favour or against them (Figure 31). Interestingly, the ‘dominant’ social groups within Nepal (Hill Castes, Hill Janajatis, and Newars) were honest enough to admit that this discrimination may work in their favour. Unfortunately, Muslims who did believe there was some discrimination, representing some 18 percent of this group, thought that this discrimination worked against them. It is also significant that unlike perceptions of security, where Tarai Janajatis are likely to feel as safe as their Hill counterparts (see Section 3.3 above), more Tarai Janajatis believe that they may be discriminated against. This sentiment was also echoed by Hill Dalits, Tarai Castes and Tarai Dalits.

In all development regions, with the exception of the East, of those that perceived that some form of discrimination was practiced by the police, approximately half of interviewees felt that that the police were more co-operative towards other caste/ethnic groups (Figure 32).

Figure 31: If the police do treat different caste/ethnic groups differently, how do they treat them differently?

(only if perceived discrimination, by ethnic/caste group, base no. = 574)

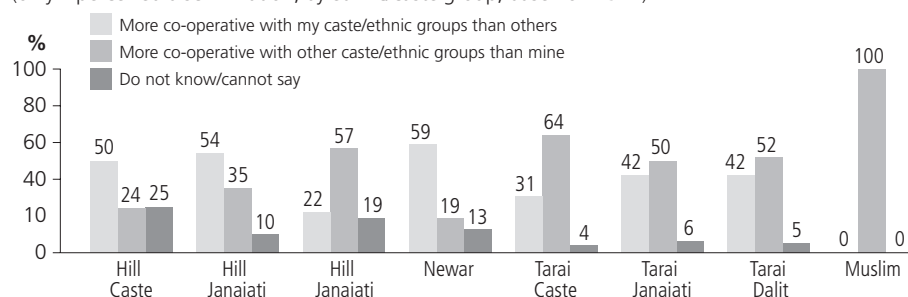
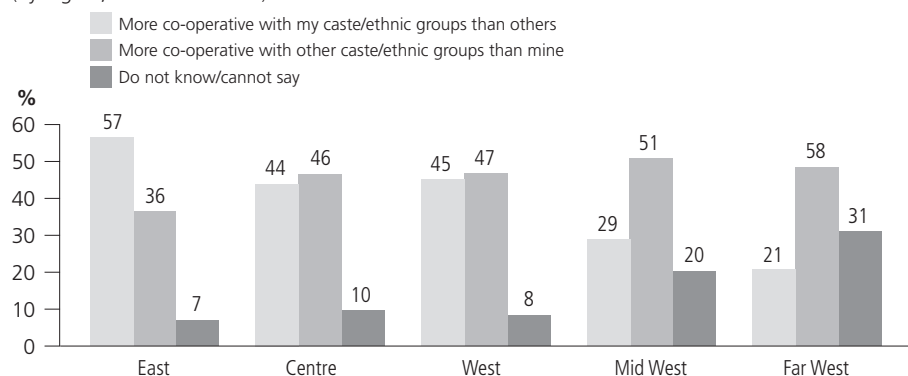


Figure 32: If the police treat different caste/ethnic groups differently, how do they behave?

(by region, base no. = 3010)



However, the interviews and focus groups revealed that discrimination along caste/ethnic lines is not the only form of discrimination, and probably not even the dominant form. The majority of participants said that the police were more likely to discriminate against you if you were poor and without influence:

“I think the police discriminate between the rich and poor, between the educated and uneducated. Submit your file along with a bottle of beer and your work gets done quickly!”

In-depth interview, Thakuri male, Jumla

“When the general public go to a police post and request they come to the place where an incident has taken place, they say ‘OK’, but they don’t turn up. However, if a person with money or power phones them from home, they come to the venue quickly.”

Focus group discussion, male, Biratnagar

“Affluent people get access to justice/the police easily. We have seen some ethnic groups being treated badly by police.”

Focus group discussion, male, Kathmandu Valley

This suggests that discrimination is not primarily motivated by specific prejudices against particular groups, so much as by people's overall social and economic standing. However, it may be argued that there is still an ethnic/caste component by default inasmuch as certain castes and ethnic groups have traditionally had more resources and greater influence within the state. As such, they are more likely to be able to influence officials towards a favourable outcome whenever an incident occurs.

4.5 Equality and discrimination: Gender

While the discussion on ethnicity/caste provoked mixed reactions, responses with regards to policing and gender were much more uniform. Two key messages came through very strongly from the survey, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The first is that many people believe that the police do not always treat female members of the public with enough respect and dignity, and this is a key reason for more general distrust of the police (see Section 4.1). Secondly, there is overwhelming support for moves to increase the number of female police officers and ensure a greater gender balance within the police service.

Although nearly half (47 percent) of Nepalis did not believe that the police treated women differently from men, 34 percent of people did believe there was some gender discrimination – much higher than the 19 percent who thought there was some ethnic/caste discrimination (see Figures 29 and 33). With regard to the geographic distribution of opinions, gender discrimination was acknowledged as being present in all three ecological regions⁷ (Figure 34), signalling that this practice is not limited to particular areas of Nepal, but rather that it is an institutional problem. As a consequence, despite focus group participants and interviewees suggesting that many police officers behave responsibly, the image of the police has been severely tarnished by those who treat women badly:

“Since women are meek, uneducated and ignorant, police will always treat women with some care. No police will come to my house asking to interrogate my daughter; they will always want to speak to my son.”

In-depth interview, Rai woman, Jumla

“They are rude, they tease women in a vulgar way, there's sexual harassment.”

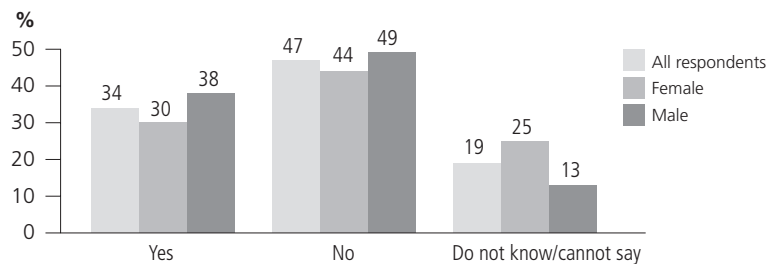
Focus group discussion, female, Nepalganj

“When the police are in our area, villagers get concerned about how they can make their girls safer.”

Focus group discussion, female, Gorkha

Figure 33: Do the police treat men and women differently?

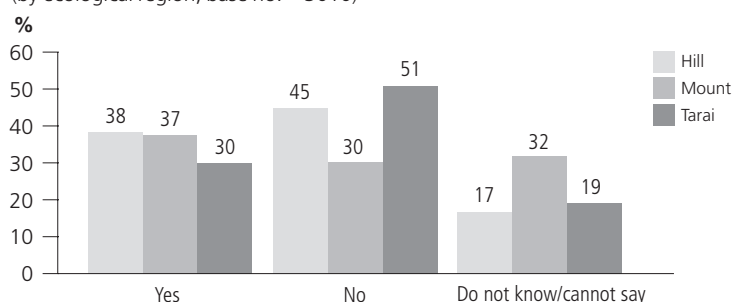
(by gender, base no. = 3010)



⁷ The three ecological regions comprise of the Hill, Mountain and Tarai regions.

Figure 34: Do the police treat men and women differently?

(by ecological region, base no. = 3010)



4.6 Inclusion in the police

The issue of recruitment is an equally sensitive topic to that of discrimination. At the time of the signing of the CPA in November 2006, the Nepal Police consisted of approximately 50,000 officers; of this only 0.2 percent were drawn from the Dalit community or other underrepresented caste/ethnic groups.⁸ While the general consensus is that the situation in relation to inclusion is getting better, and attempts had been made to make the police more representative, marginalisation remains pervasive. In addition, many barriers to promotion persist, with the only two Dalits having been ranked as Deputy Inspector General (DIG) and four as Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP):⁹

“I think social inclusion is there, but not the opportunities. There is representation but it is rare. The lower castes are not in higher positions. Hopefully it will gradually get better.”

Focus group discussion, male, Sindhulimadi

“Even if anyone from our (Madhesi) group joins the police, they are treated very badly afterwards. So, they end up leaving the job. At the same time, they never get promotion.”

Focus group discussion, male, Nepalganj

“It is getting better. Though there are Dalits in the police, they are mostly at the bottom level, not in top positions. The way exams are taken favours the higher caste groups. Low caste groups get ousted from the beginning because of their poor Nepali language skills.”

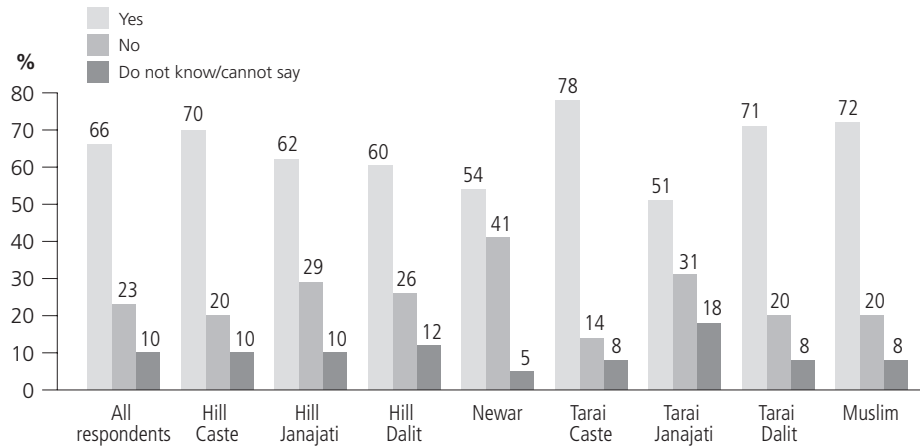
Focus group discussion, male, Kathmandu

The significance of the lack of representation of all caste/ethnic groups was investigated further by the public opinion survey and focus group discussions, in relation to the issue of whether the police spoke the local languages of the communities to which they were providing law enforcement. Overall, two thirds of Nepalis (66 percent) said that the local police did speak their language (Figure 35). Significantly, however, a quarter of the total interviewees acknowledged that language was a problem; in particular, lower answers were received for Tarai Janajati groups (where only 51 percent said that the police did speak their language, and 31 percent said definitely that they did not) and for Newars, where 41 percent said that the police were unable to speak their language. The knock-on effects of limited communication capacity between communities and the police are unclear, but it appears to be a major cause for concern. This is because barriers between individuals and their law enforcement providers limit the potential for effective alleviation of insecurity.

⁸ Sob, Durga, ‘Nepal Police and the Dalit community’ in Saferworld (2007), *Policing in Nepal: A collection of essays* (Saferworld), p.72

⁹ Gautam, Shobha, ‘Social inclusion in police reform’, in *Ibid.*, p.84

Figure 35: Do the police officials in your area speak your language or mother tongue?
(by ethnic/caste group, base no. = 3010)

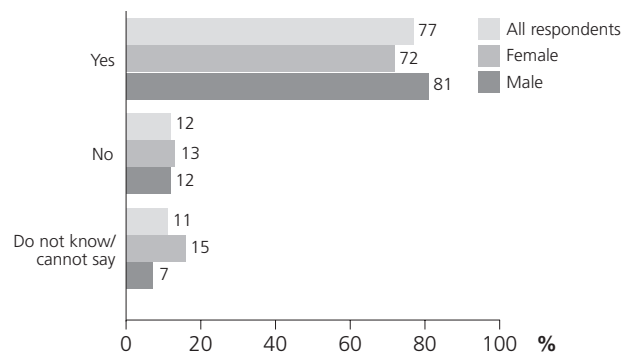


The limited inclusion of particular caste and ethnic groups is similarly true for women. Out of the overall total of police officers only approximately 4 percent are women.¹⁰ The general omission of women from the police is significant: interviewees and focus group participants stated that boosting the numbers of women police officers would lead to a change in the way the police dealt with women’s issues, and would ensure that male police officers would not think that they could get away with verbally or physically abusing female members of the public. Over three-quarters (77 percent) of Nepalis thought this was a good idea, while only 12 percent were against more women in the police (Figure 36). Interestingly, even more men (81 percent) supported this idea than women (72 percent).

“I think policewomen are more dedicated, just and dependable. I like them for their dutifulness.”

In-depth interview, male, Pyuthan

Figure 36: Do you think there should be more women in the police?
(by gender, base no. = 3010)



Two other key reasons were given for supporting more women police officers. Firstly, many Nepalis thought that it was simply a matter of equal opportunities and that women should have the same chances to work and advance in the police service as their male counterparts. Secondly, the most frequently heard response in the opinion survey was that women were much better at understanding women’s problems and would therefore be better at dealing with many issues (Figure 37).

“Having women police provides us with access. We are happy to have women police and feel encouraged to go to the [police] post.”

Focus group discussion, female, Gorkha

¹⁰ Ibid, p.84

“Had there been women police we would have reported [crimes] without hesitation.”

Focus group discussion, female, Biratnagar

“It is necessary to have women police to look after the complaints of women.”

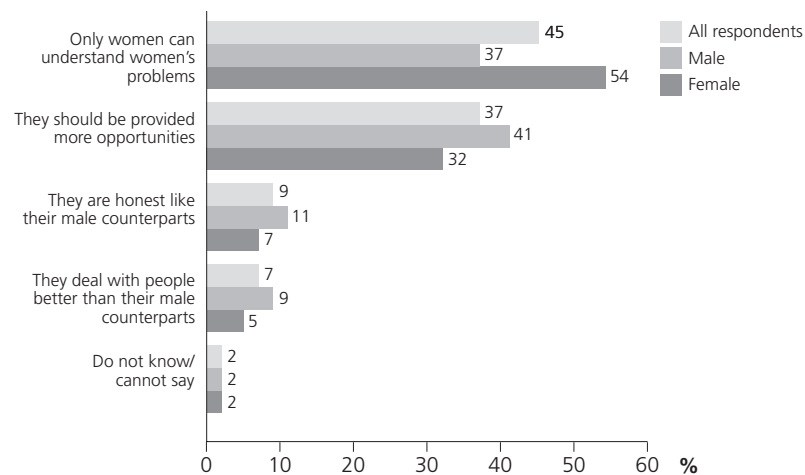
Focus group discussion, male, Biratnagar

“It doesn’t matter what gender they are. If there are women police, it will be easier for women rather than us. The important thing is behaviour and work ethics or style, and the attitudes of the police. Women police do listen more.”

Focus group discussion, male, Dhangadhi

Figure 37: If there should be more women in the police, why?

(One answer only, by gender, base No. = 2304)



5

Expectations and hopes for the future

ALTHOUGH THE NEPALIS SURVEYED AND INTERVIEWED had various concerns about security and expressed a range of criticisms of the police, they were far from downbeat about the future, as Section 3 has shown. The public opinion survey did not look in detail into the public's hopes and fears regarding their security and their expectations about the type of police service they would like to see, since it would be hard to ask such open-ended questions in a quantifiable way without severely restricting the range of answers that are possible. However, these questions were addressed in detail in the focus group discussions where participants were given plenty of space to discuss the type of police service they required. This section summarises the ideas identified, first presenting the 'ideal' qualities that participants would like to see in their police service, and then giving a list of suggested steps that the police could take to move towards this ideal.

5.1 The public's 'ideal' police service

The general lack of respect for the police and the numerous more direct criticisms made by various parts of the population suggest that many policemen are currently far from fulfilling all the hopes and expectations of the citizens they are supposed to be protecting.

Yet although there is a clear sense of alienation between the police and many sections of society, the focus group discussions showed that this gap was not unbridgeable. Many participants said that they very much wanted to have a co-operative relationship with the police:

"If they have got a positive attitude and are reformed then we are ready to help them. We want to help even now."

Focus group discussion, female, Gorkha

"We can help the police when necessary. We did help try to save the police post when we were asked politely. So, if they come with [the right] attitude, we are ready to help."

Focus group discussion, male, Nepalganj

"We would give information. We need to be sure that the guilty are punished – provided the police give us respect when we give this information. It depends... if the police are good, we will provide all the help they need."

Focus group discussion, female, Kathmandu Valley

The message from these quotes is clear: the public not only want to have a better relationship with the police, but are prepared to co-operate actively with them. However, before the public will do so, they want to see evidence that the police are capable of reform. Below is a list of key characteristics that focus group participants wished to see in the Nepal Police. It is striking that when asked to describe their ideal police service, respondents outlined requirements that correspond closely to those which police reform programmes in many countries are striving to introduce. Although the trend is by no means universal, it has become increasingly common for governments in many parts of the world to introduce more democratic policing models.¹¹ Common priorities include: ensuring that the police are more appropriately structured, tasked and resourced to provide citizens with equal access to security and justice; encouraging values of fairness, impartiality and respect for human rights culture; introducing mechanisms for greater accountability and public consultation; and prioritising the needs of citizens rather than their own or the government's.

Desired characteristics of a reformed police service (focus group responses):

Serving society	<i>“The police used to be for the security of the King before, but now it is for the security of the state and people.”</i> Male, Biratnagar
Upholding the law	<i>“They are people themselves. They should be demanding the rule of law, and therefore be law-driven too.”</i> Woman, Kathmandu Valley
Working with the community	<i>“There should be a ‘bottom-up’ relationship with the police. There should be systems for feedback from the community to the police. We need to improve these things so that we can feel secure.”</i> Male, Kathmandu Valley
Protecting human rights	<i>“I am ready to help provided human rights are protected.”</i> Male, Gorkha
Co-operative and communicative	<i>“We want the police to be people-friendly, [to] have an interest in helping the people.”</i> Woman, Sindhulimadi
Polite and respectful	<i>“They should speak politely. Their attitudes and manners should be good... We need police with manners.”</i> Male, Biratnagar
Competent	<i>“The police should have good analytical skills. They have to be educated and practical. They should be provided with more training.”</i> Male, Dhangadhi
Responsible	<i>“We wish them to be very responsible as the poor always pin their hopes on the police.”</i> Male, Sindhulimadi
Accountable	<i>“Political parties and better laws can play vital roles in making them accountable.”</i> Female, Gorkha
Treating everybody equally	<i>“They have to make us feel that they are for security. There should be no discrimination even with the poor and lower-caste people. Whatever they do, they should do it to win the trust from society.”</i> Female, Dhangadhi

¹¹ See for example, The OECD DAC Handbook on SSR: Supporting Security and Justice, p. 163, OECD 2007. Available from: http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3343,en_2649_34567_37417926_1_1_1_1,00.html

Representative of all communities	<i>“I did not get justice just because I am Dalit... Had there been Dalit police, I would have got justice for sure.”</i> Female, Nepalganj
Apolitical	<i>“The police should not favour any political party or agenda.”</i> Male, Biratnagar

5.2 Proposed steps towards improved policing

The list above provides a selection of attributes and qualities that the Nepali public would like to see in their police service. In addition, focus group participants were also able to propose concrete steps that the police service itself could take in the immediate future, to improve public trust. Since these steps are the views of people who are not experts in policing, and the aim of this paper is to present these ideas rather than to propose a comprehensive strategy for reform, they are broad directions rather than specific measures. Nonetheless, they can act as a powerful catalyst for debate on what precise reforms should be undertaken in the near future.

- **Improve communication skills** Many respondents felt that the police did not deal with the public in a polite and respectful manner, and that doing so would greatly improve trust and co-operation.
- **Work with community groups** Some people suggested that the police should work more closely with local community groups, which would boost understanding and allow them to work together to fight crime.
- **Work with youth groups** Several people raised concerns about deviant behaviour among young people, but also said that the police do not understand youth issues. The police should try to work more closely and develop better relationships with young people.
- **Improve interaction with women** Many interviewees, both male and female, felt that some police officers did not treat women with enough respect. If the police interact with female members of the public better, this would greatly improve their image.
- **Recruit more female police officers** Both male and female respondents were keen to see more female police officers, both because they want greater equality and because they believe women police officers can handle certain situations better.
- **Enhance visibility** In some areas, suspicion of the police was high and there was opposition to the police operating in the respondents' local area. As a whole, however, many people wanted more police posts in each VDC (village development committee), and for the police to patrol the community more regularly.
- **Root out corruption** There was a commonly-held view that some police were corrupt and that powerful people found it easier to influence the police. They suggested that more should be done to ensure that everyone is treated equally and to discipline corrupt officials.
- **Free the police from political interference** Several focus group participants believed the police should be free from political interference (including attempts by politicians to use the police for political or personal goals); this would mean the police had operational independence from government bodies.
- **Improve investigation skills** Some interviewees thought that the police sometimes acted on hearsay rather than undertaking a proper investigation, and suggested that there should be better training on investigation skills.

6

Conclusion

THE RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN FOR THIS SURVEY provides a description of the Nepali general public's attitudes towards public safety and policing, for the period May 2007 to June 2007. From the responses of the participants, it was evident that the overall mood was one of relief, cautious optimism and considerable hope. However, this was tempered by underlying concerns. Until recently, the primary source of insecurity was the violent conflict between the Maoists and the Government, but with the signing of the peace agreement and the Maoists' entrance into mainstream politics, this threat appears to have receded for now. Furthermore, following the *Jana Andolan-II* the promise of greater democracy and future elections for the Constituent Assembly have allowed Nepalis to hope that mechanisms will be found to resolve the causes of conflict and create a secure basis for peaceful development.

However, there is a fear, in some parts of the country at least, that the elimination of one great threat to security may be replaced by several others, especially in areas where there is a security vacuum that the state cannot rapidly fill. Most notably, the insecurity in the Tarai resulting from the Madhesi Movement (and the Government's response to it) has destabilised a significant portion of the country and shown the weakness of the state. Indeed, there is also a residual fear that the conflict could return if the political parties fail to achieve the expected results through peaceful means and the elections are held late or are poorly managed:

"Now, all the political parties are working together. However, as the government has failed to conduct the Constituent Assembly polls on time, it might create another movement."

Focus group discussion, male, Biratnagar

When asked directly, the majority of Nepalis thought that their neighbourhoods were safe and had no immediate security problems. However, more broadly, public concern is rising about various forms of criminality, from more serious crimes such as theft, extortion and assault, through to anti-social behaviour such as alcoholism and vandalism. Thus regardless of whether actual crime is rising or not, the fear of crime is certainly growing.

Fear of crime is exacerbated by a sentiment among significant sections of the Nepali public that the police are not as reliable in protecting them against crime as they would like. Although two thirds of Nepalis said that they had at least some trust in the police, there was little respect for them, and the majority of views in the focus groups and in-depth interviews indicated public dissatisfaction with the way the police currently operate. While there was some acknowledgement that not all police officers are bad, and that the image of the police is being spoiled by those who are corrupt, impolite, rude towards women or incompetent, the fact that such negative views were wide-

spread suggests that the police have a major image problem, and that this needs to be addressed in the near future.

It is important to note, however, that this public dissatisfaction with the police has not generally led to a total rejection of the police as an institution. Some interviewees and focus group participants did comment that they were better off without the police, and that it was easier to protect oneself than to rely on the police. In practice, however, it seems that relatively few villages have yet decided to take matters into their own hands, with only one in ten Nepalis reporting that they had formed some kind of public security arrangement, normally a local security committee. It appears that a more common attitude is a combination of resignation and hope; people are not entirely satisfied with police performance, but they do not see any alternative. They are therefore still committed to the idea of the police as a force for good, and have strong hopes that the police will increasingly act in this way. Section 5 of this report has presented a clear general outline of how the public would like the police to behave, and these ideas could form the basis for any future discussions on policing in Nepal.

Both this optimism and dissatisfaction can be explained by a shift in public expectations. During the ‘People’s War’, the public’s views on security were strongly coloured by the conflict, and security was primarily seen in terms of protection from both the direct and indirect threats emanating from the war. However, now that peace has returned, the nature of the security threats they face is changing, and their understanding of what it means to be protected by the state is changing too. Furthermore, the Jana Andolan-II and the promise of greater democracy have focused minds around the whole way in which the state acts. In the past, the police were associated with the protection of the state and the monarch, not the people. This allowed a way of policing to emerge that paid scant attention to human rights and was not always concerned with the views of the public. It is clear that the public is increasingly unwilling to accept this and wants a police service that thinks and acts democratically:

“The police force has to be remodelled according to the spirit of Loktantra.”

In-depth interview, Magar male, Arghakhanchi

“The police used to be for the security of the King, but now it is for the security of the state and people.”

Focus group discussion, male, Biratnagar

“We are all hopeful that the security situation will be better. We think our voice will be heard.”

Focus group discussion, female, Nepalganj

“We would be happy if our problems are heard and solutions are implemented.”

Focus group discussion, female, Gorkha

There is hope among Nepalis that the security situation will get better, and that the police will become more reliable and democratic. Yet it is not the responsibility of the police alone to achieve these changes. On the one hand, communities themselves must engage more actively with the police. In some areas, focus group participants and interviewees mentioned that civil society organisations had helped to establish dialogue with the authorities on various security issues, and that this had helped to build trust between them and reduce feelings of insecurity.

Moreover, political parties, state leaders and other influential people also need to guide the process of reform. This is because political parties are perceived to have a significant responsibility in safeguarding safety and security, as it was apparent that stability was seen to be intrinsically linked to political unity. In light of this, there was concern that reform was currently being held up by ongoing political contention, including manoeuvring before the elections, and that not enough attention was being paid to issues such as policing. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of political parties and government decision-makers to bring about the reforms that the public would like to see:

“I expect policymakers will have a clear idea on the policies that should be formulated.”

Focus group discussion, male, Kathmandu Valley

“The state and intellectuals should understand the problems before it becomes too late. Leaders should be visionary. The police should be qualified and trained enough to understand the needs of the hour.”

Focus group discussion, male, Sindhulimadi

ANNEX 1: Survey methodology and demographics

A substantial public opinion survey, formulated by Saferworld and IDA, was conducted to gauge public perceptions of security and law enforcement provision. The nationwide survey questioned a proportionally representative sample of 3,010 interviewees, all of which were aged 18 or above. In regions and communities where the mother tongue was a language other than Nepali, the interviewer translated the questionnaire into the local language impromptu, and administered it.

Sampling for this process was conducted in five inter-related stages. Initially Nepal was divided into its three ecological regions (mountain, hill and Tarai) and its five development regions. The resulting 15 sub-divisions, and Kathmandu Valley which was addressed independently given its demographic size, were further divided into their respective districts. From this 30 were eventually selected for investigation, based upon the employment of a proportional allocation. In the second stage, a representative number of village development committees (VDCs) and/or municipalities were selected at random from every sample district. The number of sample VDCs therefore, varied in accordance to the size of the sample districts. Overall, one VDC was selected for every 20 respondents. In the third stage, the VDC sample size was further broken up into two wards. In the fourth stage, households for interview were randomly selected.¹² The final stage involved a member of household being selected for interview, by the use of a Kish-grid.¹³

As a result of this process, the responses provided by this sample can accurately be considered to represent national perceptions, as it has a 95 percent confidence level (with a margin of error of +/- 1.8 percent).¹⁴ The poll does not however, claim to have the same level of precision at a regional or district level.

Demographics

The following tables give statistics for demographic patterns according to the 2001 Census ('Population') and the corresponding statistics for the demographic breakdown of the opinion survey. All tables in this annex have been supplied by Interdisciplinary Analysts.

Sex

Sex	Population (%)	Sample (%)
Female	50.10	50.0
Male	49.90	50.0
Total	100.00	100.0

Age group

Age Group	Sample (%)
18–25	27.5
26–35	27.7
36–45	19.7
Above 45	25.1
Total	100.0

¹² It should be noted however, that of the 3,010 interviews 117 respondents were purposely selected from some minority groups to avoid the chance of their being excluded.

¹³ This method ensured that all household members above 18 years of age had an equal chance of being selected for interview.

¹⁴ Limitations with the survey relate to the fact that the far-west region is slightly over-represented, and that the Hindus are a little over-represented while the Buddhists are slightly under-represented. This outcome is not deliberate, but is instead a by product of the sampling frame adopted by the study. However, other sample characteristics such as caste/ethnic groups, sex, age groups, literacy and urban/rural dwellers largely correspond to their proportion in the general population.

Residence, by development region

Development Region	Population (%)	Sample (%)
East	23.1	25.2
Central	34.7	32.5
West	19.7	17.6
Mid-West	13.0	11.7
Far-West	9.5	13.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Residence, by ecological region

Ecological Region	Population (%)	Sample (%)
Mountain	7.3	8.2
Hill	44.3	41.7
Tarai	48.4	50.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Rural/urban settlement

Settlement	Population (%)	Sample (%)
Rural	86.1	84.1
Urban	13.9	15.9
Total	100.0	100.0

Educational Status

Educational Status	Sample (%)
Illiterate	34.3
Literate but no formal education	13.0
Primary	14.0
Lower secondary	9.1
Secondary	16.6
Intermediate	9.2
Bachelor's and above	3.7
Total	100.0

Occupation

Occupation	Sample (%)
Agriculture	49.6
House wife/husband	15.5
Industry/Business	12.1
Student	8.0
Service	7.3
Labour	5.7
Unemployed	1.1
Retired	0.7
Total	100.0

Caste/ethnicity

Caste/Ethnicity (%)	Population (%)	Sample (%)	Caste/Ethnicity (%)	Population (%)	Sample (%)
Chhetri	15.80	15.54	Rajbansi	0.42	0.93
Bahun	12.74	11.79	Kanu	0.42	0.70
Magar	7.14	6.41	Sunuwar	0.42	0.80
Tharu	6.75	7.74	Sudhi	0.40	0.53
Tamang	5.64	3.85	Lohar	0.36	0.70
Newar	5.48	5.75	Tatma	0.34	0.33
Muslim	4.27	4.05	Khatwe	0.33	0.47
Yadav	3.94	3.02	Dhobi	0.32	0.37
Kami/Biswokarma	3.94	1.89	Majhi	0.32	0.53
Rai	2.79	2.62	Nuniya	0.29	0.40
Gurung	2.39	2.06	Kumhar	0.24	0.37
Damai/Pariyar	1.72	1.16	Danuwar	0.23	0.33
Limbu	1.58	2.43	Chepang	0.23	0.27
Thakuri	1.47	2.33	Halwai	0.22	0.30
Sarki/Mijar	1.40	0.70	Rajput	0.21	0.20
Teli	1.34	0.96	Kayastha	0.20	0.23
Chamar	1.19	0.86	Badahi	0.20	0.20
Koiri	1.11	1.56	Marwadi	0.19	0.47
Kurmi	0.94	1.03	Satar	0.19	0.23
Sanyasi	0.88	1.59	Jhangar	0.18	0.03
Dhanuk	0.83	0.83	Bantar	0.16	0.20
Sherpa	0.76	0.96	Kahar	0.15	0.20
Musahar	0.76	0.86	Gangai	0.14	0.13
Dusadh	0.70	1.06	Rajbhar	0.11	0.13
Sonar	0.64	0.66	Lodha	0.11	0.27
Kewat	0.60	0.63	Thami	0.10	0.17
Tarai Brahman	0.59	1.10	Dhimal	0.09	0.13
Baniya	0.55	1.23	Bhote	0.08	0.13
Gharti	0.52	0.56	Bind	0.08	0.03
Kalwar	0.51	0.96	Thakali	0.06	0.17
Mallaha	0.51	1.33	Badi	0.02	0.20
Kumal	0.44	1.03	Sikh	0.01	0.03
Hajam	0.43	0.56	Others	2.83	0.71
			Total	100.00	100.00

These caste/ethnic groups were re-classified into eight broad groups for the purposes of analysis. These are: Hill Caste; Hill Janajati, Hill Dalit; Newar; Tarai Caste; Tarai Janajati; Tarai Dalit; and Muslim. Although there are internal variations within Newars and Muslims, they have been taken to be single categories for the purpose of this study.

The specific caste/ethnic groups were thus divided into six groups:

Hill Caste	Chhetri; Bahun; Thakuri; Sanyasi; Dhimi
Hill Janajati	Bhote; Sherpa; Thakali; Magar; Tamang; Rai; Gurung; Limbu; Sunuwar; Danuwar; Majhi; Thami; Chepang
Hill Dalit	Biswokarma (Kami); Badi; Pariyar (Damai); Kumal; Mijar (Sarki); Gharti
Tarai Caste	Yadav; Tarai Brahman; Sudhi; Teli; Hajam; Dhanuk; Kanu; Baniya; Kurmi; Mallaha; Marwadi; Halwai; Kewat; Badahi; Kayastha; Chaurasiya; Nuniya; Gupta; Patel; Lodha; Kahar; Rajput; Khatwe; Bind; Koiri; Kalwar; Kumhar
Tarai Janajati	Tharu; Rajbansi; Satar; Jhangar; Dhimal; Gangai
Tarai Dalit	Dusadh; Chamar; Lohar; Bantar; Musahar; Sonar; Dhobi; Tatma

The sample size of each of these 8 broad caste/ethnic groupings is as follows:

Caste/Ethnic Broad Category	Sample (%) (Rounded Figures)
Hill Caste	31
Hill Janajati	21
Hill Dalit	6
Newar	6
Tarai Caste	15
Tarai Janajati	9
Tarai Dalit	8
Muslim	4
Total	100

Religion		
Religion	Population (%)	Sample (%)
Hindu	80.7	85.3
Buddhist	10.7	6.6
Islam	4.2	4.4
Christianity	0.5	1.1
Kirat	3.6	2.5
Atheist	0.0	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0

ANNEX 2: In-depth interviews methodology

In-depth interviews were conducted by Interdisciplinary Analysts with over 150 individuals from across the country. The individuals for in-depth interviews were purposely selected with the intention of representing various ideological persuasions, age-groups, development-geographic regions, sex, caste/ethnicity and settlement areas. Between nine to ten respondents were selected from every eco-development region for in-depth interviews. Sufficient time was given to building a rapport with the interviewees before the interview commenced. Then one-to-one interviews were conducted in a private setting with the selected individuals. An open-ended questionnaire was formulated, through which respondents were asked to express their views in detail. The interviews were recorded with tape recorders and later transcribed. Interdisciplinary Analysts then provided a summary of these answers, identifying general trends and highlighting specific points of view.

The following list of questions was provided to interviewers to guide the conversation. This list largely corresponds with the public opinion survey questionnaire; however, many questions were adapted to allow more qualitative answers, and several more open questions about security, politics and development were also added:

- Do you think the country is moving in the right direction after the peace agreement between the government and the rebels?
- How safe or unsafe do you feel this year compared to a year ago and why?
- How safe do you feel travelling this year compared to last year?
- How safe do you feel talking to strangers compared to last year?
- How safe or unsafe do you feel in your community compared to last year?
- How fearful are you that you and your family may be a victim of crime?
- Are there any problems in your neighbourhood regarding law and order?
- How do you assess the present government's performance?
- How capable is the present government in maintaining law and order in the country?
- In your opinion, why do *bandhs* continue to occur?
- How safe do you feel about participating in mass events such as those informing people about the Constituent Assembly?
- How safe do you feel about voting during the coming elections to the Constituent Assembly?
- In your view, which organisation is capable of bringing peace in the country?
- How much do you trust the police?
- Have you heard of the armed police? Do you think the Nepal Police and the Armed Police are the same or are they different? What are the positive and negative sides of both the armed and the civil police?
- Have you had to deal with the police for any reason in the past one year? How was their behaviour towards you? (If not, how do you expect their behaviour towards you would be?)
- Do police treat men and women differently? How?
- Do the police discriminate between caste/ethnic groups? If yes, how do they discriminate?
- What are your views regarding policewomen?
- What do you suggest the police should do to maintain law and order in your village/neighbourhood?
- What do you suggest the police should do during demonstrations, strikes and protests?

- Do you know of any security arrangements in your area made through the efforts of the community?
- Why do you think such security arrangements have become popular? What do you think are the positive and negative aspects of such arrangements?
- Could you give any suggestions to improve security in your area?
- Do you think security situation will improve in the future?
- Is there any injustice your family has faced in the past one year?
- Have you had to face any injustice in the past one year?
- Are you satisfied with the court in your area?
- How capable are the police of bringing criminals to court in your area?
- It is said that everybody is equal in the eyes of the law. How true is this in the case of Nepal?
- Do you see the people of Nepal being provided better access to justice in the future?

ANNEX 3: Focus group discussions

Twelve focus group discussions were held between 8 April 2007 and 1 May 2007. They were moderated by the Institute for Human Rights Communication Nepal (IHRI-CON), and were organised in co-operation with three focal organisations (the Nepal Press Institute, the Regional Media Resource Centre, and Women Empowerment for Sustainable Peace and Human Rights) which have good local contacts and the ability to provide support and facilities for the holding of such meetings. Focus group discussions took place in the following locations:

Location	Date	Town/areas represented by participants	Focal organisation
Biratnagar (men)	1 May	Jhapa, Morang, Siraha, Saptari, Sunsari	Regional Media Resource Centre
Biratnagar (women)	1 May		
Dhangadhi (men)	20 April	Doti, Dadeldhura, Kailali, Kanchanpur	Women Empowerment for Sustainable Peace and Human Rights
Dhangadhi (women)	21 April		
Gorkha (men)	10 April	Gorkha, lamjung, Tanahun	Women Empowerment for Sustainable Peace and Human Rights
Gorkha (women)	9 April		
Kathmandu Valley (men)	13 April	Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Kathmandu	Nepal Press Institute
Kathmandu Valley (women)	13 April		
Nepalganj (men)	18 April	Banke, Bardia, Dang Nepalganj	Regional Media Resource Centre
Nepalganj (women)	18 April		
Sindhulimadi (men)	25 April	Mohotari, Ramechhap, Sarlahi, Sindhuli	Women Empowerment for Sustainable Peace and Human Rights
Sindhulimadi (women)	26 April		

These areas were chosen in order to ensure that views were heard from across all five development regions, and that the major areas of population – the Hill areas, the Tarai, and the Kathmandu Valley – were all represented. There was an equal number of male and female participants; focus groups were held separately for men and women in each location in order to allow people to speak more freely and explore their attitudes (including different gender perceptions) in more detail.

However, while the focus group participants were largely representative of Nepal as a whole in terms of location and gender, the project team felt it was important to hear from people whose voices might not otherwise be heard or were worthy of special attention. Special attempts were therefore made to invite lower caste groups and other marginalized groups to participate.

Discussions in the focus group were mostly allowed to flow freely, but were guided by moderators, who asked questions and helped to keep the conversation moving. The following seven topics were used by moderators to guide the discussions:

- Individual/personal perceptions of security
- Perceptions of security at the community level
- Perceptions of security at the national level
- Communal initiatives to provide security
- Perceptions and experiences of interaction with the police/security sector
- Expectations and hopes for the future of policing/security
- Peace and development: the relationship between security and economic development

All the conversations were recorded, and transcripts of the main quotes and summaries of key discussions were prepared by Saferworld and IHRICON.

ANNEX 4: Validation workshops

Seven workshops were held between 26 September 2007 and 16 November 2007. During these discussions representatives from the police, local government authorities, political parties, the business community, civil society organisations and local communities were invited to comment on the findings of Saferworld, Interdisciplinary Analyst (IDA) and Institute for Human Rights Communication Nepal (IHRICON). Workshops took place in the following locations:

Location	Dates
Pokhara	26 September
Kathmandu	28 September
Chitwan	3 October
Butwal	4 October
Biratnagar	10 October
Dhangadi	15 November
Nepalganj	16 November

As part of the process, presentations were made by IHRICON and IDA on the focus group discussions and public opinion survey respectively, including information about the methodology used and the findings specific to the relevant development region as well as national-level findings. Discussions were then encouraged amongst participants to validate the findings, to highlight areas of contention and to allow for opposing views to be voiced.

Thus, the overall objectives of the workshops were to:

- Provide the participants with the opportunity to comment and validate Saferworld and its partners' research findings;
- Stimulate a discussion based on the findings of Saferworld's research on people's perceptions of policing in Nepal;
- Enquire about where participants think the findings were right and where corrections and/or additions needed to be made;
- Feed the comments made into the Saferworld report documenting the research findings and conclusions.

All the conversations were recorded, and transcripts of the main quotes and summaries of key discussions were compiled by Saferworld.

Interdisciplinary Analysts is a Kathmandu-based research and consultancy firm which works in the areas of natural resource management public opinion polls, disaster mitigation, conflict resolution, development co-operation and renewable energy.

The Institute of Human Rights Communication, Nepal (IHRICON) is a human rights and communication NGO established by a group of media professionals who have been working actively in the field of human rights advocacy for more than a decade.

Saferworld is an independent non-governmental organisation that works with governments and civil society internationally to research, promote and implement new strategies to increase human security and prevent armed violence.

COVER PHOTO: Police assigned to public order duties waiting for instruction, Kathmandu, November 2006. © SIMON RYNN, SAFERWORLD



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