

## FOREWORD

In a world where war, terrorism and humanitarian crises can seem all-pervasive, the *Human Security Report* offers a rare message of hope.

Drawing on research from around the world, this far-ranging study reveals that for more than three decades positive changes have been quietly taking place.

Over the past 30 years the collapse of some 60 dictatorships has freed countless millions of people from repressive rule. The number of democracies has soared, interstate wars have become increasingly rare, and all wars have become less deadly.

In the early 1990s the number of civil wars began to drop as well—a decline that has continued to this day.

And it's not just wars that are in decline—notwithstanding Rwanda, Srebrenica and Darfur—the number of genocides and other mass killings is also dramatically down worldwide.

The fact that wars have been getting less frequent and less deadly is good news for the developing world, where most armed conflicts now take place.

The *Human Security Report* argues that peace and development are two sides of the same coin—that equitable development helps build security, while war is 'development in reverse'.

Building inclusive democracies and creating more effective development strategies are both highly effective long-term security policies. But as the Report shows, the big decline in warfare in the 1990s is due primarily to the dramatic UN-led post-Cold War upsurge in peacekeeping, peace building and conflict prevention. It turns out that cooperative multilateral security strategies are far more effective than the UN's critics allow.

The *Human Security Report 2005* tracks and examines the extraordinary changes in global security that have taken place since the end of World War II. The data are revelatory, the analyses are compelling, and the case for a new approach to securing peace is persuasive.

That new approach is 'human security'.

Human security privileges people over states, reconciliation over revenge, diplomacy over deterrence, and multilateral engagement over coercive unilateralism.

But human security's aspirations and reality do not always coincide. Hundreds of millions of people continue to live in countries wracked by violence and poverty. And human security policies—from preventive diplomacy to post-conflict peace building—are frequently underfunded, lacking in political support, and flawed in execution.

The *Human Security Report* provides the data and analysis that show how extraordinary progress has been made despite these limitations.



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