La sécurité humaine maintenant

Rapport de la Commission
sur la sécurité humaine

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Commission sur la sécurité humaine

Human security now

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Présentation

Premier rapport de la Commission sur la sécurité humaine, créée en 2000, ce livre fait le terrible constat que, si les peuples et les individus désirent paix, équité sociale, respect des droits de l'homme et démocratie, les institutions internationales et les gouvernements nationaux n'ont pas cette priorité sur leurs agendas. La Commission formule en conséquence des propositions pour placer la sécurité humaine en première ligne de ces agendas.

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1. Human security now

Commission on human security

Today's global flows of goods, services, finance, people and images spotlight the many interlinkages in the security of all people. We share a planet, a biosphere, a technological arsenal, a social fabric. The security of one person, one community, one nation rests on the decisions of many others—sometimes fortuitously, sometimes precariously. Political liberalization in recent decades has shifted alliances and begun movements towards democracy. These processes opened opportunities for people but also new fault lines. And political and economic instabilities, some involving bitter conflicts with heavy casualties and dislocations, have broken out within states. Thus people throughout the world, in developing and developed countries alike, live under varied conditions of insecurity.

Institutions have gradually responded. The United Nations completed more peacekeeping operations in the 1990s than ever in its history. It also negotiated new international agreements to stop some threats. Transnational corporations, working in many countries, have transformed scientific and informational advances into practical applications. They regularly navigate diverse markets and cultures, facilitating the exchange of goods and services. Regional entities are finding appropriate avenues of coordinated action. And civil society organizations are flourishing, relying on low-cost electronic communication to keep expenses down.

This report's call for human security is a response to new opportunities for propelling development, for dealing with conflict, for blunting the many threats to human security. But it is also a response to the proliferation of menace in the 21st century—a response to the threats of development reversed, to the threats of violence inflicted. With so many dangers transmitted so rapidly in

today's interlinked world, policies and institutions must respond in new ways to protect individuals and communities and to empower them to thrive. That response cannot be effective if it comes fragmented—from those dealing with rights, those with security, those with humanitarian concerns and those with development. With human security the objective, there must be a stronger and more integrated response from communities and states around the globe.

Security centred on people—not states

The international community urgently needs a new paradigm of security. Why? Because the security debate has changed dramatically since the inception of state security advocated in the 17th century. According to that traditional idea, the state would monopolize the rights and means to protect its citizens. State power and state security would be established and expanded to sustain order and peace. But in the 21st century, both the challenges to security and its protectors have become more complex. The state remains the fundamental purveyor of security. Yet it often fails to fulfil its security obligations—and at times has even become a source of threat to its own people. That is why attention must now shift from the security of the state to the security of the people—to human security (box 1.1).

Box 1.1 Rethinking security: An imperative for Africa?

Traditional notions of security, shaped largely by the Cold War, were concerned mainly with a state's ability to counter external threats. Threats to international peace and security were also usually perceived as threats from outside the state (see, for example, chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter). More recently, thinking about security has shifted. In Africa, for example, such shifts can be traced to the internal struggles of African people against colonial rule and occupation, whether in Algeria, Angola, Cape Verde, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa or Zimbabwe.

Views on security were shaped by the experiences of

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colonialism and neocolonialism and by the complex processes through which internal and external forces combined to dominate and subjugate people. The enemy came from within the state, and the conditions under which people lived every day placed them in chronic insecurity. These experiences introduced into the debate such issues as whose security matters and under what conditions, and what are the moral, ethical and legal bases for what is now termed a "just war".

These experiences and perceptions were important in shaping such disparate-seeming issues as how the women's movement mobilized against oppression and what form reconstruction, development and reconciliation would take in newly independent countries. Notable in Africa was the way the women's movement linked struggles for national independence and security to the struggle for equality and social equity. The persistent marginalization of countries in Africa from processes of economic growth and development, however, reinforced perceptions of exclusion and vulnerability. For these reasons, development, poverty eradication and greater social equality were increasingly linked to conflict resolution, peace-building and state building in Africa.

Thinking about security broadened from an exclusive concern with the security of the state to a concern with the security of people. Along with this shift came the notion that states ought not to be the sole or main referent of security. People's interests or the interests of humanity, as a collective, become the focus. In this way, security becomes an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety and participate fully in the process of governance. They enjoy the protection of fundamental rights, have access to resources and the basic necessities of life, including health and education, and inhabit an environment that is not injurious to their health and well-being. Eradication of poverty is thus central to ensuring the security of all people, as well as the security of the state.

This understanding of human security does not replace the security of the state with the security of people. It sees the two aspects as mutually dependent. Security between states remains a necessary condition for the security of people, but

national security is not sufficient to guarantee peoples' security. For that, the state must provide various protections to its citizens. But individuals also require protection from the arbitrary power of the state, through the rule of law and emphasis on civil and political rights as well as socio-economic rights.

Significantly, such thinking on security takes place alongside the development of renewed initiatives focusing on regional and continental cooperation and regeneration. A convergence in how we understand issues of security and how we view the effects on the lives of people is already evident in the founding documents of the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, and the reformed Southern African Development Community, including its Organ on Politics, Defence and Security.

But, of course, this does not mean an end to the debate about the role of the state in security management. Rather, it reinforces the point that without popular participation in shaping agendas on security, political and economic elites will go it alone in a process that will further marginalize and impoverish the people of Africa. It is against this background that the idea of human security must become a tool and instrument to advance the interests of humanity, particularly in Africa. Rethinking security in ways that place people and their participation at the centre is an imperative for the 21st century.
Frene Ginwala
Note: Based on a presentation at the "Parliaments Uniting for African Unity Conference", Cape Town, June 2002.

Human security complements state security, enhances human rights and strengthens human development. It seeks to protect people against a broad range of threats to individuals and communities and, further, to empower them to act on their own behalf. And it seeks to forge a global alliance to strengthen the institutional policies that link individuals and the state—and the state with a global world. Human security thus brings together the human elements of security, of rights, of development.

The Commission on Human Security's definition of human security: to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms—freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.

The vital core of life is a set of elementary rights and freedoms people enjoy. What people consider to be "vital"—what they consider to be "of the essence of life" and "crucially important"—varies across individuals and societies. That is why any concept of human security must be dynamic. And that is why we refrain from proposing an itemized list of what makes up human security.

As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan points out, human security joins the main agenda items of peace, security and development. Human security is comprehensive in the sense that it integrates these agendas:

> Human security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment—these are the interrelated building blocks of human, and therefore national, security.[1]

Human security also reinforces human dignity. People's horizons extend far beyond survival, to matters of love, culture and faith. Protecting a core of activities and abilities is essential for human security, but that alone is not enough. Human security must also aim at developing the capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices and to act on behalf of causes and interests in many spheres of life. That is why human security starts from the recognition that people are the most active participants in determining their well-being. It builds on people's efforts, strengthening what

they do for themselves.

Human security and state security

Human security complements "state security" in four respects (box 1.2):[2]

– Its concern is the individual and the community rather than the state.

– Menaces to people's security include threats and conditions that have not always been classified as threats to state security.

– The range of actors is expanded beyond the state alone.

– Achieving human security includes not just protecting people but also empowering people to fend for themselves.

Box 1.2 Human security and state security
Security is facing new challenges. In the past, security threats were assumed to emanate from external sources. State security focused mainly on protecting the state—its boundaries, people, institutions and values—from external attacks.

Over the last decades, our understanding of state security and the many types of threats has broadened. In addition to securing borders, people, values and institutions, we have come to understand the dangers of environmental pollution, transnational terrorism, massive population movements and such infectious diseases as HIV/AIDS. Most significant, there is growing recognition of the role of people—of individuals and communities—in ensuring their own security.

This broadening of security reflects the changing international and national environments. Internal conflicts have overtaken interstate wars as the major threats to international peace and security. The globalization process has deeply transformed relationships between and within states. Although more people than ever have access to information and essential social

goods, the gaps between rich and poor countries—and between wealthy and destitute people—have never been greater than today. The exclusion and deprivation of whole communities of people from the benefits of development naturally contribute to the tensions, violence and conflict within countries.

To achieve peace and stability in today's interdependent world, preventing and mitigating the impact of internal violent conflicts are not sufficient. Also important are upholding human rights, pursuing inclusive and equitable development and respecting human dignity and diversity. Equally decisive is to develop the capability of individuals and communities to make informed choices and to act on their own behalf.

In many respects, human security requires including the excluded. It focuses on the widest possible range of people having enough confidence in their future—enough confidence that they can actually think about the next day, the next week, and the next year. Protecting and empowering people are thus about creating genuine possibilities for people to live in safety and dignity. Seen from this angle, human security reinforces state security but does not replace it.

At the start of the 21st century, we are at a dangerous crossroads. In response to the threat of terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, states may revert to a narrower understanding of state security—rather than foster human security. The credibility and legitimacy of the multilateral institutions and strategies are being questioned, and long-standing alliances among states are eroding. Under the guise of waging a war against terrorism, human rights and humanitarian law are being violated. Even commitments to earlier international agreements are being reviewed.

Humanitarian action now also seems to be in crisis. Few situations better reflect these new developments than the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The denial of access to humanitarian actors to reach civilians, the closing off of whole communities, the willful destruction of civilian properties, as in the Jenin refugee camp in 2002—all imply that people are being held hostage to protect state security needs. Too little attention, as in the case of Iraq, is given to the impact on

civilians and the possible implications for maintaining the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence guiding humanitarian action. The provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance should not be used as a bargaining tool in weapons issues, as in the case of the nuclear armament of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In a world of growing interdependence and transnational issues, reverting to unilateralism and a narrow interpretation of state security cannot be the answer. The United Nations stands as the best and only option available to preserve international peace and stability as well as to protect people, regardless of race, religion, gender or political opinion. The issue is how to make the United Nations and other regional security organizations more effective in preventing and controlling threats and protecting people, and how to complement state security with human security at the community, national and international levels.

It is frightening today that the dangers of war loom as large as ever—that hundreds of millions of people do not feel secure enough to rebuild their houses or plow their fields or send their children to school. The agenda, vast and complex, must be tackled starting from the pervasive and critical threats confronting people today. Now, more than ever, human security is essential.

Sadako Ogata

People-centred. State security focuses on other states with aggressive or adversarial designs. States built powerful security structures to defend themselves—their boundaries, their institutions, their values, their numbers. Human security shifts from focusing on external aggression to protecting people from a range of menaces.

Menaces. State security has meant protecting territorial boundaries with —and from—uniformed troops. Human security also includes protection of citizens from environmental pollution, transnational terrorism, massive population movements, such infectious diseases as HIV/AIDS and long-term conditions of oppression and deprivation.

Actors. The range of actors is also greater. No longer are states the sole actors. Regional and international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society are involved in managing security issues—as in the fight against HIV/AIDS, the ban against landmines and the massive mobilizations in support of human rights.

Empowerment. Securing people also entails empowering people and

societies. In many situations, people can contribute directly to identifying and implementing solutions to the quagmire of insecurity. In post-conflict situations, for example, bringing diverse constituents together to rebuild their communities can solve security problems.

Human security and state security are mutually reinforcing and dependent on each other. Without human security, state security cannot be attained and vice versa. Human security requires strong and stable institutions. Whereas state security is focused, human security is broad.

Human security's distinctive breadth

Human security thus broadens the focus from the security of borders to the lives of people and communities inside and across those borders. The idea is for people to be secure, not just for territories within borders to be secure against external aggression. And unlike traditional approaches that vest the state with full responsibility for state security, the process of human security involves a much broader spectrum of actors and institutions—especially people themselves.

Human security is concerned with violent conflict. For whatever form violence takes, whether terrorism or crime or war, violence unseats people's security. More than 800,000 people a year lose their lives to lethal violence—and in 2000, nearly 16 million lived as refugees.[3] The catastrophic effects of war persist for generations. The memory of conflict and loss lives on, affecting people's ability to live together in peace.

Human security is also concerned with deprivation: from extreme impoverishment, pollution, ill health, illiteracy and other maladies. Catastrophic accident and illness rank among the primary worries of the poor—and accurately, for their toll on human lives—causing more than 22 million preventable deaths in 2001. Educational deprivations are particularly serious for human security. Without education, men and especially women are disadvantaged as productive workers, as fathers and mothers, as citizens capable of social change. Without social protection, personal injury or economic collapse can catapult families into penury and desperation. All such losses affect people's power to fend for themselves.

Each menace, terrible on its own, justifies attention. Yet to address this range of insecurities effectively demands an integrated approach. That approach would keep the full range of human deprivation in view, for all people. It would attend not only to the protection of refugees from ongoing violence—but also to their health and livelihoods. It would concentrate on the provision of basic education to the poor—but also on basic education that is safe, that strengthens civil society and that creates tolerant societies. It would not focus on peace to the exclusion of development or on the environment to the exclusion of security. Instead, it would have a spectrum of basic variables in full view.

Not only are peace and development both important. They are also interconnected. The chain from poverty and deprivation to violent conflict—and back—has to be followed carefully. Deprivation persists in countries that do not flare up in conflict, and conflicts flare up in relatively well-off countries. Deprivation and unequal treatment may not generate an immediate revolt, but they can remain in people's memory and influence the course of events much later. And while the leaders of conflicts often come from the more prosperous parts of society, poverty can provide rich recruiting grounds for the "foot soldiers" of violent engagements.[4]

Wars destroy human lives and scar survivors. They destroy homes, economic assets, crops, roads, banks and utility systems. They destroy habits of trust that form the basis of market transactions and broad-based political associations. Poverty rises in wartime, often significantly. During conflicts, gangs, mafias and black market activities can increase insecurities. Governments may cut social expenditures, and economic growth may slow or even contract. After conflict, countries face the enormous expense of rebuilding their assets and markets, usually from a reduced tax base and with unpredictable foreign assistance. And conflicts are prone to recur, deepening poverty even more.[5]

Economic injustice and inequality also polarize communities. The tolerance of conflict by an otherwise peaceful population is a peculiar phenomenon in many parts of the contemporary world, particularly where a large part of the populace feels badly treated or left behind by global economic and social progress. Many who find violence utterly unacceptable in their personal lives provide remarkably little opposition to political violence seen as part of a fight against injustice—whether for their ethnic group or their nation or their faith.

In transitions, too, each aspect of human security must be kept in view to maintain balance while moving forward. That balance can be tenuous. In post-conflict situations, if countries focus too much on consolidating political stability, they may be destabilized by economic retreats (or any number of other factors). In the transition from communism to an open economy, there was cause for celebration in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Yet in Tajikistan per capita incomes fell 85%, plunging four-fifths of the population below the poverty line. In Latin America, the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy has often been impeded by slow or negative growth, weak institutions, corruption and reversal of social protection, leading people to question why democratic forms of governance do not deliver promised benefits.

Human security and human rights

Focusing on human security adds an important perspective to today's global challenges. But the question arises: How does human security relate to other approaches already in use in the United Nations?

The idea of *human security* fits well with human development and human rights, but it also adds something substantial (box 1.3). Human security and human development are both fundamentally concerned with the lives of human beings—longevity, education, opportunities for participation. Both are concerned with the basic freedoms that people enjoy. But they look out on shared goals with different scopes. Human development "is about people, about expanding their choices to lead lives they value".[6] It has an optimistic quality, since it focuses on expanding opportunities for people so that progress is fair—"growth with equity". Human security complements human development by deliberately focusing on "downside risks". It recognizes the conditions that menace survival, the continuation of daily life and the dignity of human beings. Even in countries that have promoted growth with equity, as in some Asian countries, people's lives are threatened when economic downturns occur.[7] The recent downturn in Argentina similarly threatened the lives of many in that country.

Box 1.3 Development, rights and human security

Human security is concerned with reducing and—when possible—removing the insecurities that plague human lives. It contrasts with the notion of state security, which concentrates primarily on safeguarding the integrity and robustness of the state and thus has only an indirect connection with the security of the human beings who live in these states.

That contrast may be clear enough, but in delineating human security adequately, it is also important to understand how the idea of human security relates to—and differs from—other human-centred concepts, such as human development and human rights. These concepts are fairly widely known and have been championed, with very good reason, for a long time, and they too are directly concerned with the nature of human lives. It is thus fair to ask what the idea of human security can add to these well-established ideas.

Human development and human security

The human development approach, pioneered by the visionary economist Mahbub ul Haq (under the broad umbrella of the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP), has done much to enrich and broaden the literature on development. In particular, it has helped to shift the focus of development attention away from an overarching concentration on the growth of inanimate objects of convenience, such as commodities produced (reflected in the gross domestic product or the gross national product), to the quality and richness of human lives, which depend on a number of influences, of which commodity production is only one.

Human development is concerned with removing the various hindrances that restrain and restrict human lives and prevent its blossoming. A few of these concerns are captured in the much-

used "human development index" (HDI), which has served as something of a flagship of the human development approach. But the range and reach of that perspective have motivated a vast informational coverage presented in the UNDP's annual *Human Development Report* and other related publications that go far beyond the HDI.

The idea of human development, broad as it is, does, however, have a powerfully buoyant quality, since it is concerned with progress and augmentation. It is out to conquer fresh territory on behalf of enhancing human lives and is far too upbeat to focus on rearguard actions needed to secure what has to be safeguarded. This is where the notion of human security becomes particularly relevant.

Human security as an idea fruitfully supplements the expansionist perspective of human development by directly paying attention to what are sometimes called "downside risks". The insecurities that threaten human survival or the safety of daily life, or imperil the natural dignity of men and women, or expose human beings to the uncertainty of disease and pestilence, or subject vulnerable people to abrupt penury related to economic downturns demand that special attention be paid to the dangers of sudden deprivation. Human security demands protection from these dangers and the empowerment of people so that they can cope with—and when possible overcome—these hazards.

There is, of course, no basic contradiction between the focus of human security and the subject matter of the human development approach. Indeed, formally speaking, protection and safeguarding can also be seen as augmentations of a sort, to wit that of safety and security. But the emphasis and priorities are quite different in the cautious perspective of human security from those typically found in the relatively sanguine and upward-oriented literature of the human focus of development approaches (and this applies to human development as well), which tend to concentrate on "growth with equity", a subject that has generated a vast literature and inspired many policy initiatives. In contrast, focusing on human security requires that serious attention be paid to "downturns with security", since downturns may inescapably occur from time to time, fed by global or local afflictions. This is in addition to the adversity of persistent insecurity of those whom the growth process leaves behind, such as the displaced worker or the perennially unemployed.

Even when the much-discussed problems of uneven and unequally shared benefits of growth and expansion have been successfully addressed, a sudden downturn can make the lives of the vulnerable thoroughly and uncommonly deprived. There is much economic evidence that even if people rise together as the process of economic expansion proceeds, when they fall, they tend to fall very divided. The Asian economic crisis of 1997–99 made it

painfully clear that even a very successful history of "growth with equity" (as the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and many other countries in East and Southeast Asia had) can provide very little protection to those who are thrown to the wall when a sharp economic downturn suddenly occurs.

The economic case merely illustrates a general contrast between the two perspectives of *expansion with equity* and *downturn with security*. For example, while the foundational demand for expanding regular health coverage for all human beings in the world is tremendously important to advocate and advance, that battle has to be distinguished from the immediate need to encounter a suddenly growing pandemic, related to HIV/AIDS or malaria or drug-resistant tuberculosis.

Insecurity is a different—and in some ways much starker—problem than unequal expansion. Without losing any of the commitment that makes human development important, we also have to rise to the challenges of human security that the world currently faces and will long continue to face.

Human rights and human security

There is a similar complementarity between the concepts of human rights and human security. Few concepts are as frequently invoked in contemporary political debates as human rights. There is something deeply attractive in the idea that every person anywhere in the world, irrespective of citizenship or location, has some basic rights that others should respect. The moral appeal of human rights has been used for varying purposes, from resisting torture and arbitrary incarceration to demanding the end of hunger and unequal treatment of women.

Human rights may or may not be legalized, but they take the form of strong claims in social ethics. The idea of pre-legal "natural" or "human" rights has often motivated legislative initiatives, as it did in the US Declaration of Independence or in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man in the 18th century, or in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the 20th century. But even when they are not legalized, affirmation of human rights and related activities of advocacy and monitoring of abuse can sometimes be very effective, through the politicization of ethical commitments.

Commitments underlying human rights take the form of demanding that certain basic freedoms of human beings be respected, aided and enhanced. The basically normative nature of the concept of human rights leaves open the question of which particular freedoms are crucial enough to count as human rights that society should acknowledge, safeguard and promote. This is where human security can make a significant contribution by identifying the importance of freedom from basic insecurities—new and old. The descriptive richness of the considerations that

make security so important in human lives can, thus, join hands with the force of ethical claims that the recognition of certain freedoms as human rights provides.

Human rights and human security can, therefore, fruitfully supplement each other. On the one hand, since human rights can be seen as a general box that has to be filled with specific demands with appropriate motivational substantiation, it is significant that human security helps to fill one particular part of this momentous box through reasoned substantiation (by showing the importance of conquering human insecurity). On the other, since human security as an important descriptive concept demands ethical force and political recognition, it is useful that this can be appropriately obtained through seeing freedoms related to human security as an important class of human rights. Far from being in any kind of competition with each other, human security and human rights can be seen as complementary ideas.

One of the advantages of seeing human security as a class of human rights is the associative connection that rights have with the corresponding duties of other people and institutions. Duties can take the form of "perfect obligations", which constitute specific demands on particular persons or agents, or of "imperfect obligations", which are general demands on anyone in a position to help. To give effectiveness to the perspective of human security, it is important to consider who in particular has what obligations (such as the duties of the state to provide certain basic support) and also why people in general, who are in a position to help reduce insecurities in human lives, have a common—though incompletely specified—duty to think about what they can do. Seeing human security within a general framework of human rights can, thus, bring many rewards to the perspective of human security.

To conclude, it is important, on one side, to see how the distinct ideas of human security, human development and human rights differ, but also to understand why they can be seen as complementary concepts. Mutual enrichment can go hand in hand with distinction and clarity.

Amartya Sen

Any notion of development is, in some ways, inescapably "aggregative". But when it comes to insecurity, there is an important need to keep the individual at the centre of attention. Why? Because any larger unit—an ethnic group or a household—may discriminate against its own members. This is especially so for women—within the household and, more generally, in society.

Respecting human rights is at the core of protecting human security. The 1993 Vienna Declaration of Human Rights stresses the universality and interdependence of the human rights of all people. Those rights have

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