

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

Preventing Election Violence

Towards Evidence-based Practice



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Key Findings

- *Finding #1: Prevention works ... but all prevention models are not equally impactful.*
- *Finding #2: Sound security sector engagement and election administration hold the most promise for preventing election violence.*
- *Finding #3: The measurable impact of peace messaging, voter consultations, and youth programming remains small or unclear.*

Background and Objectives

- **ARC Strategic Plan**

“Enhance peacebuilding practice, both within the Institute and the peacebuilding field more broadly, ...by analyzing whether current approaches effectively contribute to conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution.”

- **Research Objectives**

- Identify PEV models with demonstrated impact
- Help prioritize programming and offer program design/implementation guidance
- Towards an evaluative framework for preventive action



Case Studies: Bangladesh, Honduras, Malawi, Moldova, and Thailand

The Tools and Context of Prevention

Prevention Tools

- Security Sector Engagement
- Election Management - Administration
- Preventive Diplomacy
- Peace Messaging
- Civic and Voter Education
- Monitoring and Mapping
- Voter Consultations
- Youth Programs

Contextual Vulnerabilities

- *History of Election Violence;*
- *Horizontal Inequality and Diversity;*
- *Uncertainty about the Election Outcome;*
- *Electoral Systems;*
- *Consolidating Democracies;*
- *...*

Measuring the Independent Variables

Score	Peace Messaging
1	Peace messaging campaigns with widespread societal and geographic reach encourage the electorate to refrain from violence and practice tolerance throughout the electoral cycle.
.75	Peace messages are present in most but not all of the areas of the country most at risk for violence, or throughout most of the electoral cycle.
.50	Peace messages are present in some of the areas of the country most at risk for violence, or only for a limited period.
.25	Peace messages are scant.
0	Peace messages are absent.

○ 1 = Very Strong; .75 = Strong; .50 = Moderate; .25 = Weak; 0 = Very Weak/Absent

Measuring the Dependent Variable

Score	Election Violence
1	Extremely violent campaign: repeated, widespread physical attacks leading to a substantial number of deaths over time (approximately over 100 deaths)
.75	Highly violent campaign: repeated, widespread physical attacks leading to a substantial number of deaths over time (approximately 20-100 deaths)
.50	Violent repression: high level assassinations and targeted murder combined with long-term high-level arrests of party leaders, the consistent use of violent intimidation and harassment (approximately 1-19 deaths)
.25	Violent harassment: police or security forces breaking up rallies, party supporters brawling in the streets, confiscation of opposition newspapers, candidate disqualifications, and limited short-term arrests of political opponents (no or few deaths)
0	No reported electoral violence

Security Sector Engagement

Best Practice:

- There exists 1) a clear regulatory framework for the provision of election security; 2) integrated security sector governance; and 3) capable, nonpartisan, and professional security forces that are accountable to civil authorities

Theory of Change:

- By acting in a nonpartisan, accountable, professional, and integrated manner, security actors will deter election violence or mitigate its spread.



Scottish police officers train Malawi police in crowd control in advance of 2014 elections (UN Photo)

Election Management and Administration

Best Practice:

- The EMB independently establishes and enforces clear and fair election guidelines, including (but not limited to) vote tabulation, voter and party registration, polling place monitoring, party code of conduct, party financing, results verification, and inter-party dispute resolution. All important issues are clearly regulated and reforms are made as necessary.

Theory of Change:

- An independent EMB that provides clear election guidelines, which it is empowered to enforce in a consistent and nonpartisan manner, will deter or mitigate election violence by 1) sanctioning parties and candidates who use violence and 2) incentivizing codes of conduct and legitimate dispute resolution, and 3) implementing a transparent registration, voting operation, and result verification protocol.

Primary Implementer:

- Domestic government

Secondary Implementer:

- Civil society, international community



2013 Presidential Election Ballot in Honduras

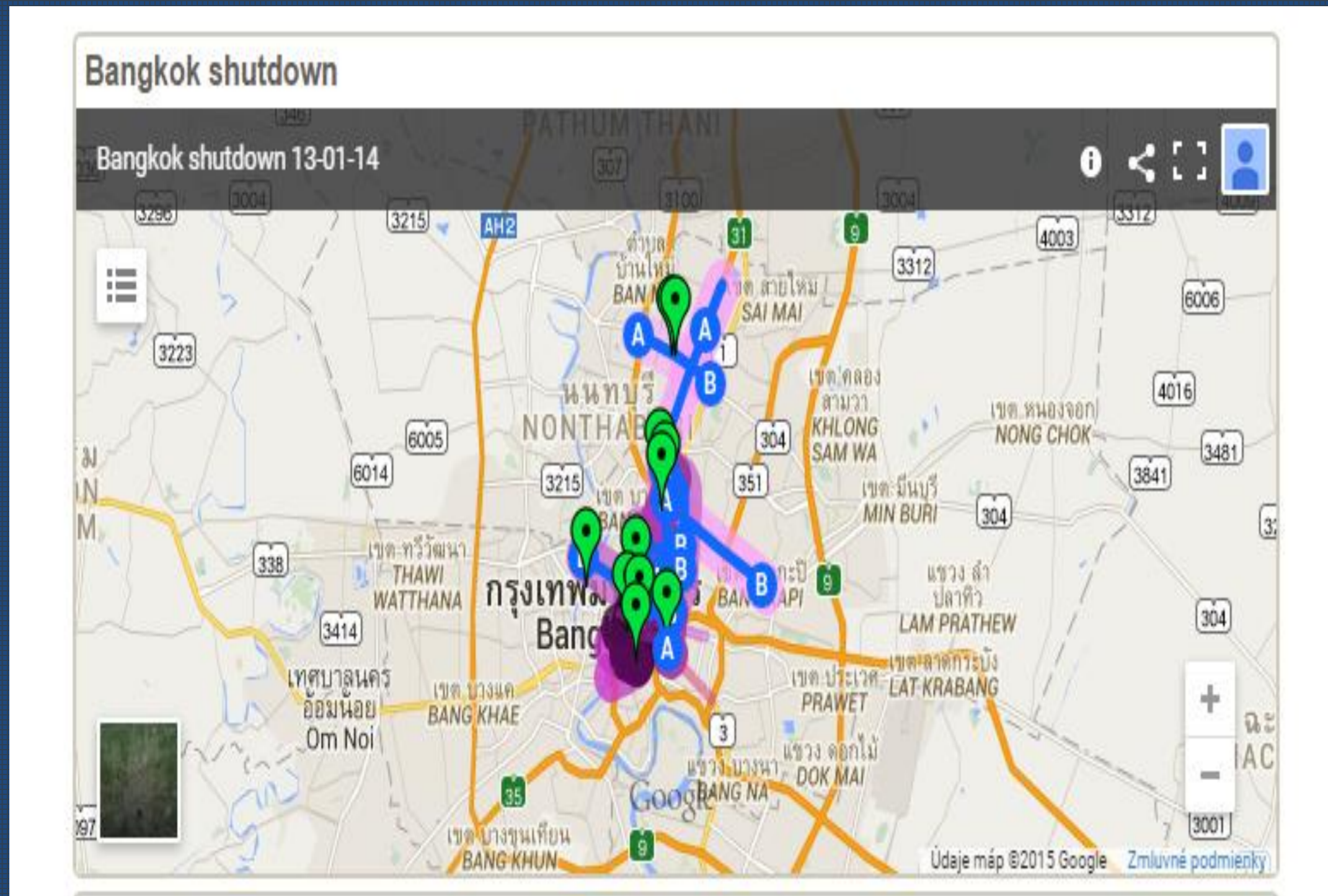
Monitoring and Mapping

Best Practice:

- Credible and neutral state and nonstate actors systematically observe and evaluate the electoral proceedings (noting the source, location, type, perpetrator, and victims of election violence) throughout the country, and produce accurate, timely and actionable early warnings.

Theory of Change:

- The systematic monitoring and mapping of election violence by neutral or credible actors will reduce violence by deterring potential perpetrators of violence, identifying areas of risk, and facilitating a timely and effective security response.



Thai Violence Watch

Preventive Diplomacy

Best Practice:

- There exists 1) an international presence with access and leverage, 2) engaged diplomatically through consistent pressure and support, 3) over an extended period, 4) targeting relevant national and/or local leaders.

Theory of Change:

- The involvement of international actors in preventive diplomacy will deter or mitigate violence by mobilizing local leaders for peace, resolving disputes, and alerting potential instigators about the consequences of incitement and the benefits of legal dispute resolution. This includes the threat or use of targeted economic sanctions, incentive-based foreign assistance, and the suspension or promise of access to regional organizations.

Primary Implementer:

- International actors



A New Comparative Research Framework for PEV

	Correlation (r) with EV	Moldova	Malawi	Honduras	Thailand	Bangladesh
Election Violence (EV)		0	.25	.5	.75	1
Prevention Tools						
Security Sector Engagement	-0.9486	0.75	0.75	0.5	0.25	0.25
Election Management & Administration	-0.8660	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.25	0.25
Civic & Voter Education	-0.8488	0.75	0.75	0.5	0	0.25
Monitoring & Mapping	-0.8249	0.75	1	0.75	0.25	0.25
Voter Consultation	-0.3535	0.25	0.25	0.25	0	0.25
Peace Messaging	0	0	1	0.25	0.5	0.25
Youth Programming	0	0.25	0.25	0.75	0.25	0.25
Preventive Diplomacy	0.6454	0.25	1	0.75	0.75	1

Finding #1: Prevention works ... but all prevention models are not equally impactful.

Finding #2: Sound security sector engagement - election administration hold the most promise for preventing election violence.

Finding #3: The measurable impact of peace messaging, voter consultations, and youth programming remains small or unclear.

Next Steps...

For International Programming

- **Break the Cycle of Election Violence through Conflict Prevention**
- **Be Strategic and Match the Anticipated Problem**

For (USIP) Research and Practice

- **Edited Volume**
- **Applying this Evaluative Framework at the sub-national level**
- **Grants for Research on Individual Instruments**
- **Feed this into USIP program design and practice**
- **Concrete IAA Discussions (Election Violence Prevention in W-Africa)**

Questions and Discussion

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Analytical Process

- Within-Case Analysis: Qualitative data collection in-country, data set analysis, coding in-group
- Comparative Analysis: Correlation analysis, a counterfactual analysis and historical comparison



PEV Tool Typology Based on Lead Implementing Actor

Lead Implementing Actor	PEV Tool
Domestic Government	Security Sector Engagement, Election Management and Administration, Civic and Voter Education
Domestic NGOs	Peace Messaging, Voter Consultations, Youth Programming, Monitoring and Mapping, Civic and Voter Education
International	Preventive Diplomacy, Monitoring and Mapping

PEV Correlations with Implementing Actor Combination

PEV Tool	Correlation Score
Security Sector Engagement	-0.9486
State-Led PEV	-.9058
Election Manag. and Admin.	-0.8660
Civic and Voter Education	-0.8488
Monitoring and Mapping	-0.8249
NGO-Led PEV	-.6454
Voter Consultations	-0.3535
International-Led PEV	-.1889
Peace Messaging	0
Youth Programming	0
Preventive Diplomacy	0.6454

State-Lev PEV: SSE, EMA; NGO-Led PEV: PM, VC, CVE, YP, MM; International-Led PEV: PD, MM

Peace Messaging

Best Practice:

- Peace messaging campaigns with 1) widespread societal and geographic reach, 2) encourage vulnerable parts of the electorate to refrain from violence and practice tolerance, 3) throughout the electoral cycle.



Peace messaging in Thailand: Candle-lighting ceremony (Duncan McCargo)

Theory of Change:

An effective peace messaging campaign that target populations vulnerable to violence or recruitment prior to sensitive phases in the election cycle will legitimize the electoral process, and alter citizen behavior away from violence.



Manuela Travaglianti, Blantyre, Malawi. August 13, 2014.

Civic and Voter Education

Best Practice:

- Civic and voter education efforts 1) organized by state and non-state actors, 2) objectively inform citizens about their roles and responsibilities, election procedures, and outcomes, 3) targeting broad segments of society, including vulnerable communities, 4) through various outreach mechanisms.

Theory of Change:

- Mitigate the risk of violence by educating voters on democratic procedures and responsibilities, empowering vulnerable communities, and enhancing the legitimacy and transparency of the electoral process.

Primary Implementer:

- Civil society



An NDI partner organization conducts civic education training in Malawi in 2014 (NDI)

Voter Consultations

Best Practice:

- A range of societal stakeholders is consulted by political parties and politicians. Voters are able to express their hopes, grievances and needs through a variety of participatory platforms.

Theory of Change:

- Voter consultations will reduce election violence by creating the perception that voter grievances are acknowledged by parties, and allowing media and the electorate the potential to hold politicians accountable based on their political program.

Primary Implementer:

- Civil society

Secondary Implementer:

- International actors, funders

Findings:

- Low impact tool
- Weak prioritization and ineffective
- Flawed theory of change?

Youth Programming

Best Practice:

- State and non-state actors carry out youth programming across the country that includes 1) targeted education; 2) electoral mobilization; 3) and employment opportunities

Theory of Change:

- Youth programs will reduce election violence by turning the primary perpetrators of violence into stakeholders in the economy and political system.

Primary Implementer:

- Civil society

Secondary Implementer:

- International programs, funding



Youth discussion around elections and democracy in Bangladesh (YES Programs)

Civic and Voter Education

Score	
1	Civic and voter education efforts 1) organized by state and non-state actors, 2) objectively inform citizens about their roles and responsibilities, election procedures, and outcomes, 3) targeting broad segments of society, including vulnerable communities, 4) through various outreach mechanisms.
.75	While incomplete or imperfect, civic and voter education efforts inform a majority of the electorate about the electoral process. 3 out of 4 criteria are met.
.50	The level of education efforts is significant, but only 2 out of 4 of the above criteria are met.
.25	Education efforts are scant, and fail to reach a majority of the electorate. Ignorance or misinformation pervade the populace. Only 1 out of 4 of the above criteria is met.
0	Education programming is absent entirely. The populace remains ill- or misinformed about the electoral process. None of the above criteria is fully met.

○ 1 = Very Strong; .75 = Strong; .50 = Moderate; .25 = Weak; 0 = Very Weak/Absent

Election Management and Administration

Score	
1	The EMB independently establishes and enforces clear and fair election guidelines, including (but not limited to) vote tabulation, voter and party registration, polling place monitoring, party code of conduct, party financing, results verification, and inter-party dispute resolution. All important issues are clearly regulated and reforms are made as necessary.
.75	The EMB fairly establishes and enforces guidelines for most election-related practices. There are few but important issues left unregulated. Some reforms are made as necessary.
.50	The EMB fairly establishes and enforces guidelines for some election-related practices. There are significant issues left unregulated. At times, some reforms are made as necessary.
.25	The EMB establishes and enforces guidelines for few if any election-related issues. The body remains only partly independent, and almost all practices are left unregulated. Little, if any, necessary reform is made.
0	The EMB is nonexistent, nonfunctional, or entirely partisan. The election commission has no positive, independent effect on election management, or violence-mitigating reforms.

○ 1 = Very Strong; .75 = Strong; .50 = Moderate; .25 = Weak; 0 = Very Weak/Absent

Monitoring and Mapping

Score	
1	Credible and neutral state and nonstate actors systematically observe and evaluate the electoral proceedings (noting the source, location, type, perpetrator, and victims of election violence) throughout the country, and produce accurate, timely and actionable early warnings.
.75	The monitoring and mapping of election violence has one of the following flaws: 1) it is not fully credible; 2) it is not systematically applied throughout the country or in identified hotspots; and 3) there is no adequate early warning.
.50	The monitoring and mapping of electoral violence has two of the flaws identified above.
.25	The monitoring and mapping of election violence is mostly flawed, as it lacks credibility, reach, and adequate early warning.
0	There is no monitoring or mapping of electoral violence in any part of the country.

○ 1 = Very Strong; .75 = Strong; .50 = Moderate; .25 = Weak; 0 = Very Weak/Absent

Voter Consultations

Score	
1	A range of societal stakeholders is consulted by political parties and politicians. Voters are able to express their hopes, grievances and needs through a variety of participatory platforms.
.75	The voter consultations suffers from one of the following flaws: 1) they are not inclusive; 2) they are not systematically applied throughout the country; or 3) the voice of voters is not reflected or recognized in party programs or government policy.
.50	The consultation of voters is significant, but suffers from two of the flaws identified above.
.25	Voter consultations are scant, and lack inclusiveness, reach, and voter recognition.
0	Voter are unable to express their hopes, grievances and needs through formal or informal participatory platforms.

○ 1 = Very Strong; .75 = Strong; .50 = Moderate; .25 = Weak; 0 = Very Weak/Absent

Youth Programming

Score	
1	State and non-state actors carry out youth programming across the country that includes 1) targeted education; 2) electoral mobilization; 3) and employment opportunities.*
.75	State and non-state actors carry out two of the programming types identified above, across the country or in at-risk communities.
.50	State and non-state actors carry out one of the programming types identified above, across the country or in at-risk communities.
.25	State and non-state actors carry out one or several of the programming types identified above, but neither across the country nor in at-risk communities.
0	There are is no youth programming.

○ 1 = Very Strong; .75 = Strong; .50 = Moderate; .25 = Weak; 0 = Very Weak/Absent

Country Selection Criteria

1) Recent elections: field research relies on memory and impressions of perpetrators and victims of violence, election administrators

- Oct 2013 – Dec 2014 → national level

2) “Middle Range” Risk

- Similar level of political instability entering recent election cycle
 - Economist Intel Unit - Political Instability Index
 - 2014 Global Peace Index

3) Freedom House – Partly Free

9 candidates → Geographic distribution (5)