Security and Sustainable Development in General Santos City, Philippines

A case study for the DCAF Policy and Research Division Project:
SSR for Safer Cities - Supporting States to Achieve SDG 11

By Mario Joyo Aguja, PhD
General Santos City, Philippines

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Foreword

SSR for Safer Cities - Supporting States to Achieve SDG 11

Safety and security has already become an urban experience for more than half of the world's population. Against this backdrop, SDG 11 seeks to bring sustainable and peaceful development to the people who live in cities by calling on states to "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". Yet high rates of urban violence reflect a failure to address the challenges of urbanization in national and donor-supported strategies for security and development. Urban violence exacerbates state fragility and human suffering, endangers local and regional peace, and drives uncontrolled migration. This fact demonstrates the urgency of linking SDG 11 with SDG 5 on women's empowerment and SDG 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Within this larger priority there is now a pressing need to address the immediate challenges of SSR in urban contexts and this is the purpose of DCAF's Policy and Research Division project "SSR for Safer Cities" supported by the Human Security Division of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. This case study is one of three case studies on security in cities conducted by local experts over the course of 2018: the selected cities are Bogotá, Cape Town and General Santos City.

Contents

Acronym List

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
BAVAWCD	Barangay Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Desk
BFP	Bureau of Fire Protection
BJMP	Bureau of Jail Management and Penology
BPO	Barangay Protection Order
CICL	Children in Conflict with the Law
CWSDO	City Welfare and Social Development Office
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
GSC	General Santos City
GSCDRRMO	General Santos City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office
HUC	Highly Urbanised City
IAS	Internal Affairs Services of the PNP
JJN	Juvenile Justice Network
LCEs	Local Chief Executives
LGC	Local Government Code
LGU	Local Government Unit
NAPOLCOM	National Police Commission
NUA	New Urban Agenda
PLEB	People's Law Enforcement Board
PNP	Philippine National Police
POC	Peace and Order Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSR	Security Sector Reform
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children

Introduction

Fostering development remains a major human preoccupation. Numerous conferences have been held and agreements made in an effort to improve the lot of millions of people around the world who are struggling to rise out of poverty, compounded by the destruction of the environment. Strategies have been developed, resources mobilised, institutions built and partnerships forged at an international, regional and local level, all in the name of development. And yet achieving this development remains elusive.

In 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda, better known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the environment and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. It is anchored on the principles of sustainable development and the pledge that 'no one will be left behind'. The global community once again united to pursue the 17 goals, with their 169 targets and 232 indicators. The goals are indivisible because the targets are interconnected.

In 2016, the New Urban Agenda (NUA) was adopted at the United Nations Conference in Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III) in Quito, Ecuador, in response to the challenges of growing urbanisation around the world. The NUA recognises the 'correlation between good urbanisation and development'.[1] Rather than seeing urbanisation as a problem, it sees 'well-planned and well-managed urbanisation [as] a powerful tool for sustainable development'.[2] The NUA also has strong links with the SDGs, especially Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities.

In a democratic society, the security sector – the armed forces, police, intelligence services, border security, private security companies, and militia – is expected to play a key role in ensuring public order and safety to secure the gains of development. If devoid of such roles, the chance of success of any development initiatives designed to promote the full potential of individuals becomes remote. Security actors, along with their oversight institutions (executive, legislative, judiciary and independent oversight bodies, and civil society), that exact democratic accountability and civilian control of the security sector are expected to deliver security effectively and efficiently. While recognising the important roles of the security sector in development, there remains a need to undertake Security Sector Reform (SSR) to ensure that it delivers services on a par with the standard of other service deliveries. With global development agendas in place, coupled with good governance, it can be of value to understand how they are implemented at a local level.

This paper aims to provide knowledge at the local level on the role of the security sector in achieving SDG 11 (making human settlements inclusive, safe and resilient), by presenting General Santos City, Philippines, as a case study. More specifically, it aims to identify SSR entry points for improving the city's safety and to provide evidence and lessons on which conditions contribute to achieving SDG 11 and how they do so, as well as linkages with other SDGs, notably Goals 5 and 16. This is in the hope of providing guidance to stakeholders (states, civil societies, media, etc.) on how to assess and report the implementation of Goal 11 from the security sector governance point of view. It also hopes to provide relevant lessons that could be offered to other cities.

This study is primarily descriptive in its nature and qualitative in its analysis. Its primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants such as the city mayor, head of the military, police officers and other concerned city officials, as well as representatives of civil society organisations. It also made use of government documents such as the analysis of national laws and local ordinances, the city's development plans, and agency documents and reports.

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1   United Nations, *New Urban Agenda* (Quito: Habitat III Secretariat, 2017), iv.

2   Ibid.

Local Security in Regional Perspective

The current state of urbanisation, governance and the security sector in Southeast Asia is provided as context for this case study. To situate the current study, a brief background on Philippine urbanisation, security sector governance and decentralisation is discussed.

Urbanising Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia is rapidly urbanising and 'urbanisation is one of the major trends shaping the region'.[3] As of 2015, the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is home to more than 630 million people. In 2015, the region was home to the largest and fastest growing metropolises in the world. While urbanisation is growing at a rapid pace in Southeast Asia (SEA), disparities across countries are observable: 'From the 100% urbanization of Singaporean city-state, Malaysia and Brunei form a highly urban group before the bulk of semi-urban Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) and followed by Cambodia which is still predominantly rural'.[4]

The security sector governance in SEA remains to be understood in the context of the evolving social, economic, political, cultural and historical narratives of the different nation-states. The construction of an effective and efficient security sector committed to the rule of law remains at the top of the agenda of the different governments in the region. SSR is taking shape in various forms and at differing paces in the region, with varying success, and mostly tied to political and economic realities. The security sector has played a vital role in SEA since the advent of the nation-states in the region. It has become a significant pillar of nation-building and has served in the consolidation of the gains of independence. Its governance remains diverse, as diverse as the different states in the promotion of their brand of democracy interspersed with varying levels of domestic economic, political and cultural challenges. SSR is often tied up with the progress of the democratisation process of the countries in the region.

As urbanisation progresses in the region, it creates new challenges to which the security sector must respond. While accustomed to traditional security threats (e.g., insurgency, criminal syndicates, transnational crimes, etc.), the challenge of making safer cities imposes new demands. Now that the SDGs have been established, ensuring safe urban spaces and environments becomes a top priority for the development agenda. How is the security sector to respond to the new challenges concerning innovative practices and in the promotion of good governance for a safer city? One issue that has emerged is that the governance of the security sector in the region is mostly under the central government while the management of cities is mostly with sub-national or local authorities.

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3   ASEAN UP, 'Infographic: Top Cities and Urbanization in ASEAN', 5 July 2017, https://aseanup.com/infographic-top-cities-urbanization-asean/.

4   Ibid.

Governance in Southeast Asia

Weatherbee's paper entitled 'Governance in Southeast Asia: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly' aptly captures the diversity of governance in the region.[5] In their article,[6] Gonzalez and Mendoza dissected the state of governance in the region and made the following observations: in regards to administrative governance, many countries in the region exhibit high administrative capacity, but the level of incentives in the public civil service is far below that of the private sector in most countries. They also noted that in terms of economic governance, most countries battle with a high concentration of ownership in the corporate sector, which puts national policies at the mercy of big business. While confidence in the legal institution is rising, corruption, weak judicial oversight and unequal voice and participation in governance are important characteristics of political governance. Finally, the authors noted how decentralisation had progressed slowly and unevenly across the region. Aside from vertical imbalance (dependence on central to local transfers), sub-national governments generally have poor capacities suggesting little authority or poor showing in tax generation and borrowings. They recommended the establishment and strengthening of transparency and accountability structures, including fiscal autonomy. They also added that given the rise of ethnic tensions in some countries in the region, peace-building institutions are needed to narrow the gaps between groups.[7]

Carino likewise noted the weaknesses of governance in the region as evidenced by the performance of institutions for order and impartiality.[8] She considered the following governance challenges in the region: (a) improvement of service delivery and access as the first concern; (b) the people that run the civil service need to be content but challenged (better performing civil servants); (c) 'equality of access to services does not seem to be as highly prized as efficiency, effectiveness and technological development';[9] (d) 'corruption remains a scourge in Southeast Asia';[10] and (e) 'the danger of too much trust in the military'.[11] Her final point is alarming given the military *coup d'état* in Thailand and the rise of populist leaders in the region. She noted the need for political and moral reform to 'touch on the integrity of electoral processes, and the performance of legislatures and local governments.'[12] She also mentioned the 'possibility that decentralisation might nurture local tyrants or produce an imbalance in development'[13] before concluding that 'Southeast Asians have accorded trust to governments which have as yet not shown themselves as trustworthy.'[14]

For most of Southeast Asia, governance of the core actors in the security sector remains highly centralised at the state level. The process of decentralisation and devolution to local governments, especially in the provision of security among metropolises and cities, is now gaining traction in the region.

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5   Donald E. Weatherbee, 'Governance in Southeast Asia: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly', in *Growth and Governance in Asia*, ed. Yoichiro Sato (Hawaii: Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004), 179–92.

6   Eduardo T. Gonzalez and Magdalena L. Mendoza, 'Governance in Southeast Asia: Issues and Options', *Philippine Journal of Development* 57, no. 1 (2004): 135–67.

7   Gonzalez and Mendoza, 'Governance in Southeast Asia: Issues and Options', 162.

8   Ledivina V. Cariño, 'Building Trust in Government in Southeast Asia' (paper presented at the 7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government, Vienna, Austria, 26–29 June 2007).

9   Cariño, 'Building Trust in Government in Southeast Asia', 44.

10   Ibid.

11   Ibid., 45.

12   Ibid.

13   Ibid.

14   Ibid., 47.

Urbanisation in the Philippines

The Philippines is urbanising at a rapid pace and urban centres play an important developmental role. The World Bank reports that about 45% of Filipinos live in urban areas today and by 2050 the number is expected to more than double to 102 million, generating higher demand for housing, essential services, transportation and jobs.[15] It noted that Philippine cities generate more than 70% of the country's gross domestic product, more than half of it from Metro Manila alone. The country's seven largest cities (National Capital Region, Metro Cebu, Davao, Bacolod, Cagayan de Oro, General Santos and Zamboanga) provide 54% of formal jobs in the country. The report noted that the Philippines has not benefited from urbanisation gains as much as other countries due to underlying structural issues affecting urbanisation in the country. While the country's urban centres are expanding and growing in numbers, the same cannot be said about the provision of quality of life to urban dwellers.

Structure of local governance in the Philippines

The country's experience with the Marcos dictatorship meant that creating a 'just and humane society'[16] became an urgent nation-building task of the post-Marcos era. The 1987 Philippine Constitution aims to rectify errors of the past by laying down the foundations for local autonomy, people's participation, greater commitment for human rights and professionalisation of the security sector. It likewise calls for the supremacy of civilian authorities over the military and the separation of the military from the police.

The principles of local autonomy and people's participation in local governance were further given flesh through the passage of the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991.[17] It is considered a groundbreaking law as it reversed the highly centralised system of governance present in the Philippines during the Marcos era. At the core of the Code is 'decentralisation'.[18] It is characterised by (a) the shift from national to local, which involves the process of deconcentration and devolution, (b) the shift from state to the private sector, and (c) the shift from state to civil society.[19] The law defines the relationship between local government units and the national government, as well as the powers of local government units such as the provinces, cities, municipalities, and *barangays* (villages). The law likewise institutionalises the different avenues for people's participation in local special bodies (i.e., Local Health Board, Local School Board and Local Development Councils).

The LGC provides local government units (LGUs) with numerous powers such as police power, power to tax, power to legislate laws and ordinances, fiscal autonomy and corporate powers not violative of the Constitution, or other laws and statutes.[20] LGUs are now tasked with expenditure responsibilities in the 'provision of health and social services; environmental management; agriculture-related services […] and enforcement of fishery laws; maintenance of select local infrastructures; and, tourism-related services.'[21] It is also given regulatory functions such as the 'inspection of food products; adoption of quarantine regulations; enforcement of the National Building Code; regulations of tricycle operations; regulation of the real estate trade; and, licensing of cockpits.'[22] This is on top of new responsibilities that the national government may assign to LGUs by laws or executive issuances from time to time. In order to perform its mandate, LGUs receive cash transfers from the national government in the form

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15   World Bank, Philippine Urbanization Report: Fostering Competitive, Sustainable and Inclusive Cities, (Washington DC: The World Bank Group, 2017).

16   Philippines, 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.

17   Philippines, Republic Act 7160 – An Act Providing for A Local Government Code of 1991.

18   Defined as 'the process of transferring decision-making powers to subnational tiers of government.' Jorge Martines-Vasquez and Andrey Timofeev 'Decentralization Measures Revisited' (working paper, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Atlanta, April 2010), 2.

19   Raul Gonzales, 'Case Studies on Decentralization: Philippines', SDA Technical Consultation on Decentralization, 1997.

20   Eddie G. Dorotan and Jay A. Carizo, *Issues and Critical Actions in Local Governance* (Quezon City: Galing Pook Foundation, 2014), 5.

21   Dorotan and Carizo, *Issues and Critical Actions in Local Governance*, 5.

22   Ibid.

of Internal Revenue Allotment, and projects provided by various national agencies. They are likewise authorised to generate their own revenues through the assignment of various taxing powers.[23]

Dorotan and Carizo argue that while LGUs in the Philippines have clear mandates and political powers, they have limited resources to implement these mandates. The LGC is criticised for its 'unequal and biased sharing of wealth'.[24] Functions were devolved but not compensated for with resources. Given the weak capacity of LGUs to raise revenue aside from fund transfers from the national government, many of their mandates are insufficiently funded.

In terms of governance, at the local government units, executive powers are vested with the provincial governor and city or municipal mayors and *barangay* (village) captains, while legislative and oversight powers are vested in the provincial/city/municipal/barangay councils presided over by the vice-governor, vice mayor or barangay captain at the village level. These local officials are all elected to a three-year term by the people. The different local councils are empowered to legislate local ordinances, approve the annual budget and conduct an inquiry-in-aid of legislation.

Security sector governance and the role of LGUs

The core security sector actors in the Philippines (i.e., military and police) are under the supervision of the national government. The secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) serves as the *ex-officio* chairperson of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) exercising overall supervision over the Philippine National Police (PNP). Under the leadership of the chief of the PNP, the police are organised from the national level to the regional, and down to the provincial, city and municipal levels. Police stations are established across local government territories depending on each local situation. While civilian in character and national in scope, the police operate like other typical hierarchical military structures found around the world. The BJMP and the BFP are under the supervision of the DILG.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), on the other hand, headed by its chief of staff, are under the supervision of the secretary of the Department of National Defense (DND). The president serves as the commander-in-chief of all the armed forces of the Philippines. The AFP is organised at the national level by service command (i.e., army, navy, air force) down to the regional and local level, based on strategic locations and presence of security threats. Military camps are established under the territorial jurisdiction of the local government units either to provide national or regional combat support or to undertake anti-insurgency or anti-terror campaigns in localities that require it.

The military and the police are expected to fully coordinate with local authorities for common security concerns, unless local chief executives are suspected to be associated with criminal elements, involved in criminal activities, or supportive of the 'enemy of the state'. The smooth cooperation between the security sector and local government authorities is highly dependent on the leadership qualities of the local chief executives (LCEs) and the commander of the security sector, and the convergence of their interest and needs (e.g., LCE needs for security in his/her jurisdiction, and the security sectors need for support such as in intelligence gathering and logistics to carry out its mandate). Plans and programmes of the security sector are developed at the national level based on its assessment of threats from the information provided by its units, and upon consultation with political leaders both at the national and local level.

Another layer of coordination between the security sector and the LGUs occurs through the different national groupings of local authorities – the League of Cities, the League of Provinces or the League of Municipalities. These leagues at times engage with the DILG, which has direct supervision over LGUs and the police, or through the secretary of National Defense.

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23   Real property transfers; business of printing and publications; franchises; sand, gravel, and other quarries; amusement places; professionals; delivery vans and trucks; real property; idle lands; business; and community tax.

24   Dorotan and Carizo, *Issues and Critical Actions in Local Governance*, 21.

While the core security actors are under the command of the national government, greater power is provided to local government units concerning domestic peace and order. In the spirit of the 1987 Constitution, the new police law, Republic Act 6975 as amended by RA 8551, did not only separate the police from the military; it also civilianised the character of the police force and put it under the supervision of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM). Except in cases of insurgency where the AFP play a dominant role, the PNP is generally responsible for maintaining public order and safety. In the spirit of local autonomy as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution, the city and municipal mayors and provincial governors are made deputies of the NAPOLCOM. They are empowered to 'exercise operational supervision and control' over PNP units in their respective jurisdiction. The law further clarifies that 'operational supervision and control' means the power to direct, superintend, oversee and inspect police units and forces under their jurisdiction. RA 8551 further clarifies the power of local chief executives to 'oversee the day-to-day functions of the police investigation of crime, crime prevention activities, and traffic control in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission'. Local chief executives now play a vital role in matters of police governance at the local level under these laws. In 2015 the NAPOLCOM further authorised governors and mayors to perform policy formulation functions in line with the implementation of the Community and Service-Oriented Policing (CSOP) system as the foundation of community-oriented policing and crime prevention strategy in the country.[25]

To date, the major issue that both the PNP and local chief executives have had to deal with is that of professionalism. The PNP's 'long history of corruption, unethical behaviour, bad governance and mismanagement'[26] continue to haunt it. Today's mass media contain many stories of the unethical police conduct described by Varona, such as 'bribery, patronage politics, the cutting of corners around the criminal justice system, financial corruption, shortcoming of leadership and violation of human rights'.[27] Local authorities are not without their share of illegal and unprofessional conduct, such as the cosying up to criminal syndicates and 'enemies of the state', and treating the police as personal bodyguards and thugs. In recent years, a number of LCEs had their deputisation status removed by the NAPOLCOM for abuse of authority and conduct unbecoming of a public official (e.g., Mayors Eulalio Alilio of Lemery, Batangas; Raul Palino of Teresa, Rizal; Antonio Halili of Tanauan City; Cecilio Hernandez of Rodriguez, Rizal; and, Loreto Amante of San Pablo City).[28] The issue of professionalism in the security sector and among LCEs is often taken care of by established oversight bodies such as the NAPOLCOM for the police, the Ombudsman, the Human Rights Commission and the Philippine Congress.

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25   NAPOLCOM Memorandum Circular No. 2015-003, dated November 12, 2015.

26   Glenn Varona, *Towards Improving Ethics and Governance in The Philippine National Police: A Critical Systemic Review* (PhD thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 2011), 7.

27   Ibid.

28   Philippine Daily Inquirer, 'Napolcom Strips 5 Mayors of Control Over Cops'. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 9 November 2017.

The Security Sector in General Santos City

General Santos City (GSC) is considered one of the most highly urbanised and fastest growing cities in the Philippines. Located in the southern portion of the Philippines, in the island of Mindanao, the city is home to 538,086 residents. Based on the 2015 National Census, the Philippine Statistical Authority ranks it as the 12th most populous highly urbanised city in the country. GSC was declared a City on 8 July 1968[29] and later categorised as a Highly Urbanised City in 1988.[30] With its vast and gently rolling plain near Sarangani Bay, it has a total land area of 53,606 hectares, which equals 0.18% of the Philippine territory. It has a type IV climate where rain is evenly distributed over the year. The city is politically divided into 26 *barangays* (villages) of which 22 are classified as urban. It has an urban population of 97.6 %.

The city is culturally vibrant and considered a 'migrant'-populated city.[31] Shaped by its long history of migration, it has become a melting pot comprising the tri-people of Mindanao.[32] At first, orchestrated by the national government through the National Land Settlement Administration in the late 1930s, settlers from Luzon and the Visayas were resettled in the city to ease agrarian unrest in those areas and to open Mindanao as a new frontier. This was followed by economic migration in the late 1980s during the growth of its tuna industry. Most of the recent migrants came from impoverished rural, agricultural or fisheries-based communities in neighbouring provinces in search of a better life.[33] The city has a population density of 1,004 persons per square kilometre with an average household size of 4.3 persons. More than half of its population is aged 23 years old or less, and it has a high dependency rate of 56 dependents per 100 of working age. It has a high literacy rate of 98.4%.[34] Its annual population growth of 2.71% is higher than the Philippine growth rate of 1.91%, primarily due to in-migration.

General Santos City is one of the most economically active urban centres in Mindanao. Its typhoon-free location, natural harbour and airport means that it serves as the transport, telecommunications, banking, service, business and commercial hub of the southern part of the country. It is known as the Tuna Capital of the Philippines due to its thriving tuna industry that began to flourish in the 1970s. It has 8 canning factories. It has a total of 4,468 fishing households. Its major crops include rice, corn, coconut, mango and banana. Its major livestock products are cattle, pigs, goats and poultry valued at PHP 1.99 billion in 2015. Canned pineapple and canned tuna are its top 2 export products. The city is ranked as the 2nd largest canned and processed tuna manufacturer in Southeast Asia, next only to Thailand. In 2015, its tuna export products amounted to 37% of total exports. The Economic Management and Cooperative Development Office (CEMCDO) reported that the size of the city's economy based on Gross Sale of Registered Firms (GSRF) in 2017 was PHP 101 billion.[35] For the same year, the city registered a total of 10,237 business establishments with a declared total of 93,140 employees, roughly 17% of its residents. As the business, education and health centre of the south, it has 74 banks and is home to 48 secondary schools, 44 vocational schools and 20 tertiary schools. It has 8 private and public hospitals and 41 public health facilities.

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29 By virtue of Republic Act No. 5412 – *An Act Creating the City of General Santos*.

30 Local government units autonomous from provinces that have a minimum population of 200,000 and an annual income of at least ₱50 million (in 1991 constant prices).

31 Rufa Cagoco-Guiam, *The Nature, Causes and Dynamics of Internal Migration: A Baseline Study* (General Santos City: City Population Office, 2016).

32 Indigenous people, Christian-settlers and Muslims.

33 Cagoco-Guiam, *The Nature, Causes and Dynamics of Internal Migration*.

34 General Santos City, *Ten Point Agenda. Creating a Livable Environment for all 'Generals' Towards Nation Building* (General Santos City: City Planning Office, 2016).

35 1 USD = PHP 53.00 as of June 2017.

The city has developed a ten-point agenda with the aim of becoming *Livable GenSan* by 2040, characterised as being safe, people-friendly, accessible, affordable, green and culture-rich.[36] It sees good governance, competitiveness, livability and bankability as its key development strategies.[37] However, hindrances abound that require resources and strong resolve from the city government and its citizens. Foremost, the city remains highly dependent on fund transfer from the national government. It is highly reliant on its Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) at 67.37%, which means that locally generated revenues (LGR) only amount to 30.63%, far below the Highly Urbanised City average LGR of 38.8%. It also has to deal with the problem of a very low, PHP 855 revenue per capita. The city admitted that its local economic enterprises require high subsidisation as they are not revenue generators and can only provide 39% of their operational costs. The rise of its tuna industry resulted in a low degree of economic diversification, thereby creating dependence on specific industries and limiting possibilities for new businesses, business expansion and diversification.[38]

Despite its vibrant economy, some 25% or 31,672 of the city's households belong to the 1st quartile or poorest segment of the city's economic scale, based on the city's local census conducted in 2011 using the Living Standards Index.[39] The same census revealed, however, that hunger is not a problem in the city.[40] A survey conducted by the local government revealed citizens' perceived critical concerns: education, peace and order, health services, labour and employment, economic services/development, transportation, housing and community development, social welfare services, infrastructure and environment.[41] These mirror the urban challenges that the city and the security sector need to address.

Security Actors

A close scrutiny of the LGU-GSC Organisational Structure shows only two main structures – the executive and the legislative branches.[42] The executive branch is headed by the mayor with line departments ranging from agriculture, engineering, social welfare to treasury and legal offices. The legislative branch, headed by the vice-mayor, includes the offices of the City Vice-Mayor, the City Council and the secretary of the City Council. No security actors are included in its organisational structure as they belong to the national government.

As a highly urbanised city, numerous security actors are present in the city, and different mechanisms of security sector governance are at work. Highly visible in the city are the core actors in the security sector, such as the PNP with its 790 officers and an oversized company contingent of 160 personnel of the AFP constituting the Task Force GenSan (TF-GenSan). TF-GenSan maintains the security at all entry and exit points of the city, including its boundaries. The city government also maintains its own armed Civil Security Unit that complements the provision of security to government facilities such as the city hall, public market, public terminals, while the different *barangays* (village) maintain their own unarmed community police, the *barangay tanod*. The Philippine Coast Guard maintains security of its coastal waters along the Sarangani Bay. Except for cases of vehicular accidents, traffic in the city is managed by its own traffic enforcers.

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36 General Santos City, *Ten Point Agenda,* 23.
37 Ibid., 28.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., 33.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., 32.
42 See the City of General Santos Official Website, https://gsantoscity.wordpress.com/lgu-gsc-organizational-structure/.

As one of the premier and strategic urban centres in southern Philippines, the city also hosts numerous regional offices such as the NAPOLCOM, PNP Region 12 Headquarters, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) under the National Security Adviser, the Office of Civil Defense under the DND and the Philippine Public Safety College. The city's strategic location also makes it the base of operations for numerous intelligence units of the armed forces. These units belong to the Philippine Navy, Philippine Air Force, Philippine Army and AFP Headquarters, whose assets and personnel remain confidential. These units indirectly contribute to the security of the city. Non-state actors with their allies and supporters also abound inside the city but remain primarily low key and mostly unarmed. The city has an active civil society, with trade unions, church organisations and mass media.

Security for local business establishments such as malls, factories and banks, and even gated communities and high-risk individuals, including government agencies, are provided by private security agencies. The PNP regulates the operation of private security agencies, as well as government and private companies directly employing security personnel. It scrutinises the paper requirements of security agencies before issuing a permit to operate or to carry firearms. The police also accredit security guard training schools and in fact participate in the delivery of some of the modules. Prospective security guards need to complete a 15-day mandatory training period before being issued a license necessary for employment by security agencies. There is strong coordination between security guards, private security providers and the police in the provision of security in the city. When a crime occurs – be it theft, murder or land occupation – in a place where a private guard is on duty, the incident is automatically reported to the nearest police station. Any suspicious looking persons or luggage are either investigated by a private guard or immediately reported to the police. Private security organisations play an active role in ensuring the city's security due to the limited number of police officers in the city. It appears that the wealthy and the privileged in the city are more secure than other inhabitants, through no fault of their own.

The convergence between the security sector and local government happens across three levels. Firstly, under the mayor's office where the mayor exercises power over the police as a deputy of the NAPOLCOM. Secondly, through the city's Peace and Order Council, as mandated by law and chaired by the mayor, and where line agencies interface with the security sector. Thirdly, at the level of committees, either mandated by national laws or by virtue of local ordinances.

Key informants interviewed considered these mechanisms helpful in the pursuit of their respective mandates, time consuming as they may be. They do provide a common platform for dialogue, and at times, result in the evolution of coordinated strategies and partnership. They also serve as an important venue for networking between the LGUs and security sector actors. With so many actors involved, at different levels of governance, leadership plays a crucial role.

The mayor of the city considered peace and order and the stereotyping of the city as a dangerous place as his most significant challenges in governing the city.[43] Crimes such as possession of illegal weapons, illegal drugs, illegal gambling, extortion and kidnapping, a disaster such as fire and flood, lack of security personnel, in-migration, ancestral claims and land speculations, are among the internal security challenges in the city.

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43   Mayor Ronnel Rivera, interview by the author, February 2018.

While strategically located for agriculture, trade and services, the city's location can also be considered as dangerous as all sorts of threat groups surround it. These include the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Moro National Liberation Front, with whom the government has already signed a peace agreement. Other groups tagged as terrorists by the government likewise abound in the neighbouring communities of the city, such as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, the New Peoples Army, the Abu Sayyaf Group and other violent extremists. These groups see the strategic value of the city as being their rest and recreation area, medical centre, propaganda centre, source of funds and logistics, meeting and transport hub, and so on. Recently the city even served as an evacuation centre for families displaced by the Marawi siege in 2017.

In the past, when cornered by military campaigns in the hinterland, rebel and secessionist groups resorted to diversionary tactics by bombing strategic locations in cities to sow fear and ease military pressure. Defending urban centres is therefore a priority security item for the national government. It is considered a key indicator of national security. In the late 1980s, the city was popularly referred to as 'Boomtown GenSan', but in the early 1990s became known as 'Bomb Town GenSan' due to a series of terrorist bombings that claimed lives. It significantly affected local businesses, which took some time to recover. In the past, the continued development of the peace process was often stymied by spoilers making GenSan their strategic target. Today, while the city supports the ongoing peace process, it does not let its guard down.

Based on the city's *Ten Point Agenda*, the major programmes prioritised by the local government over the three-year period 2016–2019 for public order and security, with corresponding financial allocation, are as follows: Crime Prevention, Law Enforcement, Anti-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Measures – this includes a peace and order programme supporting the activities of General Santos City Police Office, Joint Task Force Gensan, Charlie Company Ready Reserve, 1002nd Infantry Brigade, Traffic Management and the Peace and Order Council. Financial support for these NGAs totals PHP 610,301,735. Community Involvement – this includes peace and order programmes supporting activities of the city and private sectors involved in the maintenance of peace and order, such as *Barangay Kontra Droga*,[44] *Barangay Laban sa Krimen*,[45] the Peace Building and Development Responsive Program and provision of lighting facilities. The total cost is PHP 276,950,355. Support to BJMP-GSC Jail and Female Dormitory – this will strengthen security control of jail facilities and services and will include security measures to prevent jailbreaks and other untoward incidents. The total cost is PHP 6,905,201. Support to Courts and Prosecution – this peace and order programme supports the Public Attorney's Office, Municipal Trial Courts in the Cities, Parole and Probation Office, the Regional Trial Court, Philippine Mediation and Conciliation Center, City Prosecutors Office and People's Law Enforcement Services (PLEB). The total cost is PHP 112,411,674. Public Safety Measures – programmes, projects and activities include the construction of a progressive-type fire sub-station; replacement of the open drainage to a box culvert at the side of Police Station 5; construction of Police Station 1; construction of an additional detention cell building; and construction of riverbank protection near the BJMP area. The total cost is PHP 18,500,000.

The above plans of the city reflect three important points. Firstly, peace and order is a priority agenda item for the city government, driving it to provide resources, both financial and human, to assist security sector actors who fall under national government supervision. Given the security challenges in the country, the national government is stretched in its allocation of resources to security sector actors, which creates an urgent need for local government units to provide additional resources to the security sector under their jurisdiction. Secondly, the business of making a safer city does not come free. It requires resources, various mechanisms of police-public engagement and leadership. Through the leadership of the mayor, the local government unit and local business communities have built a partnership to augment existing deficiencies. Most recently, the city purchased motorcycles and provided gasoline to the police for visibility and provided logistics for police training. It has also purchased high-powered weapons for the city's SWAT

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44   Village Anti-Drug.
45   Village Anti-Crime.

unit. The local Chinese chamber of commerce augmented the resources of the city by running its fully-equipped fire station. The city augments the personnel of Task Force Gensan by paying for the salary of army reservists that were attached to the TF. Under the current year, the city government budgeted for the installation of CCTV cameras in strategic places in the city and an operation centre. Last year, it provided street lights, especially in communities inhabiting a 'blighted' or decaying physical environment.

Finally, with the resources provided by the city government to the security sector and with the numbers of mechanisms in place, there is growing public accountability of the security sector, especially the police in the performance of its duty of maintaining public order and safety.

Roles and Responsibilities for the Security Sector in SDG 11

SDG 11 aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Its indicators include housing, transportation, disaster management, provision of safe spaces and regional planning. It is an area where the security sector is expected to make its contribution at the local level.

SDG 11.1: Slums and safe housing

SDG 11.1 challenges states and cities to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums by 2030. The city's data showed that 21,847 or 17% of its households are informal settlers.[46] However, the city found out that not all its informal settlers are poor – they live in blighted areas, including dangerous zones, in order to have access to their means of livelihood such as the sea, public markets and canning factories. As the employment and migration hub in southern Philippines, the city has an increasing amount of informal settlements and urban blight, especially along danger zones such as major roads, riverbanks and along the coast of Sarangani Bay. This is brought about by the skyrocketing price of land for housing in the city, especially around its commercial districts and factories. These communities have limited basic facilities, which should normally include an adequate supply of potable water, efficient power and electricity distribution system, access to primary roads and transportation facilities, access to schools and day care centres, effective sewerage facilities and efficient solid waste disposal system, and drainage systems.[47]

Local authorities in urbanised and urbanising areas in the Philippines are mandated to implement RA 7279, the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) of 1992, in coordination with the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, National Housing agencies and the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor.[48] The law aims to 'uplift the condition of the underprivileged and homeless citizens in urban areas ad resettlement area…', rationalise use and development of urban land and 'adopt workable policies to regulate and direct urban growth and equitable land tenure'.[49]

Many of the city's informal settlements were present even before the passage of the UDHA, and as such, cannot be demolished without proper relocation sites, as provided for by the law. Policing these communities against new migrants is a difficult challenge as they easily blend into existing informal settlements either by joining their relatives or lured there by squatting syndicates. The current law prohibits settlements in danger zones and privately owned land without the consent of the owner, but remains silent on the expansion of old informal settlements. Due to the enormous amount of resources required to provide relocation sites in the city to accommodate its growing population, especially economic migrants, this is considered to be one of the city's major development challenges.

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46   GSC, *Ten Point Agenda*.
47   Basic facilities that need to be in place in any socialised housing or resettlement areas of the city government, as per Ordinance No. 16, Series of 2016 – *An Ordinance Institutionalizing the Comprehensive Urban Poor Development and Housing Program Framework of General Santos City, Providing Funds therefor and for Other Purposes*.
48   RA 7279, Sec. 39, Article XI.
49   Ibid., Sec. 2, Article I.

Local authorities also noted the proliferation of professional squatters – individuals or groups who occupy lands without the express consent of the landowner and who have insufficient income for legitimate housing.[50] Many beneficiaries of local housing programmes have sold their rights to relocation lots awarded to them and returned to the blighted zones as informal settlers. This could be due to the absence of economic opportunities in relocation sites and the distance from social service facilities, such as schools, health centres, public markets, etc. Finally, there is also a growing problem of the encroachments of settlements in land zoned as agricultural, due to the low price of land compared to residential zones.[51]

In-migration is one of the city's major concerns. Cagoco-Guiam noted that in-migration is 'creating serious challenges to the city's capacities and its resources for basic services.'[52] It places pressure on the delivery of basic urban services such as education, health and housing, among others. It not only increases the demand for housing but also the growth of informal settlements along danger zones. Last but not least, the greatest concern now is the impact these migrants have on the city's internal security and overall peace and order, though 'some migrants believe they are unjustly perceived as the source of disturbance of local peace and order'.[53] It is only recently that the local government commissioned a study to guide it in its policies dealing with migrants.

The City Council has formulated a policy that aims to address the social ills arising within its housing sector, especially the proliferation of informal dwellers. Firstly, it legislated an ordinance institutionalising its comprehensive urban poor development and housing framework that serves as a guide in addressing its growing informal settlements. The Council likewise created the General Santos City Housing Board.[54] Among its tasks is the formulation or localisation of the eviction and demolition rules and regulations; issuance of Demolition Compliance Certificates (DCC) for administrative or summary demolition of underprivileged citizens; and the formulation of policies and guidelines on the identification, blacklisting and prosecution of professional squatters.

To implement this policy, the city mayor progressed the General Santos City Housing Board.[55] Headed by the city mayor, the board is composed of a representative from the city council, head of concerned departments of the city government, village chief representatives, civil society representatives and some national agencies such as the PNP, National Housing Authority and the Department of Public Works and Highways. The security sector, specifically the police, plays a crucial role in maintaining order in human settlements in the city. The PNP was made a member of its Committee Against Squatting and Squatting Syndicates and Committee on Relocation and Resettlement. The former is tasked with identifying professional squatters and squatting syndicates – groups of people engaged in the business of squatter housing for profit or gain[56] and facilitate the filing of appropriate charges, while the latter is tasked to ensure a just and humane demolition or relocation either through an administrative or court-ordered demolition. The PNP is always on the alert for the intrusion of new settlers to private properties and the occupation of government and ancestral lands. But it remains powerless in stopping the ballooning population of settlers in existing informal settlements. With the mechanisms in place, there are now fewer incidents of violent demolition. What concerns the police are the increasing number of reported crimes in many of the city's informal settlements – especially in violation of special laws such

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50 'The term shall also apply to persons who have previously been awarded homelots or housing units by the Government but who sold, leased or transferred the same to settle illegally in the same place or in another urban area, and non-bona fide occupants and intruders of lands reserved for socialized housing. The term shall not apply to individuals or groups who simply rent land and housing from professional squatters or squatting syndicates', Ibid., Sec. 3(m), RA 7279.

51 General Santos City, *Ten Point Agenda*.

52 Cagoco-Guiam, *The Nature, Causes and Dynamics of Internal Migration*, 2.

53 Ibid.

54 City Ordinance No. 19, Series of 2013 – *An Ordinance Creating the General Santos City Housing Board and Providing a Comprehensive and Continuing Development Program for the Constituents of General Santos City*.

55 Executive Order No. 65 Series of 2014 organising the General Santos City Housing Board.

56 RA 7279, Sec. 3 (s).

as on drugs, illegal weapons, and local ordinances such as the anti-smoking ordinance and safekeeping hour ordinance for minors. This is where the police conduct a nightly saturation drive for visibility and to deter crimes, especially those in violation of local ordinances.

The PNP is also a member of the city's Urban Poor Development Council which 'serves as a venue for a consultative meeting which shall provide a forum for continuing dialogue between the City Government and the urban poor on the proper planning and evaluation of programs and project affecting the urban poor.'[57] It acts as a coordination platform between government agencies, NGOs and concerned communities where plans and programmes for the informal settlers are decided on.

SDG 11.2: Safe transport

SDG 11.2 calls for access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all by 2030.Traffic congestion in the central business district of the city, along with its national highways and entrances to the city, is now becoming the new norm, especially during rush hours. The city has attributed the worsening traffic conditions to the high volume of vehicles, not fully developed or concreted national roads, the presence of illegal structures, illegal parking and slow-moving vehicles such as tricycles and *habal-habals*.[58] The lack of discipline of motorists and pedestrians alike, coupled with inadequate road infrastructures, such as traffic signals and signage, sidewalks, and motorcycle, bicycle and pedestrian lanes, further aggravate the traffic conditions in the city. The GSCDRRMO reported that traffic accident/multiple vehicular accident/road crash was the number one incident they responded to in 2017, with a total of 425 cases.

One transport leader considers the city to have the worst public transport system among highly urbanised cities due to patronage politics and political considerations.[59] This key informant argued that there is no clear solution in the offing on how to resolve the public transport system due to varying positions between the executive and legislative branches, and drivers and operators. The executive department wants a total phase-out of tricycles, replacing them with e-jeeps, e-trikes or UV compliant of EURO four type of fuel, and believes the bus and train line should traverse the main thoroughfare of the city. On the other hand, the City Council through its Chair of the Committee on Public Utilities has proposed a temporary solution that will allow tricycles to traverse the outer lane of the national highway while awaiting an alternative route for them. It likewise proposed a rerouting and colour coding based on the proposed city traffic code.

Efforts are now being undertaken to widen the city's major thoroughfares, increase the number of traffic enforcers and introduce regulation to reduce the proliferation of tricycles. This regulation includes controlling the issuance of tricycle franchises as public transport and seizing 'colorum' tricycles at check-points. Check-point have been set-up from time to time in the city to apprehend undocumented drivers and vehicles. However, this becomes a major political issue between drivers and local government officials. The policy aims are to limit the number of tricycles and to introduce mass transport, limit the number of franchisees and prohibit the tricycle along national highways. As this is such a sensitive issue, no chairperson of the Transport Committee of the City Council ever gets re-elected.

Due to limited numbers of police officers, the city created the Traffic Management Office, under the supervision of the GSCDRRMO, which employs 90 traffic enforcers to help regulate and assist traffic flows, especially during peak hours. The police force is limited to conducting checkpoints, mostly for illegal firearms and weapons, and inspecting driver and vehicle documentation. However, it is expected to respond in cases of vehicular accidents.

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57   Ordinance No. 13, Series of 2013 – *An Ordinance Creating The Urban Poor Development Council In The City Of General Santos.*
58   These are private motorcycles used to convey passengers illegally. It is considered an efficient, but dangerous mode of public transportation in the city. General Santos City, *Ten Point Agenda,* 33.
59   Herbert Demos, a local labour leader organising transport workers (interview with the author).

SDG 11.5: Disaster response

SDG 11.5 aims to significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations. Flash floods, fire events and transport or road crash incidents are the primary hazards facing the residents of the city. The three major river systems of the South Cotabato drain its water into Sarangani Bay through General Santos City, often causing flash floods in the city. Along the city's riverbanks are informal settlements vulnerable to river flooding. Unless these residents are relocated to safer grounds, evacuation during the rainy season is always expected by city officials. The city considered the following as its challenges in its risk reduction and management and disaster response: delays in emergency response due to ageing ambulances; radio interference and absence of mobile interconnection to its hotline; insufficient medical and rescue equipment and supplies; respondents in unsafe conditions; majority of the population in hazard-prone areas have no access to early warning and alert systems; weak capacity of communities to address and mitigate their emergencies and disasters; and, absence of mechanisms for coordinated and integrated early recovery and restoration.[60]

In response to these challenges, the city created the General Santos City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (GSCDRRMO)[61] pursuant to the mandate of RA 10121.[62] It is tasked to set the direction, develop, implement and coordinate disaster risk management programmes in the city. It is also mandated to organise and directly supervise the local emergency response teams and the Accredited Community Disaster Volunteers (ACDV).

Pursuant to RA 10121, the General Santos City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (GSCDRRMC) was created.[63] It is tasked to approve, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Municipal DRRM Plan, and annually review, test and develop the plan consistent with other national and local planning programmes; ensure the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into local development and poverty reduction; recommend the implementation of the forced or preemptive evacuation of residents, if necessary; and convene the local council once every 3 months or as necessary.

The GSCDRRMC is headed by the city mayor, with its membership coming from the different departments of the local government that has direct relevance to DRRM (i.e., Planning and Development, Risk Reduction and Management, Social Welfare and Development, Health, Agriculture, Gender and Development, Engineering, Veterinary, Budget, Environment, etc.), the president of the Association of Barangay Captains and a representative of the City Council. Also represented in the council is the Philippine Red Cross, 4 representatives from accredited CSOs, 1 private sector representative and a youth representative. National agencies with a presence in the area are likewise included, such as the Department of Education, DILG, Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Security sector actors (e.g., police, military, coast guards and fire department) are all included as members of the council and play an important role. Security sector actors, especially the police and the military, are often relied on for the provision of security during disasters and the deployment of assets and personnel as first-responders for communication, rescue, camp management and medical assistance, and management of the dead. They are also actively involved in disaster preparedness, such as in the carrying out of fire drills, bomb detection training and bomb drills, tsunami drills and training for the incident command system. Joint exercises or drills are held among the concerned agencies to simulate their preparedness and to develop a well-coordinated response in times of disaster. Stretched personnel

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60   General Santos City, *Ten Point Agenda*.
61   Ordinance No. 03 Series of 2011 – *An Ordinance Creating the General Santos City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, Providing Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes.*
62   *An Act Strengthening the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management System, Providing for The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework and Institutionalizing the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes.*
63   Executive Order No. 02, Series of 2016 as amended by EO 33 Series of 2016 & EO 34 Series of 2017.

numbers and limited resources has not deterred members of the GSCDRRMC in their active participation in disaster management.

The city also has regulations for the forced evacuation of its residents in times of disaster.[64] The city ordinance provides for the mobilisation of the members of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the National Irrigation Authority (NIA), assigned within the affected locality by the city mayor. However, as earlier mentioned, the provision of safe settlements remains a challenge for the city government.

SDG 11a: Rural-urban links

SDG11a calls for support to positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning. The Philippines is divided into 17 regions, and regional development planning is done through the Regional Development Councils (RDCs). The RDC is the highest planning and policy-making body in a region. It serves as the counterpart to the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board at the sub-national level. It is the primary institution that coordinates and sets the direction of all economic and social development efforts in the region. It also serves as a forum where local efforts can be related and integrated with regional and national development activities. It provides for administrative decentralisation to strengthen the autonomy of LGUs.

General Santos City forms part of Region XII – the SOCCSKSARGEN Region.[65] The RDC XII is composed of all provincial governors and city mayors, mayors of municipalities designated as provincial capitals, and mayors of municipalities designated as a regional centre in the SOCCSKSARGEN area: all presidents of the Provincial League of Mayors; the regional directors of agencies represented in the National Economic and Development Authority Board[66] and the regional directors of the Department of Education, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Transportation, Commission on Higher Education, TESDA, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Presidential Management Staff and Commission on Information and Communications Technology; representatives from accredited private sector and non-government organisations based in the region; and special non-voting members (SNVMs) coming from both the public and private sectors. The mayor of General Santos City chairs the RDC XII.

Except for the regional director of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency and the regional director of the Commission on Human Rights, who are SNVM, there are no other security sector actors involved in the RDC. It either shows the disconnect between socio-economic and security in current development thinking or the persistence of the view that security is primarily local, where security sector actors, specifically the police, are under the supervision of the national government. It must be emphasised that except for incidents involving insurgency and anti-terrorism, the city and municipal mayors and provincial governors are deputies of the NAPOLCOM.

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64   Ordinance No. 1, Series of 2013 – *An Ordinance Prescribing the Guidelines on the Implementation of Pre-emptive or Forced Evacuation in General Santos City as a Resort when a Disaster or Emergency is about to Occur or Occurred and Danger of Loss of Lives Becomes Imminent.*

65   The region is composed of the provinces of South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City.

66   National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), Dept. of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Dept. of Agriculture (DA), Dept. of Budget and Management (DBM), Dept. of Environment and National Resources (DENR), Dept. of Finance (DOF), Dept. of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Dept. of Health (DOH), Dept. of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Dept. of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Dept. of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Dept. of Science and Technology (DOST), Dept. of Trade and Industry (DTI), Dept. of Transportation and Communication (DOTC), Bangko Sentral and Pilipinas (BSP).

SDG 5 for Safer Cities

This section analyses the current state of urban security according to targets and indicators set out in SDG 5 Gender Equality and makes connections with SDG 11 and the NUA. Gender equality is one of the most obvious cross-cutting themes in the SDGs and the observations and guiding questions below are intended to highlight how gender equality links concerns both in security sector governance and urban safety. Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls is at the heart of SDG.

SDG 5.1: Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls.

The Philippine Progress Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2015 indicated that in some respects, women's lives have improved and that the gender gap has been narrowed, especially in the areas of education, political participation and peace and institutional mechanisms.[67] But urgent issues remain that hamper the achievement of equality and development such as those related to reproductive health and poverty. There are also new or emerging issues that require priority attention as they threaten or erode progress achieved in the condition of women, including new forms of violence in electronic media that victimise women, girls and children, and those related to the impact of climate change. The Philippines was ranked 5th in 2013 in the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum, making it the only Asian country included in the top ten.[68] Its achievement is made relevant by its being the 'only country in the Asia and the Pacific that has fully closed the gender gap in both education and health'.[69] It also scored top place ranking in the areas of educational attainment and health and survival (life expectancy).[70]

The above achievements are a product of legislation as well as financial investments made by the Philippine government. Numerous national laws that promote gender and development and aim to end discrimination and violence against women in the Philippines are now in place. Of great importance are the national legislations relating to women and development, such as the Nation Building Act,[71] the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995,[72] the Anti-Rape Law of 1997[73] and the Rape Victim and Protection Act of 1998,[74] the Anti-Trafficking in Person Act of 2003[75] and its amended versions, the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004,[76] the Anti-Child Pornography Act,[77] and the Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act,[78] (RA 9995, 2009) the Magna Carta for Women[79] and the Responsible and

67   Philippine Commission on Women, *Philippine Progress Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly* (PCW, 2015).
68   World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2103* (Geneva: WEF, 2013), 8.
69   WEF, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2103*, 21–22.
70   WEF, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2103*, 18, 19.
71   RA 7192 – *An Act Promoting The Integration Of Women As Full And Equal Partners Of Men In Development And Nation Building And For Other Purposes.*
72   RA 7877 – *An Act Declaring Sexual Harassment Unlawful In The Employment, Education Or Training Environment, And For Other Purposes.*
73   RA 8353 – *An Act Expanding The Definition Of The Crime Of Rape, Reclassifying The Same As A Crime Against Persons, Amending For The Purpose Act No. 3815, As Amended, Otherwise Known As The Revised Penal Code, And For Other Purposes.*
74   RA 8505 – *An Act Providing Assistance And Protection For Rape Victims, Establishing For The Purpose A Rape Crisis Center In Every Province And City, Authorizing The Appropriation Of Funds Therefor, And For Other Purposes.*
75   RA 9208 – *An Act To Institute Policies To Eliminate Trafficking In Persons Especially Women And Children, Establishing The Necessary Institutional Mechanisms For The Protection And Support Of Trafficked Persons, Providing Penalties For Its Violations, And For Other Purposes.*
76   RA 9262 – *An Act Defining Violence Against Women And Their Children, Providing For Protective Measures For Victims, Prescribing Penalties Therefore, And For Other Purposes.*
77   RA 9775 – *An Act Defining the Crime of Child Pornography, Prescribing Penalties Therefor and for Other Purposes.*
78   RA 9995 – *An Act Defining and Penalizing the Crime of Photo and Video Voyeurism, Prescribing Penalties Therefor, And for Other Purposes.*
79   RA 9710 – *An Act Providing for The Magna Carta of Women.*

Reproductive Health Act of 2012.[80] The most recent is the law declaring November 25 as National Consciousness Day to Eliminate Violence against Women and Children (RA 10398). The Revised Penal Code of the Philippines (RPC) also contains provisions protecting women from crimes such as seduction, abduction and acts of lasciviousness.

Parallel local legislations significantly promoting gender and development were also passed by the City Council. These are the General Santos City Anti-Discrimination Ordinance,[81] Barangay Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Desk (BAVAWCD) of the City of General Santos,[82] General Santos City Council of Women (GSCCW) Ordinance,[83] The General Santos City Reproductive Health Code,[84] *the 2007 Gender and Development Code of the City of General Santos,*[85] the General Santos City Anti-Discrimination Ordinance[86] and the *Local Inter-Agency Task Force Against Trafficking.*[87]

The national government created the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the national machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment, and since 1995 has included in the national budget legislation a proviso that allocates 5% of budget to the agency's Gender and Development (GAD) programmes. The PCW decides on the use of this resource for GAD via different agencies and is annually monitored by the Department of Budget and Management and the Commission on Audit. The city has also established its own General Santos City Council of Women which is mandated to serve as the city's 'main vehicle in advancing gender and development' down to the village level.[88]

SDG 5.2: Eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres.

The PNP plays a crucial role in the enforcement of laws protecting women and children. The PNP Reform and Reorganisation Act of 1998 mandated the creation of a Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) in all police stations nationwide 'to administer and attend to cases involving crimes against chastity, sexual harassment, abuses committed against women and children and other similar offenses.'[89] The law also provides for a 10% quota for women in the PNP's annual recruitment, training and education. More recently, the quota has been increased to 15% by the NAPOLCOM. The law also institutionalises the development of gender sensitivity programmes in the police force. It has a proviso on administrative liability for the violation of the rules and regulations regarding gender sensitivity and gender equality for the members of the force.

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80 RA 10354 – *An Act Providing For A National Policy On Responsible Parenthood And Reproductive Health.*
81 Ordinance No. 28, Series of 2016 – *An Ordinance Prohibiting Discrimination of Persons in the City of General Santos on the Basis of their Disability, Age, Health Status, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Ethnicity, and Religion.*
82 Ordinance No. 30, Series of 2016 – *An Ordinance Institutionalizing the Establishment of Barangay Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (AVAWCS) Desks in the 26 Barangay of General Santos City, Providing Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes.*
83 Ordinance No. 6, Series of 2017 – *An Ordinance Creating the General Santos City Council of Women, Defining its Role, Function and Composition, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes.*
84 Ordinance No. 09, Series of 2007 – *An Ordinance Enacting The General Santos City Reproductive Health Code.*
85 Ordinance No. 04, Series of 2007 – *An Ordinance Ordaining and Instituting the Gender And Development Code of The City Of General Santos, and for Other Purposes.*
86 Ordinance 28, Series of 2016 – *An Ordinance Prohibiting Discrimination of Persons in the City of General Santos on the Basis of their Disability, Age, Health Status, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Ethnicity, and Religion.*
87 Ordinance No. 01, Series of 2005 – *An Ordinance Creating the Local Inter-Agency Task Force Against Trafficking (Liatfat) in the City Of General Santos, and for other purposes.*
88 Ordinance No. 6, Series of 2017 – *An Ordinance Creating the General Santos City Council of Women, Defining its Role, Functions and Composition, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes.*
89 RA 8551 – *An Act Providing For The Reform And Reorganization Of The Philippine National Police And For Other Purposes, Amending Certain Provisions Of Republic Act Numbered Sixty-Nine Hundred And Seventy-Five Entitled, 'An Act Establishing The Philippine National Police Under A Re-Organized Department Of The Interior And Local Government, And For Other Purposes.'*

Under Philippine law, violence against women and their children is defined as:

> any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman *with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child*, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, within or without the family abode, which results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty (*emphasis mine*).[90]

It has three essential elements: a relationship, be it sexual or dating, must exist; the child must be a common child or her child; and finally, that harm is defined as physical, sexual, psychological or economic. The law carries a stiffer penalty than similar crimes committed against women and their children by persons that do not have any relationship with them.

In 2017, a total of 417 cases of violence against women and children were reported by the city's Welfare and Social Development Office (CWSDO). These VAWC cases were categorised as physical abuse (45.5%), sexual abuse (1.4%), psychological abuse (25.6%), economic (26.86%) and trafficking (0.47%). These cases were either referred to the PNP for possible filing of cases in court, were issued Barangay Protection Orders (BPO),[91] or were referred to medico-legal departments for further medical examination. In terms of crime statistics, in 2017, 17% of the crime volume in the city, or a total of 608 cases, were committed against women as identified by the police. On the other hand, 6% of or 220 crime suspects were women. Rape constitutes 8.8% of all index crime in the city, or 20% of crimes against persons during the same year.

Victims of crimes against women and children are assisted by the city's Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) of the PNP in partnership with local social workers. These crimes include offenses related to violence against women and their children,[92] rape,[93] acts of lasciviousness and unjust vexation,[94] child abuse,[95] children in conflict with the law,[96] and photo and video voyeurism.[97] Legal architecture protecting women and children is generally in place in the Philippines, however, its implementation remains a challenge to authorities.

In General Santos City, all its 8 police stations have a WCPD with at least one female police officer on 24/7 duty to attend to incidents relating to violence against women and their children, trafficking, and children in conflict with the law. At the barangay level, the City Council institutionalised the establishment of a Barangay Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Desk (BAVAWCD) in the 26 barangays of the city.

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90 RA 9262, Sec. 3

91 A BPO refers to the Protection Order issued by the *Punong Barangay* (PB) (the village chief) or if the PB is unavailable, by *kagawad* (a village council member) ordering the offender to desist from committing or threatening physical harm to the victim. It is effective for 15 days and is not extendible. Violation of BPO could be a ground for court action. If found guilty, the perpetrator shall be ordered by the court to suffer imprisonment of 30 days without prejudice to other criminal or civil action that the offended party may file for any acts committed. (http://www.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/documents/resources/BPO_primer.pdf).

92 RA 9262 – *An Act Defining Violence Against Women And Their Children, Providing For Protective Measures For Victims, Prescribing Penalties Therefore, And For Other Purposes.*

93 RA 8353 – *An Act Expanding The Definition Of The Crime Of Rape, Reclassifying The Same As A Crime Against Persons, Amending For The Purpose Act No. 3815, As Amended, Otherwise Known As The Revised Penal Code, And For Other Purposes.*

94 RA 7610 – *An Act Providing For Stronger Deterrence And Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation And Discrimination, And For Other Purposes.*

95 RA 7618.

96 RA 9344, as amended – *An Act Establishing A Comprehensive Juvenile Justice And Welfare System, Creating The Juvenile Justice And Welfare Council Under The Department Of Justice, Appropriating Funds Therefor And For Other Purposes.*

97 RA 9995 – *An Act Defining And Penalizing The Crime Of Photo And Video Voyeurism, Prescribing Penalties Therefor, And For Other Purposes.*

Systematic coordination is in place between the police and CWSDO village social workers on matters relating to violence against women and their children, trafficking, and children in conflict with the law. When an incidence of VAWC happens at the *barangay* and the *barangay tanod* responds, the victim is immediately brought to the *barangay* hall for the social worker to attend. The social worker then accompanies the victim to the nearest police station to report the incident. The victim is attended by a WCPD officer in the station. The social worker then accompanies the victim back to the *barangay* hall for counselling. The victim is assisted by the social worker whether opting for the issuance of a Temporary Protection Order (TPO) or deciding to file a VAWC case. On the other hand, when a VAWC incident is responded to by the police, the responding officers turn over the victim to the WCPD officer on duty at the police station at the time of reporting the crime. Then the WCPD officer-on-duty accompanies the victim to the *barangay* hall and turns over the victim to the barangay social worker for counselling. The social worker then assists the victim when she opts to file for a TPO or a case. The social worker at the *barangay* submits their report to the CWSDO while the WCPD at the police station reports the case to the City Police WCPD.

At the city level, an active local Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and their Children (IACVAWC) is in place. It serves as a platform to discuss issues related to coordination and development of protocols and common capability among stakeholders to adequately protect women and children. The committee meets on a quarterly basis. There is now a proposal pending before the City Council to transform this body into a Local Council on Anti-Trafficking, Anti-Child Pornography, and Anti-VAWC to effectively include crimes relating to trafficking and child-pornography, as most of the victims are women and children.

Key informants from the city's WCPD of the PNP noted an increase in the reporting of VAWC cases in the city. In fact, GSC PO is considered number three in VAWC reporting nationwide. Informants attributed the increase to a massive information drive undertaken by the WCPD in the various *barangays*, in partnership with *barangay* officials and social workers, which led to greater awareness and reporting of VAWC cases. This is also partly due to the creation of a VAWC desk in all *barangays* of the city and women desks in all police stations. The partnership between the police officer and the social worker is often lauded as 'women's partnership for women's empowerment'.

SDG 16 for Safer Cities

SDG 16 aims to bring peace and justice and develop strong institutions. It is particularly relevant because of the emphasis it places on the security sector as a provider of accountability, justice and security. Discussed herein is the general state of criminality in the city, the status of children in conflict with the law, and the different participatory and oversight mechanisms in place to bring about public safety, especially those that involve members of the security sector.

Peace and order is a major concern for the city. Its lack of police visibility, delayed response time and low arrest rate are among its important challenges. The congestion of the city jail and persistent drug use and drug trafficking are among other concerns for city officials.[98]

The maintenance of peace and order is considered to be one of the major action points of the city as indicated in its *Ten Point Agenda: Creating a Livable Environment for all 'Generals' Towards Nation Building*. It includes the city's *Comprehensive Development Plan for 2017 to 2022* and its *Executive and Legislative Agenda for 2017 to 2019*. Its foremost goals for peace and order and public safety is to 'ensure community safety from harm and protection from natural and man-made disasters.' It aims to 'sustain peace and order for a crime and drug-free city.' Among its priority objectives are the reduction in crime volume; increase in crime solutions and clearance efficiency; reduction of the incidence of fire and man-

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98   General Santos City, *Ten Point Agenda*.

made calamities; ensuring public safety by reducing occurrences of accidents caused by lack or non-observance of public safety measures; strengthening of community involvement in peace and order, public safety and disaster risk reduction and mitigation in the 26 *barangays*; ensuring that human rights are protected at all times; fostering humane treatment of prisoners; and facilitating out-of-court solutions of cases and speedy trial of cases brought to the courts.

SDG 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

The police are the first line of defence against crime. It is believed that the number of crimes will reduce if the number of police is increased. For a population of half a million people, the city has only 790 police officers, which is equal to 64% of the standard police to population ratio of 1:500, or a deficit of 440 police officers. The same state of deficiency could be said of its firefighters and prison guards. It has only 20% of the standard firefighters to population ratio of 1:2000, which means it is still in need of 247 firefighters. The city jail, with its 1,605 inmates (as of Dec. 2015) has a cell to inmate ratio of 1:36, far below the standard of 1:20. It needs 36 new detention cells to decongest the jail and be compliant with standards. Jail congestion has resulted in the increased incidence of infectious diseases.

According to the General Santos City Police Office, crime volume in the city dramatically declined from 2015 to 2017. Data has showed a decrease in the crime volume since 2016, most especially in index crimes. In terms of percentage, there is a tremendous decline in index crimes of 53.78% from the period 2015 to 2016, but a noticeable increase in the percentage of non-index crime for the same period was also recorded. The average monthly crime rate recorded in 2015 was 66.21, down to 58.87 in 2016, further down to 56.94 in 2017. This means that for every 100,000 people, there was around 66 incidents of crime committed every month in 2016 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Crime Statistics in General Santos City based on PNP crimes reported

Year	Crime volume	Index Crime	%	Non-Index Crime	%	Average monthly crime rate
2015	8316	4061	48.8	4254	51.15	66.21
2016	3843	865	22.5	2978	77.49	58.87
2017	3780	791	20.9	2989	79.07	56.94

Source: General Santos City Police Office data for 2015, 2016, 2017.

In 2017, a total of 791 index crimes were committed in the city, or 20.9% of the total crime volume in the city. In this category, more crimes against property were committed (55.87%) than crimes against persons (44.12%). For crimes against property, theft (28.57%) and robbery (19.59%) were among the leading crimes. The top-three index crimes in the city in 2017 were physical injury (21.7%), rape (8.84%) and homicide (7.45%) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Statistics on index crime in General Santos City

	Crime Against Persons					Crime Against Property							Total crime volume	% of total volume	Total IC Solved	% of IC	% of total crime volume
	Murder	Homicide	Physical injury	Rape	**Total**	Rob-bery	Theft	Carnap-ping MV	MC	Cattle rustling	**Total**	Total IC					
2015	84	16	1008	102	1216	617	2056	129		44	2845	4061	8316	48.8	899	22.1	10.8
2016	83	11	144	107	345	178	267	0	65	10	520	865	3843	22.5	245	28.3	6.4
2017	48	59	172	70	349	155	226	2	57	2	442	791	3780	20.9	281	35.5	7.4

Source: General Santos City Police Office data for 2015, 2016, 2017.

On the other hand, a total of 2,989 crimes, or 79% of all crimes committed in the city in 2017, are categorised as non-index crime. These crimes are either due to reckless imprudence or to violation of special laws (i.e., drugs, illegal possession of firearms) and ordinances (e.g., the anti-smoking ordinance and the safekeeping hour ordinance for minors). According to our key informant, the increase in statistics relating to violations of special laws are attributed to active law enforcement work of the police.[99] It is considered to be a gauge of police performance and is often rewarded. Because the counts vary as one crosses local government territories, the PNP does use them as a gauge of public safety.[100] A total of 2,009 crimes, or 66.2%, were categorised as reckless imprudence that resulted in homicide, physical injury and damage to property. These are followed by violation of special laws (22.81%) and other non-index crimes (9.97%). Of the 2,009 crimes categorised as reckless imprudence that resulted in homicide, physical injury and damage to property, 51.07% of these crimes caused damage to property, 46.24% resulted to physical injury, and 2.69% to homicide (refer to Figure 3).

Figure 3: Statistics on non-index crime in General Santos City

| | Reckless Imprudence Resulted in | | | | | | | | | | |
	Homicide	Physical injury	Damage to prop-erty	Violation of special laws	Other non-index crimes	Total Non-IC	Total crime volume	% of total volume	Total Non-IC Solved	% of Non-IC-solved	% of total crime volume
2015	3	94	98	1816	2243	4254	8316	51.15	2835	66.64	34.09
2016	17	455	485	1176	845	2978	3843	77.5	2184	73.33	56.8
2017	54	929	1026	682	298	2989	3780	79.1	2298	76.88	60.8

Source: General Santos City Police Office data for 2015, 2016, 2017.

The 'war on drugs' of the Duterte administration, which has claimed tens of thousands of lives, is an urban phenomenon, but primarily concentrated in Metropolitan Manila. In 2017, the number of crimes committed due to a violation of special laws (that includes drugs) was only 682 cases or 23% of total non-index crime or 18% of all crimes. The 'war on drugs' launched in the city is unique in that it did not shed much blood. The city won the 2017 Galing Pook Award[101] in recognition of its successful anti-drug campaign, the *Likay Droga* (*Lingap sa Kabataan Ayaw sa Druga*)[102] Program. The programme aims 'to enhance and strengthen effort in protecting youngsters and other concerned sectors from the ill effects of prohibited drugs.'

Homicide

Concerning homicide, there were 59 cases in index crime and 54 cases in non-index crime categories, or a total of 113 cases, roughly 2.98% of the total crime volume for 2017. For a community of a little over half-a-million people, this translates to 0.21% of the total crime volume in 2017 and a very low homicide rate of 21 persons per 100,000 population. But if we consider only the homicide data in index crime, the homicide rate goes down to 11 persons per 100,000 population.

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99   SPO1 Jubelag of the GSC PNP Investigation and Detective Management Bureau.
100 Rambo Talabong, 'Crimes, Except Homicide, in the Philippines down by 21.8% in 2017', *Rappler*, 20 December 2017.
101 The Galing Pook Awards, which was launched in 1993, pioneers in recognising innovative practices and programmes by local government units in terms of their positive impact, promotion of people's participation and empowerment, innovation, transferability and sustainability, and efficiency of programme service delivery.
102 Avoid drugs (Care for the Youth who don't want Drugs).

Crime Solution Efficiency (CSE)

In the Philippines, criminal cases are categorised as Solved when the offender has been identified, taken into custody and charged before the prosecutor's office on the basis of sufficient evidence. A crime is considered Cleared when a case is filed, but the suspect has not yet been apprehended. The CSE in General Santos City is 57% in 2016 up to 60.79% in 2017. The CSE rate for index crime is 28.3% in 2016 up to 35.52% in 2017, while for non-index crime, the CES for 2016 is 65% up to 67.5% in 2017. The above CSE for index and non-index crime is considered low by local officials and therefore more initiatives need to be made to increase its crime solution efficiency rating.

SDG 16 2: End all forms of violence against and torture of children.

RA 9344, better known as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, aims to protect children pursuant to Art. 40 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This law is an application of the principles of restorative justice applicable to children in conflict with the law. In 2017, a total of 677 cases involving minors were documented by the CWSDO in 2017. These cases are divided into Children at Risk (CAR), Children in Conflict with the Law or CICL and Children Needing Special Assistance (CNSP) (i.e., victims of rape and physical abuse). CAR refers to cases where minors violated the safekeeping ordinance by staying outside of their residence or beyond their property line or entering or remaining in any public place, entertainment and recreation centre or business establishment from 10pm to 4pm, unaccompanied by adult persons having parental care or custody of a minor.[103] The CWSDO reported a total of 539 cases or 79.61% of all cases involving minors. Children in Conflict with the Law or CICL refers to offenses committed by minors under RA 9344 or the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006. A total of 99 cases was reported in 2017, or 14.6% of all reported cases. The Children Needing Special Assistance (CNSP) are children who were victims of rape and physical abuse that require special protection. It constitutes a total of 39 children or 5.76% or all cases in 2017.

In the interest of children, the city organised the Juvenile Justice Network (JJN). The JJN is a city-wide network organised in accordance with RA 9344 or the Juvenile Justice System and Welfare Act of 2006. It is composed of various sectors from government and non-government organisations that look into the possibilities of providing appropriate services and interventions to rescue juvenile delinquents in the light of restorative justice. The five pillars of the Philippine Justice system, namely the PNP, the Public Attorneys' Office, the office of the Prosecutor, the Regional Trial courts and local government, are aptly represented in the JJN. It serves as a platform for coordination to ensure that concerns of children in conflict with the law are fully attended to under the mandate of the law. It is considered an effective mechanism for the protection of children. However, the fast turn-over of police officers due to promotion and early age of retirement has made the continuous capacity building of the group a necessity.

For its accomplishments, the JJN significantly contributed to the following initiatives in the city: (a) implementation of the juvenile justice law;[104] (b) transfer of CICLs to Marcellin Foundation Inc., a private facility designated to undertake diversion programmes; (c) training of stakeholders in handling CICLs; and (d) strengthening of BCPC (Barangay Council for the Protection of Children) and creation of CJC (Children's Justice Committee) as a strategy. More significantly, the JJN implemented a process flow in handling CICL that is customised to the local situation. It also institutionalised the monthly meeting as the proper forum to discuss issues. Concerns related to the implementation of RA 9344; g.) Generate/Match the data of CICL case from the Law Enforcer Level, Social workers, barangay officials and other stakeholders.

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103 Ordinance No. 18 Series of 2016 – *An Ordinance Establishing Safekeeping Hours for Minors in The City of General Santos, Providing Guidelines for Its Implementation, And for Other Purposes.*

104 RA 9344 – *An Act Establishing a Comprehensive Juvenile Justice and Welfare System, Creating The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council Under the Department of Justice, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes.*

With the growing number of cases involving children, and in order to protect children and to deter crimes committed by or against children, as well as to enforce the city's Safekeeping Ordinance, from 2017 the GSCPO has conducted a daily saturation drive from 10pm to 4am by patrolling places prone to youth-gang violence. These are mostly in informal settlements. The combined units of the PNP Mobile Force, Patrol Operation Section, WCPD precinct officers and sometimes with accompanying social workers constitute a composite team of 70 people. The nightly operations, while considered resource consuming, are found to be effective in significantly reducing youth-gang violence and violation of safekeeping ordinance.

SDG 16.6. Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

Numerous participatory mechanisms are in place in the city that enhance greater participation in creating a safer General Santos City. These mechanisms are either mandated by national law or through a local ordinance or national and local executive orders. Through the leadership of the local chief executive, these mechanisms also serve as a platform for engagement between local officials, civil society organisations and security sector actors. Aside from those earlier mentioned (i.e., GSC Housing Board, Urban Poor Development Council, GSC Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, Inter-Agency Council on Trafficking of Persons, VAWC, Juvenile Justice Network, etc.), another mechanism in place is the PNP Advisory Councils created at the national, regional and local levels. The City Advisory Council of the General Santos City Police Office is comprised of residents known for their integrity and willingness to support the police in improving its efficiency and effectiveness. These are citizens interested in the issue of public order and safety in the city. As the name suggests, the council advises and recommends measures for the improvement of police performance. As well as serving as a critic of the police, the council helps in extending logistical support for the police. My key informant considers the advisory council an essential arena of engagement that the police created not only for public relations purposes but for the serious business of engaging the public in improving the performance of the police in particular, and developing police professionalism in general.[105] It remains an important arena of engagement with the police.

Worth mentioning here are oversight mechanisms in place dealing with the security sector at the city level. The General Santos City Peace and Order Council (POC) is the mandated major mechanism for local peace and order. It is where the chief executive exercises its executive oversight of the security sector, more specifically the police. The City POC is headed by the mayor, with the vice-mayor, city director of the DILG, chairperson of the Committee on Peace and Order of the City Council, city prosecutor, city director of the PNP, commanding officer of TF-GenSan, regional director of PDEA, regional director of the PIA, city director of the NBI, fire marshal, school division superintendent, regional officer of the Regional Maritime Office, station commander of the Philippine Coast Guard, city health officer, department head of the City Social Welfare and Development Office, all barangay captains, five representatives of the NGOs, and head of the Civil Aviation Authority.[106]

The POC serves as the major forum for inter-disciplinary dialogue and deliberation of major issues and concerns affecting peace, order and public safety nationwide. It recommends strategic actions or activities aimed at promoting, improving or enhancing peace, order and public safety measures, including anti-insurgency measures, within their respective jurisdiction; recommends measures to converge and orchestrate internal security operations of civil authorities and agencies, military and police; and formulates and adopts effective mechanisms for coordination, cooperation and consultation involving local executives, citizenry and law enforcement agencies.[107] The security sector plays a crucial role in the council as it regularly presents its threat assessment and strategies. It helps in the timely formulation of local security and peace and order policies and undertakings.

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105 Olive Sudaria, former Regional Director of the Philippine News Agency and currently a member of the Police Regional Office XII Regional Advisory Council and a member of the GSC Police Office Advisory Council, interview with the author.
106 Executive Order No. 09 Series of 2013, Office of the City Mayor.
107 Memorandum Circular No. 2015-130, Dept. of Interior and Local Government.

There are also mechanisms in place where the public can directly bring their complaints about erring police officers. These include the Internal Affairs Service (IAS) of the PNP and the People's Law Enforcement Board (PLEB). The IAS undertakes *motu propio*, or official, investigations of police excesses, and acts on complaints brought to its attention. However, given that the unit is part of the PNP, many citizens do not bring their complaints to the attention of IAS due to perceived bias.

The PLEB is the major mechanism used by citizens to complain against police officers. It is unique in its mandate and local in its organisation. By virtue of RA 6975, as amended, the PLEB serves as the 'central receiving entity for any citizen's complaint against the officers and members of the PNP.' Subject to the provisions of Sec. 41 of RA 6975, the law mandates the PLEB to 'take cognizance of or refer the complaint to the proper disciplinary or adjudicatory authority within three (3) days upon the filing of the complaint.' It is mandated by law to act on citizen's administrative complaints against any members of the PNP 'where the offense is punishable by withholding of privileges, restriction to specified limits, suspension or forfeiture of salary, or any combination thereof, for a period exceeding thirty (30) days; or by dismissal.' The PLEB is organised by the local government, appointed by the mayor and composed of 5 members-residents of the city, to wit:

(1) Any member of the city or municipal legislative council chosen by the council itself;

(2) Any barangay captain (village chief) of the concerned city or municipality chosen by the Association of Barangay Captains (ABC); and[108]

(3) Three (3) other members who are removable only for cause to be chosen by the local peace and order council from among the respected members of the community known for their probity and integrity, one (1) of whom must be a woman and another a member of the Bar, or, in the absence thereof, a college graduate, or the principal of the central elementary school in the locality.[109]

In General Santos City, the PLEB is considered an effective and active mechanism in dispensing administrative cases filed against any members of the police. As of 2018, there are 17 cases pending before the PLEB of the city, mostly on the nature of misconduct or abuse of authority. In terms of the age of these pending cases, 6 were filed in 2012, 1 in 2013 and 2014, 5 in 2014, 1 in 2015 and 2016, 1 in 2017 and 2 in 2018. The PLEB conducts hearings with the parties, usually with their legal counsel, before it renders its decision. Due to its nature as a quasi-judicial body, its proceedings can be delayed by long hearings on the presentation of evidence, absence of the parties, usually by the complainants, or requests for postponements by the respondents. The delays in hearings and in the promulgation of decisions could also be attributed to the difficulty of the PLEB to have a quorum during its sessions and meetings.[110] PLEB members are generally volunteers, with an insignificant *per diem* entitlement against a heavy responsibility, who are equally busy with their respective jobs. However, with lawsuits filed against police officers year-in and year-out, sometimes of a similar nature, the effectiveness of the PLEB as a deterrence for the police officers to violate their oath of professionalism could be doubted. This remains a contested area for public policy research. Nevertheless, the PLEB continue to play an important role as a mechanism in the oversight of the police, at the local level.

The City Council also exercises oversight of the security sector. It has 26 regular committees. Committees are generally tasked to 'act upon a proposed ordinance, resolution or other measure referred to it by the City Council.' Its Committee on Public Order and Safety has jurisdiction over the security sector. It mandates cover on:

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108 RA 6975, Sec. 42 (b).
109 RA 8551, Sec. 67 (3).
110 Hon. Franklin M. Gacal, Jr., a member of the PLEB as representative of the City Council. He is the current chair of the Committee on Public Order and Safety of the City Council. Interview with the author.

[a]ll matters or questions pertaining to or connected with, the maintenance of peace and order in the city; police, jail management and fire department matters; prevention and abatement of public nuisance; enforcement of laws and ordinances to maintain peace and order; training programs to PNP members, Barangay Tanods and other support groups; recognition and incentives to deserving PNP members, Barangay Tanods and other law enforcers; safety measures to mitigate disastrous effects of natural or man-made calamities; and *all* other matters related to public order and safety (*emphasis mine*).[111]

While the mandate of the committee is clear, and local legislators have exhibited ability to do its oversight work, its current authority to oversee is limited. Unlike the Philippine Congress, local government legislative bodies do not have contempt powers. Our key informant laments the fact that while committees have subpoena powers (*subpoena duces tecum* – subpoena for the production of evidence and *subpoena ad testificandum* – subpoena to appear and give oral testimony), it cannot place in contempt or legally compel individuals or institutions who refuse to appear or present documents before the committee.[112] The committee is only as good as its moral suasion and public pressure on concerned individuals or institutions to appear before the committee. However, despite its limitations, the committee continues to serve as a good platform for the public to ventilate issues and concerns relating to public order and safety. Bad publicity is what the security sector wishes to avoid at the local level. There was a recent incident, where out of exasperation the City Council declared the city police director as *persona non grata* for his failure to stop the proliferation of small town lotteries, despite clear orders from the city mayor and urging from the City Council. It eventually resulted in the removal of the police director, due to public pressure on national police leadership and from the mayor.

While the engagement of the public with the police through different bodies is considered essential, its effectiveness in contributing to good governance of the PNP remains a subject of inquiry. Various discussions with key informants point to satisfaction with existing mechanisms and the role played by the police, but there is still a shared sense of the need to strengthen existing mechanisms of cooperation. The current state of security in the city is a mirror of the effectiveness of the different mechanisms for participation in place.

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111 Internal Resolution No. 05, Series of 2016 – *Resolution Adopting the Internal Rules of Procedures of the 18th Sangguniang Panlunsod of the City of General Santos.*
112 Hon. Franklin M. Gacal, Jr., interview with the author.

Conclusions

Urbanisation is growing at a fast pace in Southeast Asia, serving as one of the major trends that will shape the future of the region. Ensuring safer cities is a growing concern, and this remains a contested space. While more powers are now devolved to local authorities to ensure urban safety, at the same time the control and supervision of most security sector actors remain in the exclusive domain of the central government. Furthermore, while some powers are now devolved to local government units to ensure urban security, as the current case reflects, resources are not. Cities have to raise the needed resources if they want to build an effective and efficient security sector at the local level.

General Santos City, as this case study has shown, is an important urban centre in southern Philippines as it serves as a hub for business, transport, services and telecommunications. Owing to its strategic importance, both economic and political, it is of mutual interest to national and local governments to ensure that the city continues to be safe, competitive, sustainable and inclusive.

Economic investment in the city is primarily local. Therefore, the desire to ensure that the city is safe is a major political agenda at the local level. The decentralisation of governance provided local actors with the opportunity to shape domestic security policy, as it empowered them to create local mechanisms for participation in urban safety. Partnership for security is but one manifestation of local ownership. While local citizens should continue to push for SSR at the national level, local authorities have the authority, capability and interest to ensure urban safety. As the city further urbanises, the challenge of the provision of services to new entrants concerning jobs, housing, education and health may serve as a source of future urban insecurity that needs to be addressed now.

The security sector, most especially the police, in close coordination with the local government unit of General Santos City, has made important headway in ensuring the city fulfils its responsibility in attaining the SDGs. As the case study shows, there are four crucial elements to its success: existence of legal frameworks, active multi-stakeholder participation in vibrant local mechanisms, resource sharing and political leadership.

Existence of national and local legal frameworks

The decentralisation of governance as enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution and further amplified by the passage of the Local Government Code of 1991, clearly defined the responsibility of LGUs and their ownership in local security and development. The national police law likewise clearly defines the relationship of the police and local chief executives, in their capacity as deputies of the NAPOLCOM. It also provides important mechanisms for police oversight from local to national level, such as the IAS and the PLEB. Various laws protecting the rights of citizens to human settlements (e.g., UDHA) and abuse (VAWC, juvenile justice, anti-trafficking), and the role of authorities are in place.

The existence of local ordinances (e.g. housing board, disaster risk reduction and management) ensures the localisation of national mandates. It tailors these mandates to local conditions to ensure effectiveness as shown in the case of the Anti-VAWC, which brings awareness down to the village level.

Active multi-stakeholder participation in vibrant local mechanisms

Numerous mechanisms are in place either by virtue of national laws or local ordinances. These measures serve as a powerful platform for coordination between security sector actors and local stakeholders. They break down an erstwhile silo mentality in the provision of security, while also promoting participation, local ownership and the accountability of many stakeholders in the common quest for an effective and efficient provision of local security. It also destroys the notion that security is the exclusive domain of the security sector. These various mechanisms also reflect efforts for a greater collaboration among stakeholders, localisation and innovation – elements considered critical in the attainment of the SDGs.

While participation and cooperation is necessary, it is time consuming as well. Prudence has to be taken to ensure that countless coordination meetings and activities do not impinge on the efficiency of stakeholders to fulfil their specific mandates

Resource sharing

The study shows that the cooperation between security providing institutions and the local government is cemented by resource sharing between the LGU and the security sector. It comes in the form of needed materials (e.g., vehicles, weapons, training, etc.) to intelligence information and the augmentation of personnel. This manifests a high level of cooperation for a common purpose – urban security. If the city had more resources available, additional investment would be forthcoming. Unfortunately, the city has many mandates to finance from the national government, without corresponding resources. However, one should not lose sight of the responsibility for the national government to provide critical resources to the security sector as its main mandate. The LGUs can merely complement.

Political leadership

This is also a critical factor in creating a safer city, as shown by the case study. Using the triple-A test, the mayor of the city possesses the necessary *authority* to maintain peace and order as mandated by laws and legal issuances. He also exhibits an *ability* to perform such a mandate as exemplified by his twice-a-month command meetings with PNP leadership and his monthly meeting with the City Peace and Order Council. Aside from regularly meeting the PNP, he actively engages the TF GenSan and coordinates well with various intelligence units and security sector actors located in the city. He also lobbies resources from the City Council and the private sector to support the core security actors. In the city, the mayor also exhibits an *attitude* of keeping the city safe. Aside from being a politician motivated by the desire to serve the public, the mayor also has family-business interests to protect, which could best be served by a safer city.

Legal mandates, whether national or local, are important. However, these mandates are only realisable when there is a strong leadership to bring numerous stakeholders and with the political will to ensure implementation at the local level. The leadership provided by the local chief executives, be it motivated by personal and or political motives, in ensuring that the city is safe, has resulted in the establishment of working mechanisms at the local level and the channelling of resources for sustainable development – for urban safety in the case of this study. While leadership and political will are important, it must be put on check from time to time. We have numerous narratives of abuse of power by local executives where security actors become their personal bodyguards. This merely affirms the need for local good governance.

The state of the peace process, its progress or failure, will always affect the security of the city due to its strategic importance. The training of security actors, improved intelligence gathering and improvement in logistics for securing the city and the participation of stakeholders in keeping a safer city will always be one of the city's priorities. The external threat to the city, if not prevented, will put to waste whatever progress has been attained in the pursuit of the SDGs.

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About this case study

In 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda, better known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the environment and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. In 2016, the New Urban Agenda (NUA) was adopted at the United Nations Conference in Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III) in Quito, Ecuador, in response to the challenges of growing urbanisation around the world. The NUA recognises the 'correlation between good urbanisation and development'. Rather than seeing urbanisation as a problem, it sees 'well-planned and well-managed urbanisation [as] a powerful tool for sustainable development'. The NUA also has strong links with the SDGs, especially Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities. In a democratic society, the security sector – the armed forces, police, intelligence services, border security, private security companies, and militia – is expected to play a key role in ensuring public order and safety to secure the gains of development and this role also extends to cities. This paper aims to provide knowledge at the local level on the role of the security sector in achieving SDG 11 (making human settlements inclusive, safe and resilient), by presenting General Santos City, Philippines, as a case study. More specifically, it aims to identify SSR entry points for improving the city's safety and to provide evidence and lessons on which conditions contribute to achieving SDG 11 and how they do so, as well as linkages with other SDGs, notably Goals 5 and 16.

About DCAF

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) is an international foundation dedicated to making states and people safer, within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. DCAF works towards this ultimate objective by assisting partner states, and international actors supporting these states, to improve the governance of their security sector through inclusive and participatory reforms based on international norms and best practices, and in response to specific local contexts and challenges.