



Why does Global South governance matter for international security?



Insufficient attention is given to the ways in which **non-state armed groups** from ostensibly stable countries threaten **global peace and security.**

What impact do under-governed areas have on global security?

The comparative cases of Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago illustrate how under-governed spaces that persist in small, stable, democratic Global South countries, threaten international security serving as safe havens for non-state armed groups (NSAGs). Examining why these spaces persist in developing countries and its implications is instrumental to disrupting transnational illicit networks, thus bolstering international security.

Findings show that:

- 1 **Political expediency** is the primary reason Global South governments fail to address the proliferation of under-governed spaces.
- 2 Areas characterised by weak governance and limited state presence serve as **safe havens for NSAGs**, enabling local and transnational security threats.
- 3 Criminal gangs, terrorist groups, and militant insurgent groups exploit under-governed spaces in Global South countries, contributing to high **violence rates, drug trafficking, and international terrorism.**
- 4 There is a high probability that NSAGs collaborate or become co-opted by **transnational illicit networks**, posing a danger to national and international security.
- 5 Securing **land rights** can diminish NSAG influence by integrating informal communities into formal governance, thus reducing safe havens for armed groups – as showcased by Peru.

To build peaceful, inclusive, and just societies, governments must:

- **Pursue land tenure regularisation.** By implementing policies to formalise land ownership, governments can help integrate informal communities into the national economy, reducing NSAGs' influence.
- **Strengthen local governance.** Investment in law enforcement and public services can enhance state presence in under-governed areas, making them less vulnerable to NSAG control.
- **Target political patronage.** Address political incentives that sustain under-governed spaces, which allow NSAGs to operate freely, by introducing transparent policies that prioritise national security over political gains.
- **Facilitate cross-border efforts and international cooperation.** Improving bilateral and multilateral intelligence-sharing, technical support, and collaboration can help curb NSAGs activities.

Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago's experiences with NSAGs reflect the broader challenges of **cross-border crime, insurgency, and terrorism in the Americas**, an ostensibly peaceful region with no recent inter-state wars.

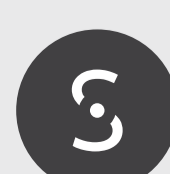


Authors

Diana Thorburn | Alexander Causwell
Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI)

Founded in 2013, Southern Voice is a network of think tanks from Africa, Asia and Latin America & the Caribbean. It contributes to the global dialogue on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Global South Perspectives is a strategic initiative by Southern Voice dedicated to examining international development challenges from the perspective of Global South researchers. Centering Global South viewpoints has the power to change the landscape of global development priorities, reshaping the trajectory of the future we aspire to build.



For more information and publications visit

www.southernvoice.org

Copyright © 2025 Southern Voice
Designer: Santiago Pacheco C.