



## Media FAQs

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### **Q: What is The Locust Effect all about?**

A: *The Locust Effect* reveals the massive, hidden plague of “everyday violence” in the developing world – and exposes way this violence not only destroys individual lives, but blocks the road out of poverty and undermines development. The implications are enormous: *We can’t end poverty if we don’t end the plague of violence. And, the violence won’t stop until public justice systems start to protect the poor.*

By “everyday violence,” we mean common, criminal violence that’s already against the law – like rape, sex trafficking forced labor, land grabs or police brutality – violence that is so pervasive throughout the developing world that poor people live in fear of it every day.

This everyday violence is “hidden” in that when we think of developing-world poverty, we think of hunger, sickness, illiteracy, joblessness, and other important issues, but rarely do we think of the fact that poor people – by virtue of their poverty – are vulnerable to violence.

A UN Commission has found that “*most poor people*” in the developing world live outside the protection of law – there is nothing to shield them from violence. This is why they are so utterly vulnerable, and why violence has become endemic to being poor.

***The Locust Effect* is a call to change this – and make the poor safe enough to thrive.**

### **Q: What exactly is a “hidden plague of everyday violence”?**

A: Everyday, common criminal violence is like a plague because of the way it has the power to devastate everything it touches: it destroys individual lives, blocks the road out of poverty and undermines development.

It’s been hidden because we just don’t make the connection: when we think about poverty, we think about hunger, disease, homelessness, dirty water and a lack of education, but we rarely think of the poor’s overwhelming vulnerability to violence.

It’s “everyday” because we’re not talking about war or genocide, but common criminal violence, like rape, sex trafficking, forced labor slavery, police brutality – violence that is so pervasive in the developing world that the poor live in fear of it every day.



**Q: Why are the poor so vulnerable to violence in the first place?**

A: There are, of course, many things that exacerbate an impoverished person's vulnerability to violence – but the heart of their vulnerability is a simple and devastating truth: there's nothing shielding them from violent people. Their justice systems don't work. The wonderful protections promised in the law books do not actually get delivered for the poor. No one goes to jail for hurting poor people, *so no one is afraid to hurt poor people*. Take India, for example, where you're more likely to get struck by lightning than you are to go to jail if you hold people as slaves.

**Q: What type of protections are the poor missing out on?**

A: Police not only don't protect the poor, they're often the ones *harming* the poor. Prosecutors don't put the criminals *in jail*, and can't keep the innocent people *out of jail*. Courts reach the wrong results, treat people badly, and take *years* to do it. The poor are left utterly defenseless.

**Q: How did we get here?**

A: Systems were never designed to protect the poor in the first place. They are colonial systems designed to protect elites *from* the common poor. When colonial powers left a half a century ago, many laws were changed but the law enforcement system was not – these systems were never re-engineered to focus on all of the people.

Systems got worse because the rich abandoned the public justice systems and created their own *private* justice systems. And, if you look at the profits behind sex trafficking and slave labor you immediately understand why some people don't *want* the justice system to work.

And finally, we simply haven't made an investment in fixing the justice systems. Amidst trillions of aid to the developing world, there has been virtually no significant investment in making criminal justice systems better protect impoverished men, women and children from everyday violent crimes.

**Q: So what's the solution?**

A: The way to stop the violence is to fix the broken justice systems so that they protect the poor from violence – from the police, to the courts to the social welfare systems. Only 1% of aid from USAID and the World Bank is applied to help improve justice systems to protect the poor from violence. We need to do better than that.



**Q: The concept of fixing the broken justice systems to alleviate poverty is not complicated; it makes sense. Why hasn't this been a focus before now? Why now?**

A: First, we have feared the risks. The human rights community has seen the great danger that's possible when state power is used for harm - and, as a result, fixing broken justice systems hasn't been a priority.

Secondly, we have understood that building justice systems that work for the poor is challenging and costly – and there is no one-size solution that can be imported or replicated.

But, with a realistic recognition of the risks and challenges, we must also recognize that a working public justice system is simply indispensable to protecting the poor from violence in a sustainable way – not sufficient, but indispensable. There is simply no way forward without addressing what we believe is the great challenge of our era.

**Q: What proof do you have that fixing justice systems will really address the problems of sex trafficking and forced labor?**

A: In Cebu, the Philippines, International Justice Mission partnered with local authorities to improve the way the justice system responded to the crime of sex trafficking. Our goal was a measurable 40% reduction in the availability of children for commercial sex in the target area. At the end of the four-year project, external auditors found a 79% reduction in the availability of children of commercial sex.

**Q: How can I help as a concerned citizen?**

A: There are a number of ways you can help:

- Spread the word about the everyday violence against the poor
- Buy the book and uncover the violence and see the solutions
- Sign the petition and send a message to the UN now.  
*Ask that violence against the poor be elevated as a global issue*
- Contribute to ending the everyday violence

**Q: Who is International Justice Mission?**

A: International Justice Mission (IJM) is a global leader in protecting the poor from violence, working directly on the frontlines. IJM partners with local law enforcement and other authorities to rescue victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems. The largest organization of its kind, IJM has ongoing operations in nearly 20 communities throughout South and Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America. IJM attorneys, investigators, social workers, community activists and other professionals – 95% of whom are at work in their own countries – have rescued thousands of victims of slavery, sex trafficking, abusive police and other criminal violence, and work to protect millions more by strengthening their justice systems.