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**World crime trends and emerging issues and responses in
the field of crime prevention and criminal justice**

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present document, prepared in accordance with the practice established by Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/18, presents the most recent information available to the Secretary-General on world crime trends and the state of criminal justice.

This year's report focuses on the analysis of selected targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1 in September 2015. Selected indicators, mainly derived from mandated data collections, are used to monitor relevant targets on public security and safety, access to justice and the rule of law.

The capacity to monitor relevant goals and targets falling within the mandate and work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime will be crucial for measuring progress and highlighting challenges. The present report indicates that data collected and disseminated by the Office can provide valuable insights and metrics for monitoring the progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Further work is needed to improve availability and quality of data so that the principle that "no one must be left behind" expressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be fully implemented and monitored.

* E/CN.15/2016/1.



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I. Introduction

1. The Sustainable Development Goals contained in Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1 at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, on 25 September 2015, came into effect on 1 January 2016. Those goals form the basis for supporting and monitoring progress in all dimensions of sustainable development until 2030. Building on the earlier Millennium Development Goals, the new global agenda sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets to stimulate action in the economic, social and environmental fields.

2. Recognizing the cross-cutting nature of public safety and security, rule of law and access to justice, relevant targets have been included in a number of goals.¹ Effective, accessible and fair justice systems, jointly with comprehensive crime prevention policies, are seen as the primary instruments to protect human rights and public safety from the threats posed by organized crime, violence, corruption and all forms of illicit trafficking. By defending societies against such menaces and by promoting the rule of law, the foundations are laid for promoting economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

3. The capacity to monitor these goals and targets with the help of suitable indicators will be crucial for measuring progress and effecting change. For that purpose, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators has produced a comprehensive proposal of a framework of indicators for monitoring all targets under the Goals (see E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1).

4. As a contribution to inform discussions on the monitoring of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and recalling the important role assigned to the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, including the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in reviewing implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the present report focuses on the measurement and analysis of indicators for relevant Goals and targets in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice.

5. Statistical data presented in this report, publicly accessible on the website of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),² are mostly based on data produced by Member States as reported annually through the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, the annual collection of data on trafficking in persons and other special data collections on trafficking in firearms and wildlife.

¹ In addition to several targets under Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels), see, for example, target 5.2 of Goal 5, target 8.7 of Goal 8, target 11.7 of Goal 11 and target 15.7 of Goal 15.

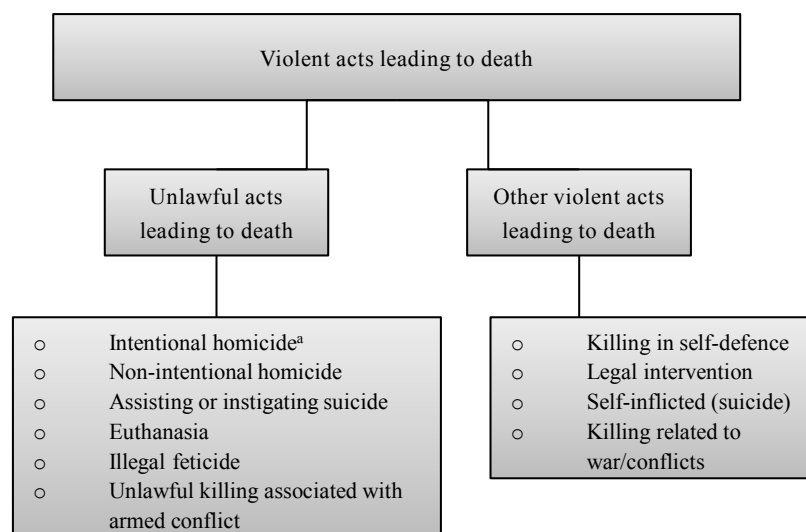
² Data received from Member States are available at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime.html.

II. Monitoring violence and related death rates

6. Under Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 16.1 is to “significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere”. Within the overarching objective of reducing all forms of violence, reducing lethal violence is given specific importance. As figure 1 shows, there are multiple types of violent death, and while some of those are considered unlawful, others, for different reasons, are generally not punishable under national legislation. Consistent with the remit for work by UNODC, this section will focus on unlawful killings, in particular intentional homicide, which globally is the most significant form of lethal unlawful violence.

Figure 1

Typology of violent acts leading to death



Source: International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, version 1.0 (March 2015).

^a Intentional homicide includes several types of unlawful killings, such as honour killing, dowry-related killing, femicide, death as a result of terrorist activities, extrajudicial killing and killing caused by excessive use of force by law enforcement/State officials.

A. Global levels and trends in intentional homicide

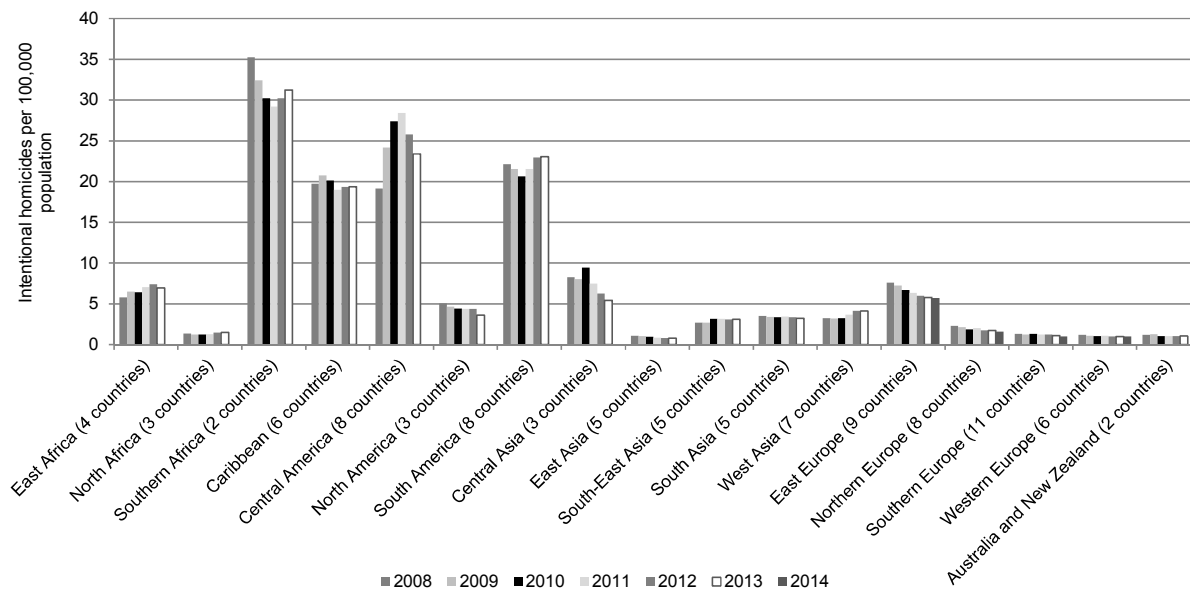
7. The rate of intentional homicide varies greatly among the different areas of the world (see figure 2). According to available data, Southern Africa and Central and South America and the Caribbean are the subregions that consistently have high levels of intentional homicide.³ In addition, there are significant differences in the trends over time in different geographical areas: over the last few years, homicide rates have increased in Southern Africa and South America but also in countries in

³ Trend data are lacking for most countries in Africa and a number of countries in Asia and Oceania.

East and North Africa and in West Asia, while decreasing in Central America and Central Asia.

Figure 2

Recent trends in intentional homicide, by subregion, 2008-2014



Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2016).

Note: The number of countries represented in each region is denoted in brackets.

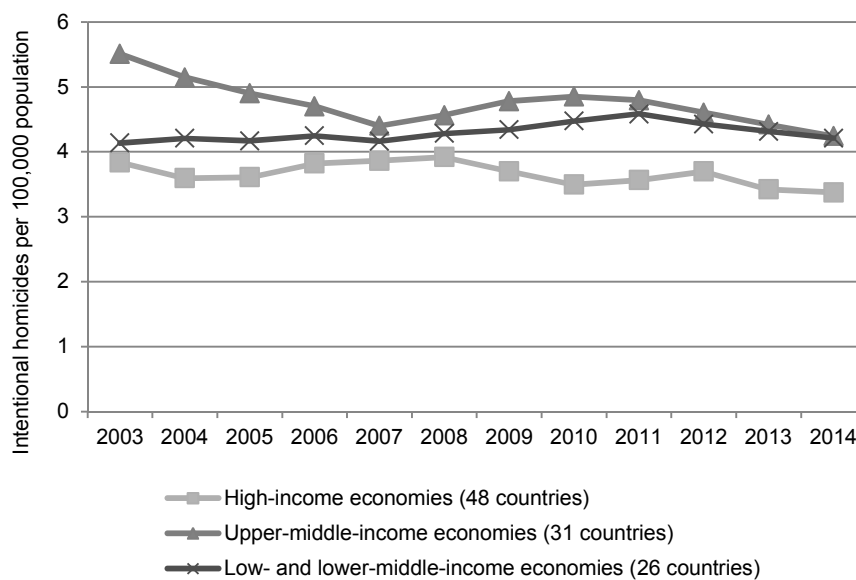
8. A number of social and economic factors influence homicide levels and trends. Homicide patterns do not vary significantly according to the average per capita income of countries. Since 2003, on average, homicide rates have slowly decreased both in upper-middle-income and high-income countries and have remained fairly stable in low-income countries (see figure 3 (a)). As a consequence of those gradual changes, by 2014 homicide levels were about equal, on average, in upper-middle-income and low-income and lower-middle-income countries, and were somewhat lower in the group of high-income countries.

9. At the global level, homicide rates are more closely linked to income inequality within the country than to the country's level of average per capita income. The group of countries with the highest Gini index⁴ (i.e., the greatest income inequality), displays intentional homicide rates that are between 6 and 9 times greater than the intentional homicide rates in the groups of countries with either medium or low levels of income inequality, an indication that distribution of income within a country, rather than the average national income, may have an impact on intentional homicide rates (see figure 3 (b)).

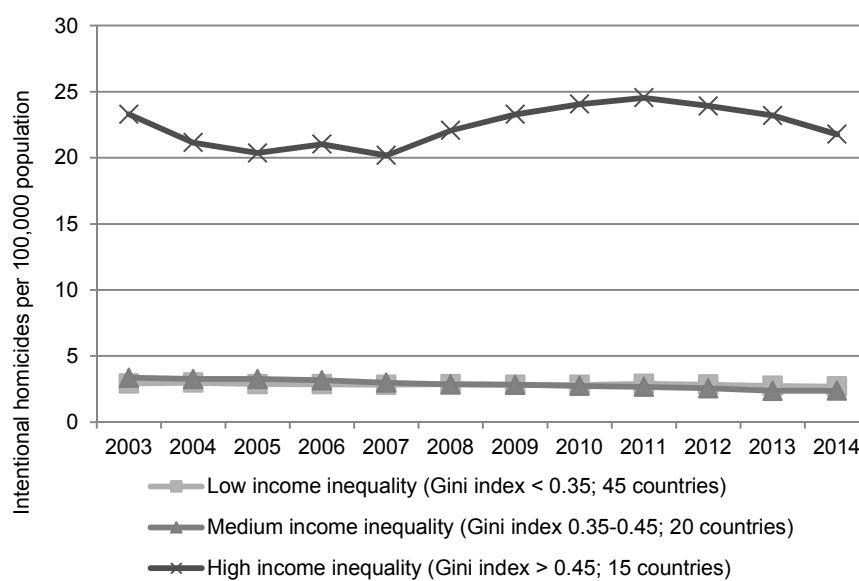
⁴ The Gini index is a widely used measure of the distribution of income in a country. A country's income distribution falls on a scale between 0 (total income equally distributed among the total population) and 1 (the point at which only one person would have all national income).

Figure 3
Recent trends in intentional homicide, by level of income and by level of income inequality, 2003-2014

(a) Intentional homicides per 100,000 population, by level of income, 2003-2014



(b) Intentional homicides per 100,000 population, by level of income inequality, 2003-2014



Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2016).

Note: Data on income categories and the Gini index are from the World Bank (2015). The number of countries represented in the relevant categories is denoted in brackets.

B. Victims and perpetrators of intentional homicide, by sex and age

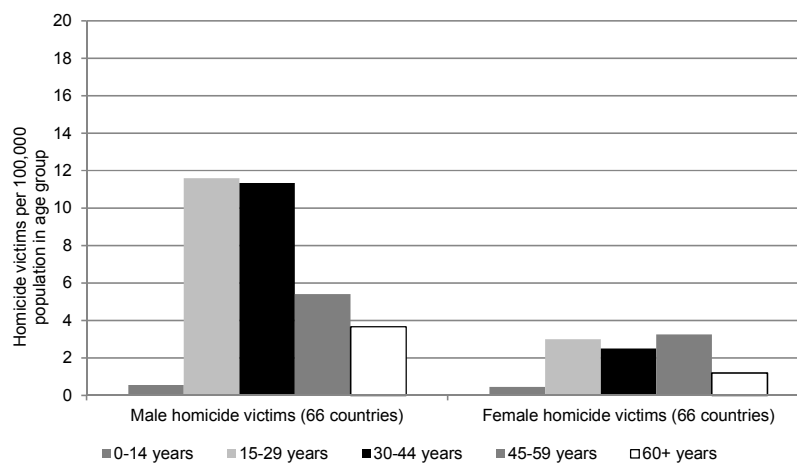
10. Intentional homicide is a male-dominated crime: globally around 80 per cent of intentional homicide victims are male, although women make up almost one third of homicide victims in Asia, Europe and Oceania (regions with below-average homicide rates). At the same time, globally, 90 per cent of the perpetrators of homicide are male, with that rate being similar in all regions.⁵

11. While men have the highest risk of becoming victims of homicide in the age groups 15-29 years and 30-44 years, women have a slightly higher homicide risk in age group 45-59 years (see figure 4 (a)). This mirrors the higher risk for men of being killed in homicides related to organized or other crimes, and gang-related violence, while women are more at risk of homicides by intimate partners or family members. With respect to perpetrators of homicide,⁶ the young age of persons arrested for or suspected of homicide is the dominant feature: the age groups 18-24 years and 25-29 years clearly have the highest rate of suspected homicide perpetrators, especially for males (see figure 4 (b)). Particularly in the Americas, for the 10 countries for which data are available, as many as 25 of every 100,000 young males aged 18-24 years have been arrested for or suspected of homicide in 2014, a clear indication that that population group is in need of targeted prevention policies.

Figure 4

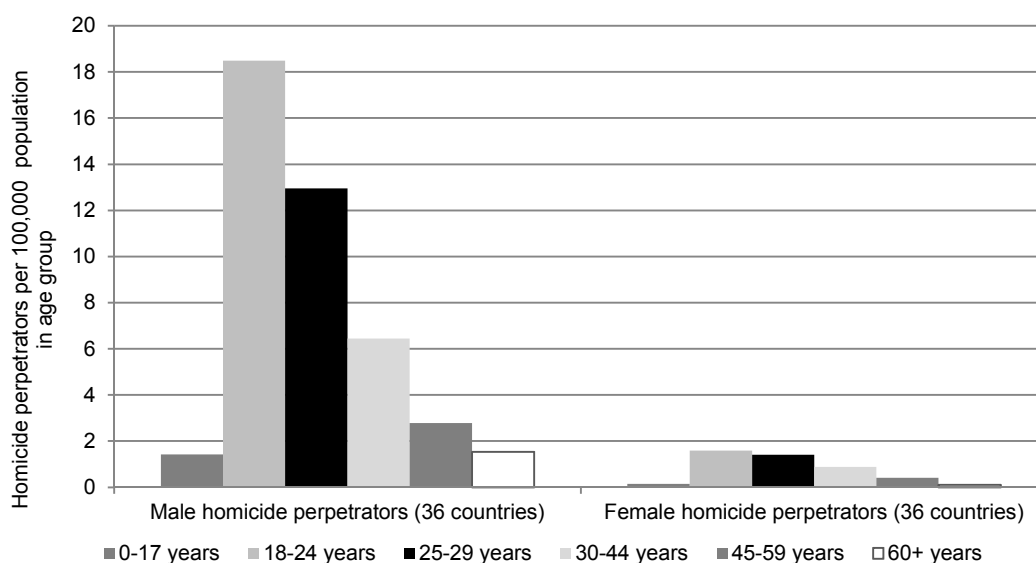
Victims and perpetrators of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age, 2014 or latest year

(a) *Homicide victims per 100,000 male/female population, by age*



⁵ See the report of the Secretary-General on the state of crime and criminal justice worldwide (A/CONF.222/4).

⁶ In interpreting these data, it should be taken into account that persons arrested for or suspected of homicide are not necessarily formally charged at the prosecution stage and/or convicted in courts. However, the number of persons arrested/suspected for homicide is typically lower than the number of homicides, and this ratio varies greatly from region to region (see UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2013: Trends, Context and Data* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 14.IV.1)).

(b) *Homicide perpetrators per 100,000 male/female population, by age*

Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2016).

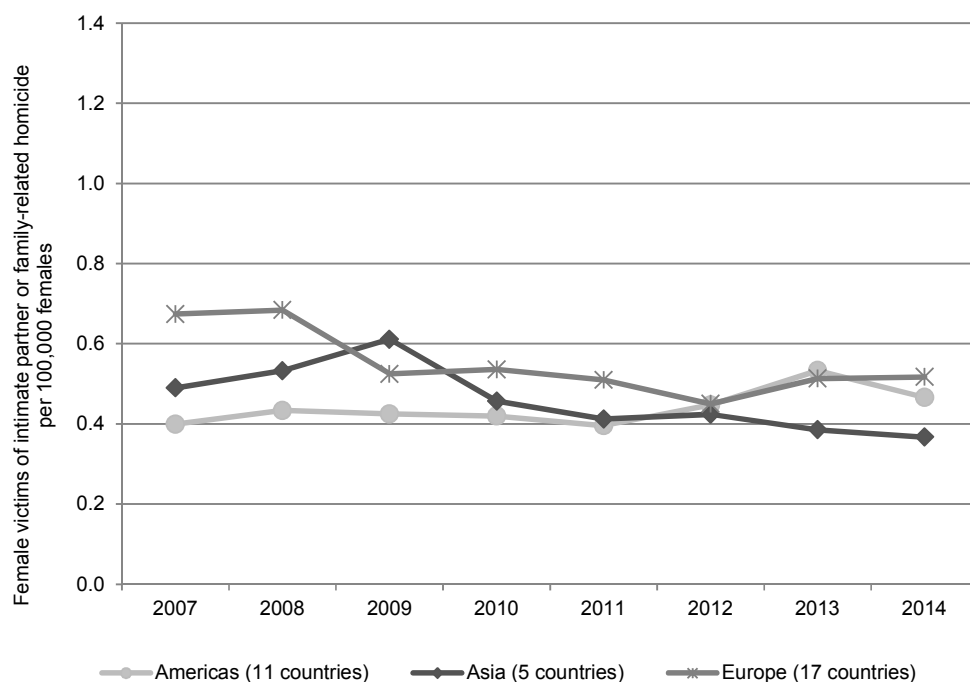
C. Gender-related killing of women and girls

12. Killings of women by their intimate partners or other family members are an important component of gender-related killing:⁷ women make up the majority of victims of homicide perpetrated by intimate partners or family members (60 per cent in a sample of 53 countries worldwide), and they constitute an even higher share of victims of homicide perpetrated by intimate partners. In the 36 countries worldwide for which data were available, women made up 78 per cent of all victims of intimate partner homicides, with few differences between regions.

13. Furthermore, available trend data indicate that the rates of female victims of homicide by intimate partners and family members are very similar from region to region and are relatively stable over time (see figure 5). While gender-related killings do not take place only within the domestic sphere, data suggest that this form of intentional homicide is similarly prevalent in all regions. The global and persistent killing of women by their intimate partners and close relatives requires renewed efforts to be fully understood in order to establish more effective prevention policies and criminal justice responses.

⁷ See UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2013*. Data on gender-related killing of women and girls can provide insights on broader patterns of violence against women and girls, an explicitly target of the Sustainable Development Goals (target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation).

Figure 5
Female victims of intimate partner or family-related homicide per 100,000, 2007-2014



Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2016).

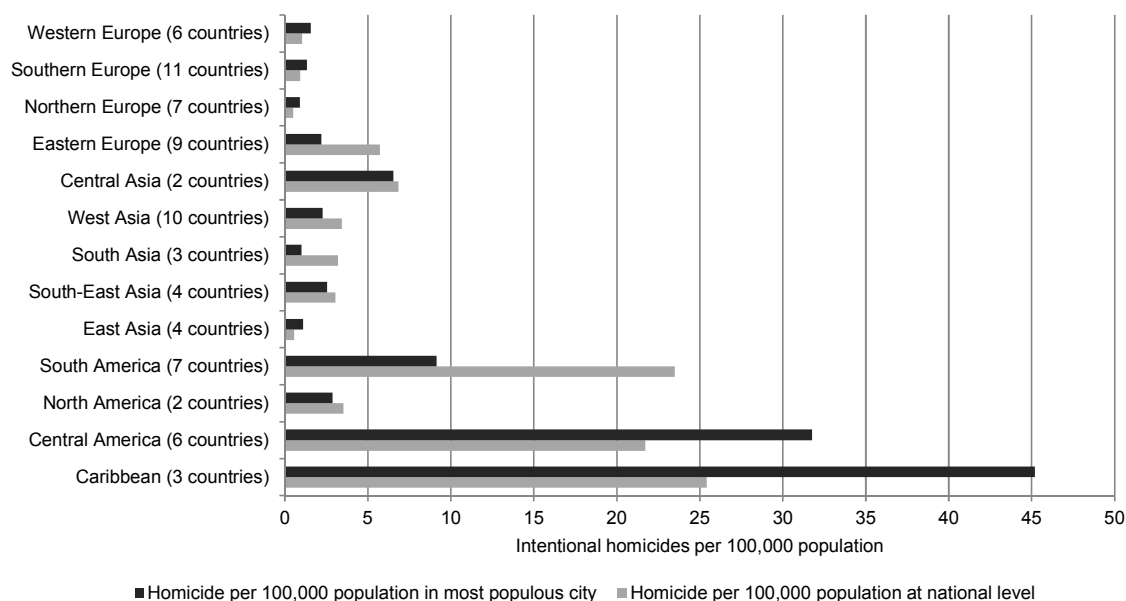
D. Intentional homicides in cities

14. Urban violence is a major concern in many countries, and providing access to safe spaces in cities is an explicit element of Sustainable Development Goal 11.⁸ Homicide rates are often considerably higher in big cities than in rural areas due to a multitude of risk factors for crime and violence that are concentrated in cities, including high levels of income inequality, the potential for anonymity within a dense population and poor urban planning.⁹ At the regional level, the most populous cities in individual countries of Central America and the Caribbean have homicide rates that are higher than the respective value for the country as a whole (see figure 6). However, in South America, Eastern Europe and other subregions, the most populous cities have homicide rates that are considerably below the national level.

⁸ Target 11.7 (By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities).

⁹ See UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2011*.

Figure 6
Intentional homicides per 100,000 population in the most populous city and at the national level, by subregion, 2014 or latest year



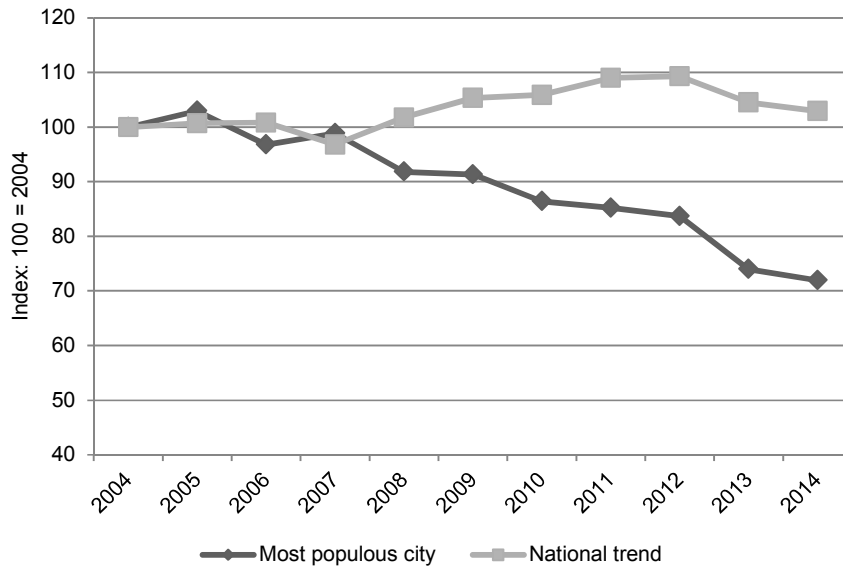
Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2016).

Note: The number of countries reporting in each subregion is denoted in brackets. Cities refer to the most populous city in each country.

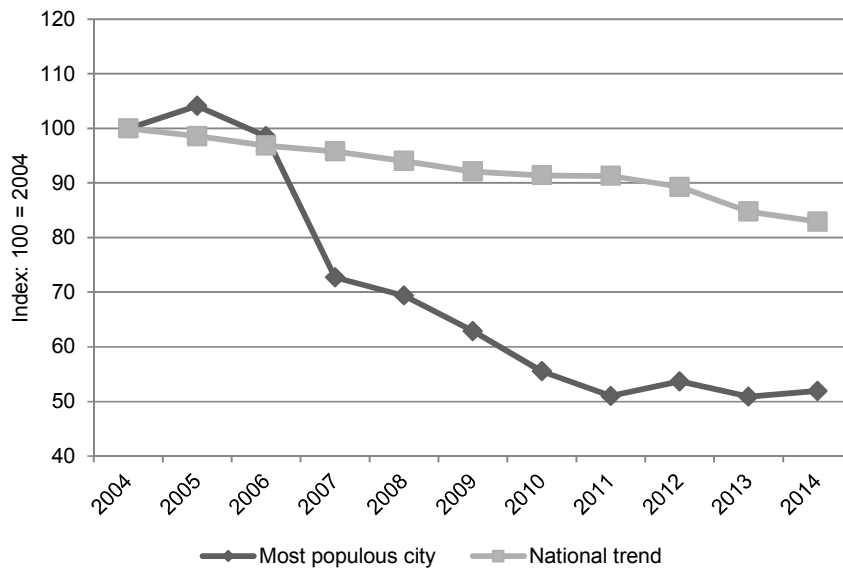
15. Over the past decade, rates of homicides in the most populous cities consistently decreased in all regions, although at different paces. In all regions, the average decrease in the most populous city of countries was greater than the overall decrease at the national level (see figure 7). While the experience of a country's most populous city is not always representative of all cities, these trends highlight that much can be done to reduce homicidal violence by tailoring crime prevention strategies and policies to address the root causes of crime and violence at the local and city levels.

Figure 7
Trends in intentional homicides per 100,000 population in the most populous city and at the national level, by region, 2004-2014

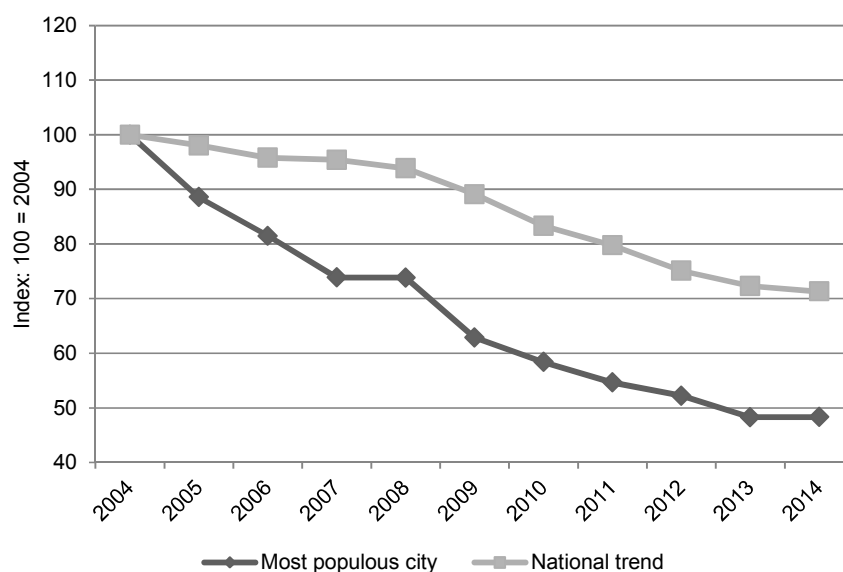
(a) *Trends in intentional homicide in the most populous city and at the national level, 2004-2014: the Americas (16 cities/countries)*



(b) *Trends in intentional homicide in the most populous city and at the national level, 2004-2014: Asia (14 cities/countries)*



- (c) Trends in intentional homicide in the most populous city and at the national level, 2004-2014: Europe (33 cities/countries)



Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2016).

Note: The number of countries and cities represented in each subregion is denoted in brackets. Cities refer to the most populous city in each country.

III. Monitoring the rule of law, access to justice and corruption

16. The broad theme of ensuring the rule of law and providing equal access to justice for all has many aspects, many of which are directly related to crime and criminal justice. The following discussion relates to indicators relevant to the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals targets 16.3, 16.5 and 16.a.¹⁰

A. Crime victims and their access to justice

17. Ensuring the rule of law and access to justice for those who have been a victim of a crime is a core State function, and it requires open and effective communication between citizens and police or judicial authorities. For different reasons, such as lack of information, obstacles in physical accessibility, fear of stigmatization, lack of trust or corruption, crime victims may not report their experience to authorities and are thus already barred from access to justice at an early stage. Data on the share of victims that report the crime to police or other law enforcement agencies (i.e., the crime reporting rate) therefore provide a direct measurement of the

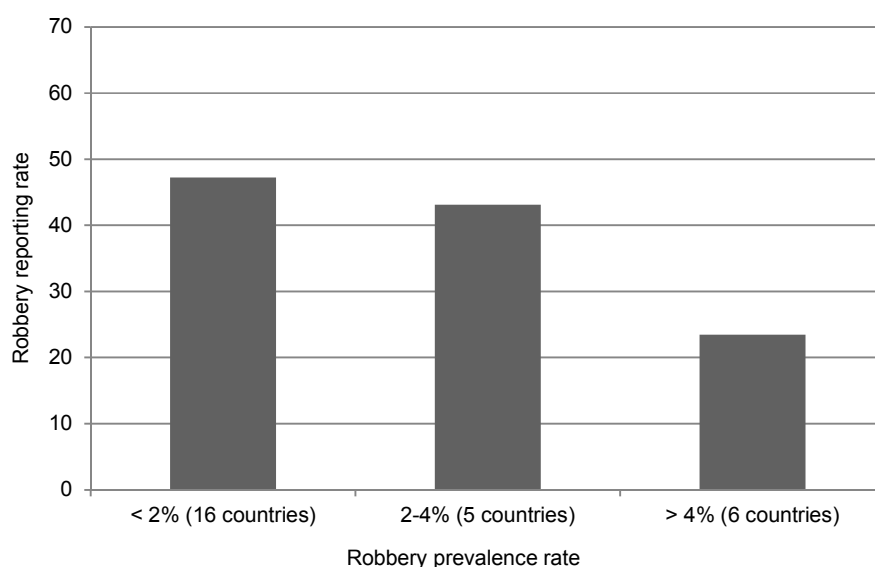
¹⁰ Target 16.3 (Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all), target 16.5 (Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms) and target 16.a (Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime).

first step needed to start the justice process and serve as a measure of the accessibility of justice. Those data also provide an indirect measurement of other important aspects of the multidimensional concept of the rule of law, including the capacity, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of criminal justice institutions.¹¹ Those data can be produced through crime victimization surveys, and available information indicate that the reporting rates¹² for the crimes of robbery and burglary are lower in countries with higher prevalence rates for both types of crime, indicating that access to criminal justice tends to be lower exactly where there is more need for it (see figure 8).

Figure 8

Percentage of victims who reported robbery or burglary to the police, by level of prevalence, 2014 or latest year

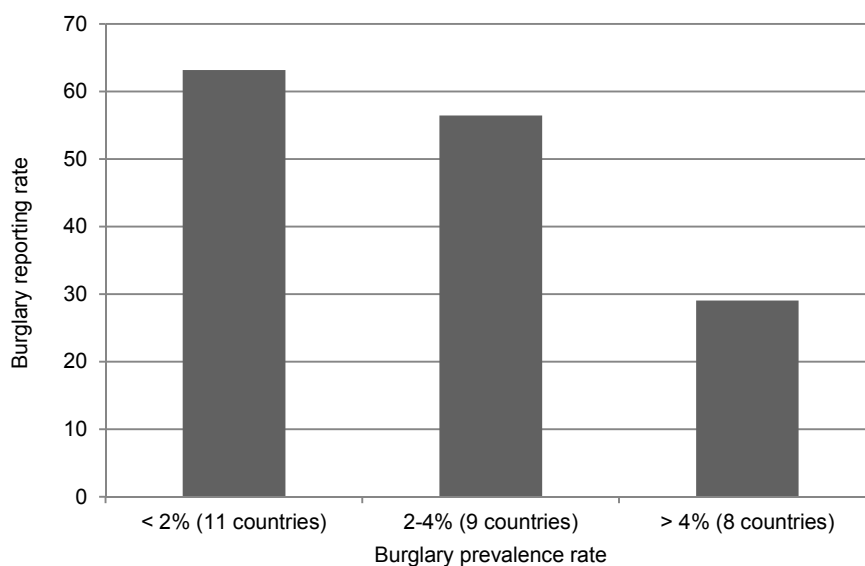
(a) *Percentage of victims who reported robbery to the police, by prevalence of robbery, 2014 or latest year*



¹¹ See also *The United Nations Rule of Law Indicators: Implementation Guide and Project Tools* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.I.13).

¹² As the reporting rate for burglary may also be linked to the reporting requirements for insurance coverage purposes, a stronger indicator is provided by the reporting rate for violent crime (such as robbery and physical assault). Data on the reporting rate for physical assault are currently collected by the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and will be used in future analysis of reporting to police.

(b) *Percentage of victims who reported burglary to the police, by prevalence of burglary, 2014 or latest year*



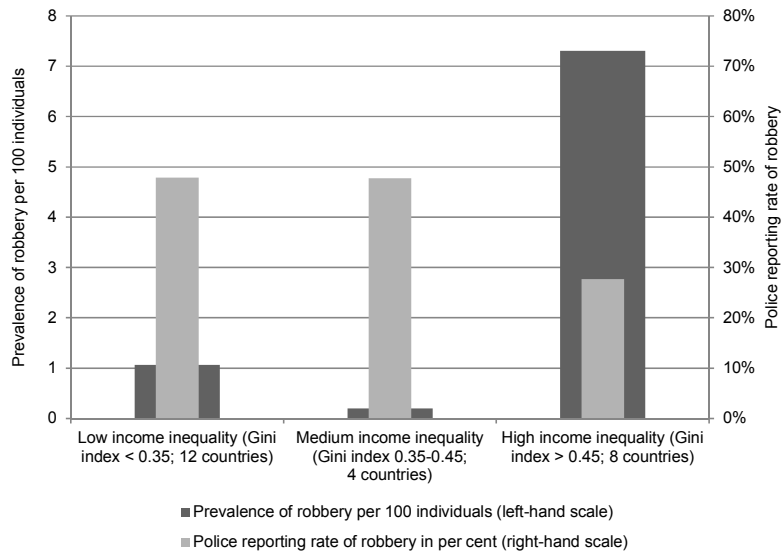
Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

Note: Number of countries represented in each category is denoted in brackets. Averages are non-weighted averages of country rates. Prevalence rates denote experience of victimization over the past 12 months as a percentage of responding individuals (robbery) or households (burglary).

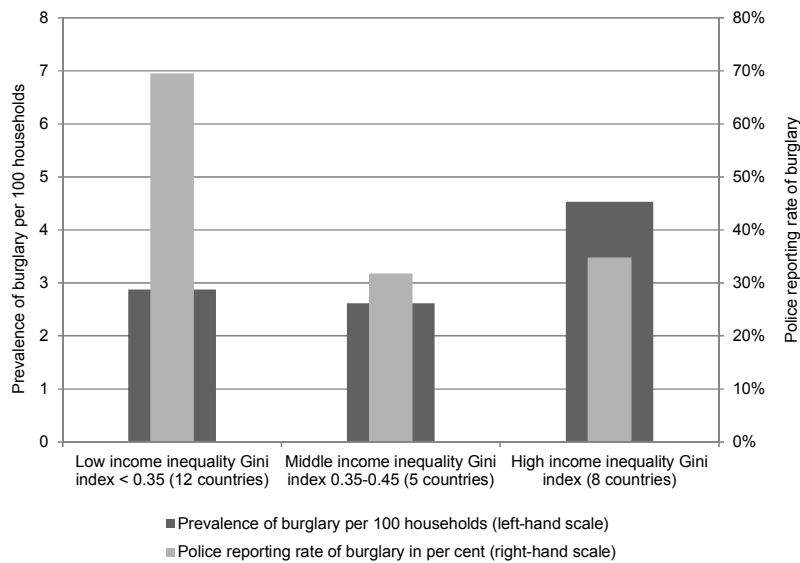
18. Moreover, as shown in figure 9, the level of income inequality also appears to influence the interaction between the prevalence of crime victimization and the crime reporting rate. Countries with higher levels of income inequality have both a significantly higher prevalence rate of robbery and burglary and a lower police reporting rate for both crimes. The link between income inequality within a country and the country's crime intensity is confirmed, and, in parallel, tends to be accompanied by reduced access to justice and therefore weaker rule of law.

Figure 9
Prevalence rate of robbery and burglary and percentage of victims who reported robbery and burglary to the police, by income level, 2014 or latest year

(a) *Prevalence rate of robbery and percentage of victims who reported robbery to the police, by income level, 2014 or latest year*



(b) *Prevalence rate of burglary and percentage of victims who reported burglary to the police, by income level, 2014 or latest year*



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

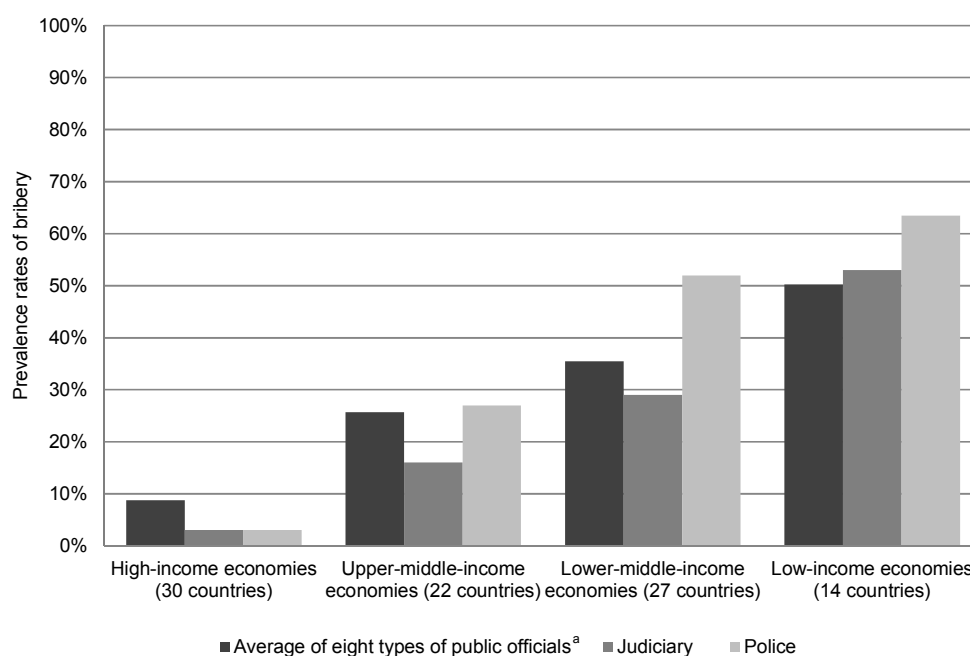
Note: The number of countries represented in each category is denoted in brackets. Averages are non-weighted averages of country rates. Prevalence rates denote experience of victimization over the past 12 months as a percentage of responding individuals (robbery) or households (burglary).

B. Corruption

19. The existence of corruption in public service, in particular in the criminal justice system, can be a serious obstacle to the equitable, efficient and fair dispensing of justice. A direct indicator of the corruption experienced by individuals in dealing with public officials and/or civil servants is the prevalence of bribery as measured by corruption/victimization surveys.¹³ Figure 10 shows that the prevalence of bribery is closely related to the average level of national income and is significantly higher in poorer countries than in richer ones. In poorer countries, the prevalence of bribes paid to police officers and the judiciary is of particular concern for the criminal justice system and with respect to the rule of law, and such bribery is indicative of reduced access to equitable justice. While there are several other forms of corruption¹⁴ whose extent and patterns might be different from those for bribery, their analysis and monitoring is currently hampered by the lack of solid metrics.

Figure 10

Prevalence rates of bribery by type of public official, by level of income, 2013



Source: UNODC calculations based on Transparency International's 2013 Global Corruption Barometer.

^a The average of eight types of public officials includes officials from the sectors of education, judiciary, medical and health, police, registry and permits, utilities, tax revenue and customs and land services.

¹³ It is defined here as the percentage of the population that had contact with a public official and have paid at least one bribe to such an official in the past 12 months.

¹⁴ The United Nations Convention against Corruption lists and defines a number of relevant criminal offences.

20. In addition to bribery, the United Nations Convention against Corruption addresses several other forms of corruption and the Convention's Implementation Review Mechanism, now in its fifth year,¹⁵ demonstrates that States increasingly approach their fight against corruption in a broad and strategic manner. For example, a rapidly growing number of countries have adopted a comprehensive national anti-corruption strategy: in 2015 alone, at least 17 States produced such a policy document for the first time. The implementation of such strategies, often produced with UNODC support, will be crucial to achieve target 16.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁶

C. Treatment of prisoners

21. An important element of access to justice and the rule of law is that prisoners — pretrial (unsentenced) detainees and sentenced persons — are treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings, as emphasized by the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).¹⁷ Furthermore, in accordance with the fundamental right of anyone charged with a criminal offence to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law, pretrial detention should be used as a last resort in criminal proceedings. If pretrial detention is imposed, detainees suspected of or charged with a crime are entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release pending trial.¹⁸ The number and share of persons held in prison without any sentence is thus an important indicator of fairness, as well as efficiency, in the criminal justice system.¹⁹

22. Globally, for the 145 countries for which data are available, the share of unsentenced detainees to the overall prison population decreased from 32 to 30 per cent between the period 2003-2005 and the period 2012-2014²⁰ (see figure 11). While countries in Africa and Asia saw a significant decrease, the proportion of pretrial detainees in the two regions remained high, 38 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively. Countries in Europe also recorded a decrease (from 20 to 17 per cent), while the Americas and Oceania experienced small increases (from 27 to 29 per cent, and 23 to 24 per cent, respectively).

¹⁵ To date, 178 States are party to the Convention against Corruption, and 145 of those States have completed or are near completion of their review process.

¹⁶ Target 16.5 (Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms).

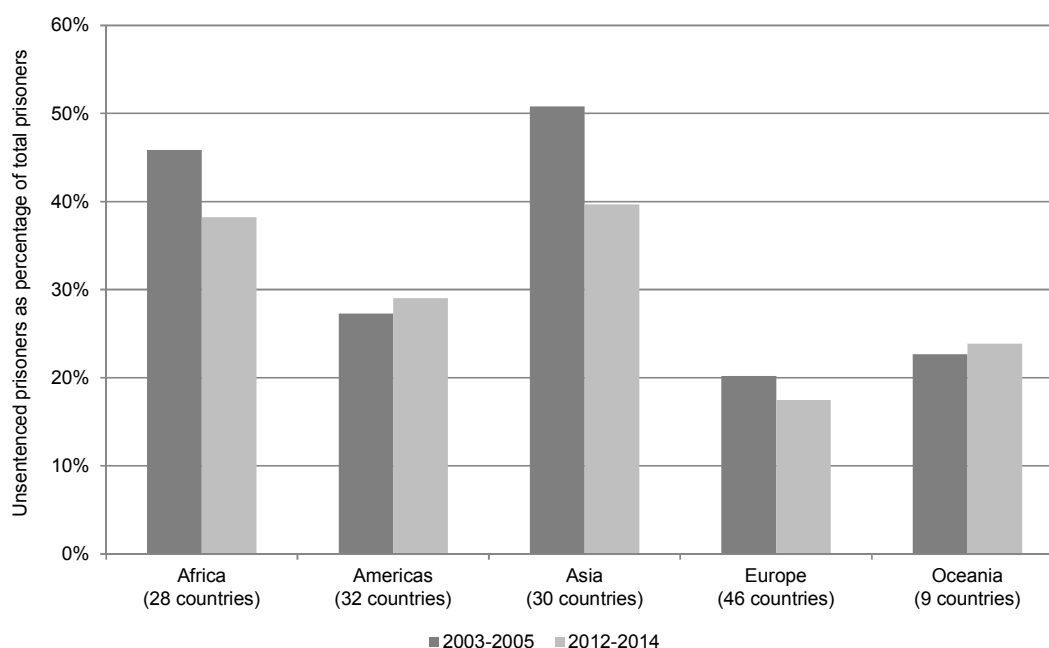
¹⁷ General Assembly resolution 70/175, annex.

¹⁸ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex, art. 14, para. 2; United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules), General Assembly resolution 45/110, annex, rule 6, para. 1; Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, General Assembly resolution 43/173, annex, principle 38.

¹⁹ The proposed Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.3.2. (Unsentenced detainees as a percentage of overall prison population) refers to persons held unsentenced or pretrial in prisons, penal or correctional institutions, including persons who have not yet been tried or are still awaiting a first instance decision on their case from a court while excluding prisoners awaiting the outcome of an appeal to a verdict or sentence.

²⁰ Over the same period, the absolute number of pretrial detainees increased by 6 per cent, while the number of all prisoners increased by 13 per cent.

Figure 11
Unsentenced prisoners as percentage of total prisoners, by region, 2003-2005 and 2012-2014 (three-year averages), by region



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and International Centre for Prison Studies.

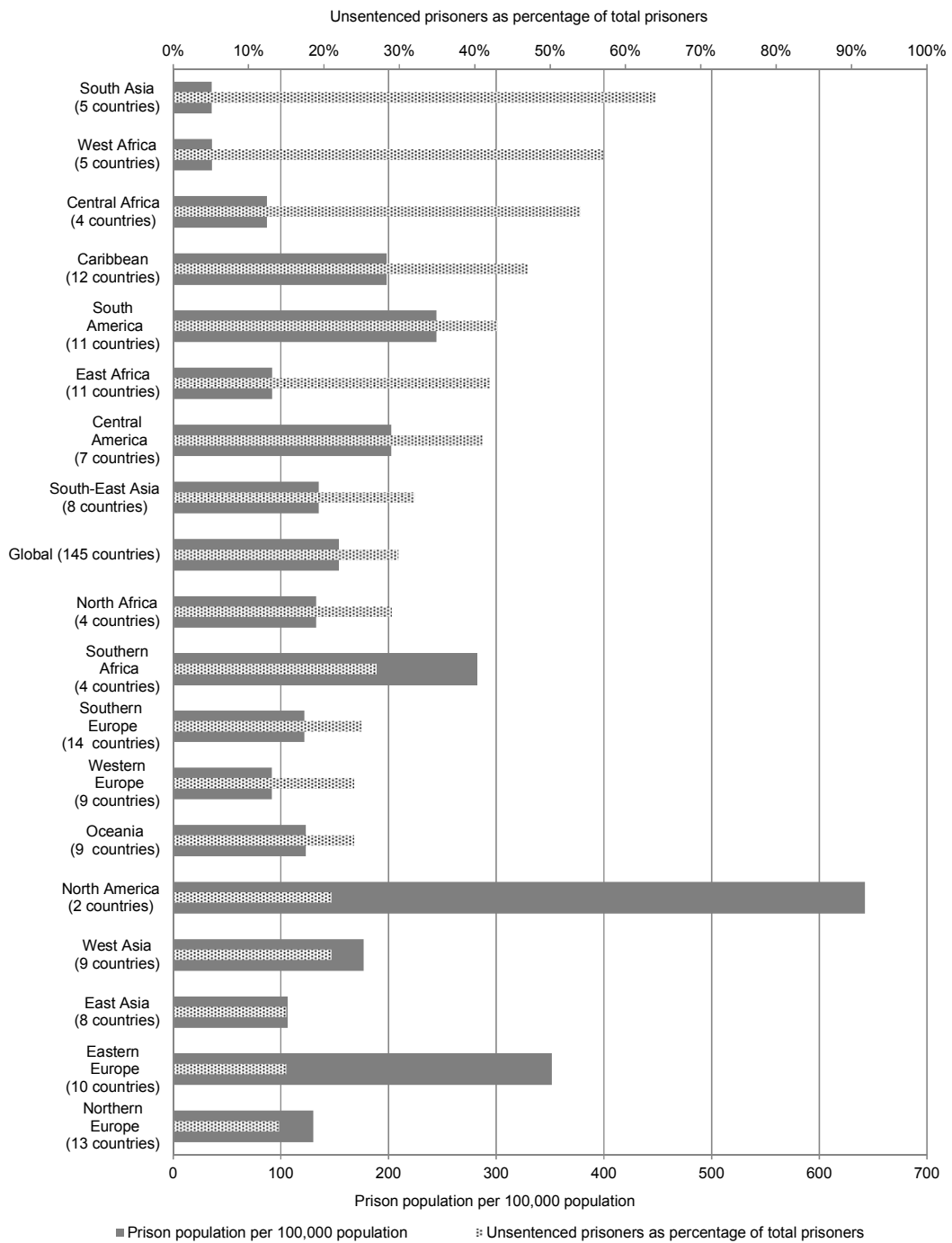
Note: The number of countries represented in each region is denoted in brackets.

23. Those trends in the share of unsentenced prisoners occurred while the total prison population continued to grow in absolute numbers (from 9.1 million in the period 2003-2005 to 10.2 million in the period 2012-2014) and increased slightly in proportion to the world population (the global rate of imprisonment has increased from 143 to 145 per 100,000 population in that same time).²¹ At the regional level, large increases in prison populations over the past decade were observed in South America, South-East Asia and West Asia (increases of 64 per cent, 40 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively). While women prisoners continue to be a minority in all regions (less than 10 per cent), the female prison population has increased faster than the male prison population on every continent.

24. As shown in figure 12, for 145 countries for which detailed data on unsentenced detainees are available, there is no direct relationship between the imprisonment rate (number of prisoners per 100,000 population) and the share of prisoners that are unsentenced prisoners. While parts of Africa and Asia have high shares of unsentenced prisoners, their overall imprisonment rates tend to be relatively low in comparison with other regions.

²¹ Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems have been complemented with data from the World Prison Population List and the World Pretrial/Remand Imprisonment List compiled by the International Centre for Prison Studies, now at the Institute for Criminal Policy Research at the University of London.

Figure 12
Total prison population per 100,000 population and unsentenced prisoners as a percentage of total prisoners, 2003-2005 and 2012-2014 (three-year averages)

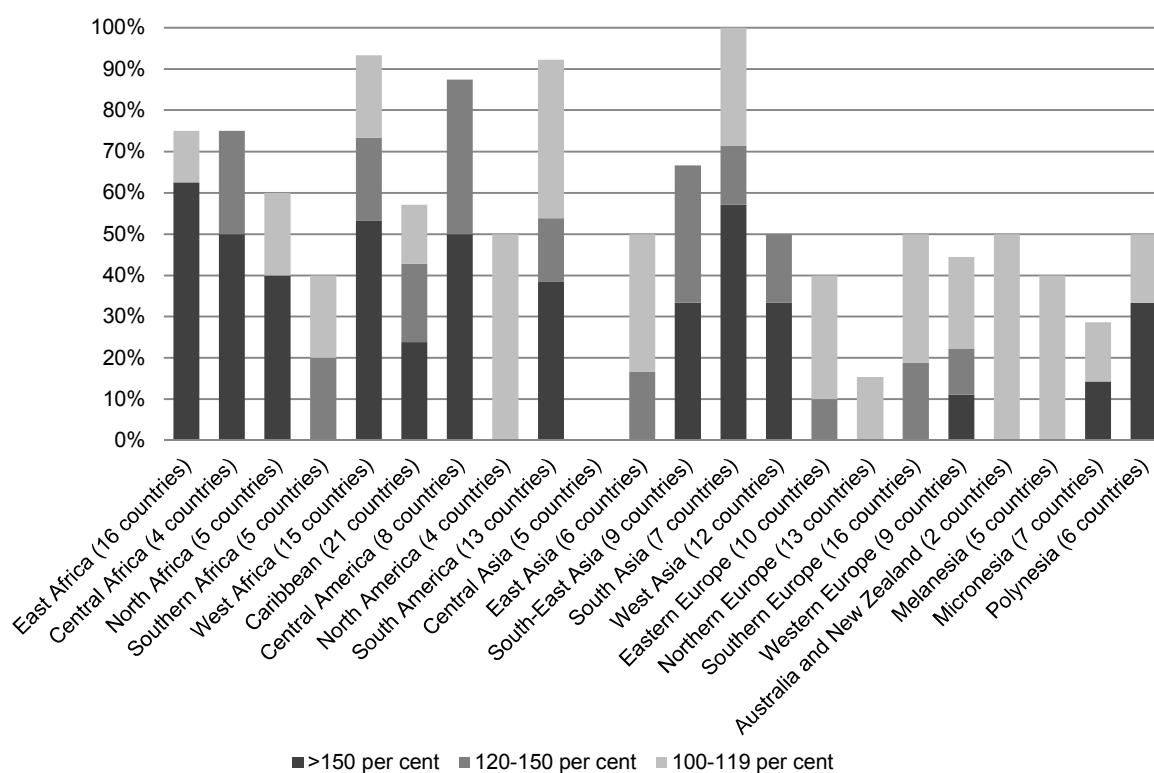


Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and International Centre for Prison Studies.

25. Prison overcrowding constitutes a priority challenge for prison administrations around the world. Globally, among 198 countries for which data on prison capacity are available, as many as 115 countries (58 per cent) had a rate of prison occupation above 100 per cent of capacity (overcrowding), 79 countries (40 per cent) had a rate of prison occupation above 120 per cent of capacity (critical overcrowding), and as many as 51 countries (26 per cent) had a problem of extreme overcrowding (above 150 per cent of capacity). Prison overcrowding is particularly severe in East, Central and West Africa, Central America and South Asia (see figure 13). Furthermore, the fact that the overall number of prisoners in a given country is lower than the total number of prison places does not necessarily mean that the country is not facing overcrowding in some of its prisons (localized prison overcrowding). As outlined in previous reports,²² high rates of overcrowding are often accompanied by high levels of violence within prison walls.

Figure 13

Percentage of countries where the prison population is over 100 per cent, 120 per cent and 150 per cent of capacity, by subregion, 2014 or latest year



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and International Centre for Prison Studies.

Note: Number of countries represented in each subregion is denoted in brackets.

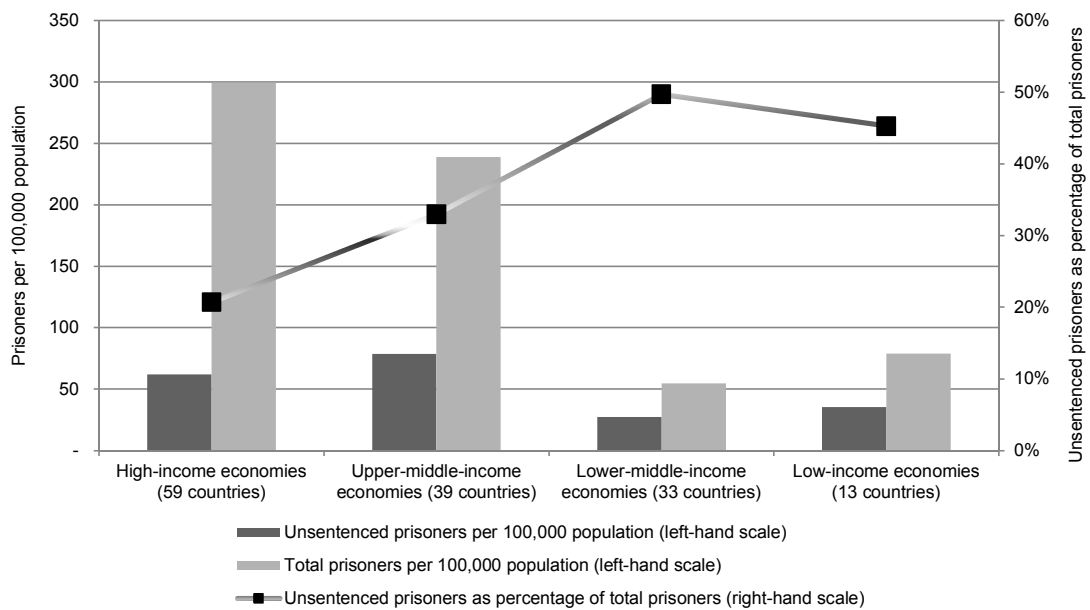
²² See, for example, A/CONF.222/4, E/CN.15/2014/5 and E/CN.15/2013/9.

26. The analysis of pretrial detention and prison overcrowding by level of income of countries confirms that poorer countries often experience critical situations. In particular, such countries tend to have prison populations which are smaller in size, but with a much higher share of unsentenced prisoners (see figure 14 (a)). A very similar pattern applies to total prison capacity in relation to total prisoners held, with a higher rate of overcrowding, on average, for lower-income countries, which have a lower rate of imprisonment but even lower capacities (see figure 14 (b)). These common patterns suggest that as opposed to particularly high rates of imprisonment, other factors, such as the lack of resources and capacity constraints account for issues of pretrial detention and prison overcrowding in many low-income countries.

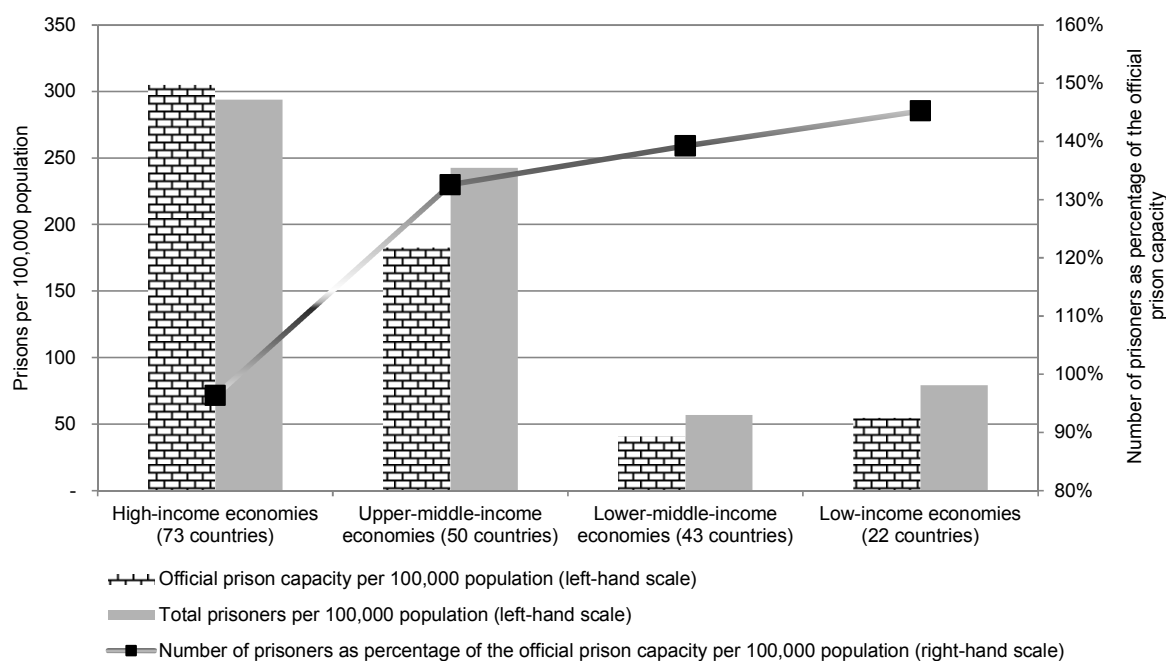
Figure 14

Rate and share of unsentenced prisoners and prisoners as a percentage of total prison capacity, by income level, 2014 or latest year

(a) *Unsentenced prisoners as a percentage of total prisoners and per 100,000 population, 2014 or latest year, by income level*



(b) *Prisoners as a percentage of total prison capacity and per 100,000 population, 2014 or latest year, by income level*



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and International Centre for Prison Studies.

Note: The number of countries represented in each category is denoted in brackets.

D. Sentenced prisoners by principle offence

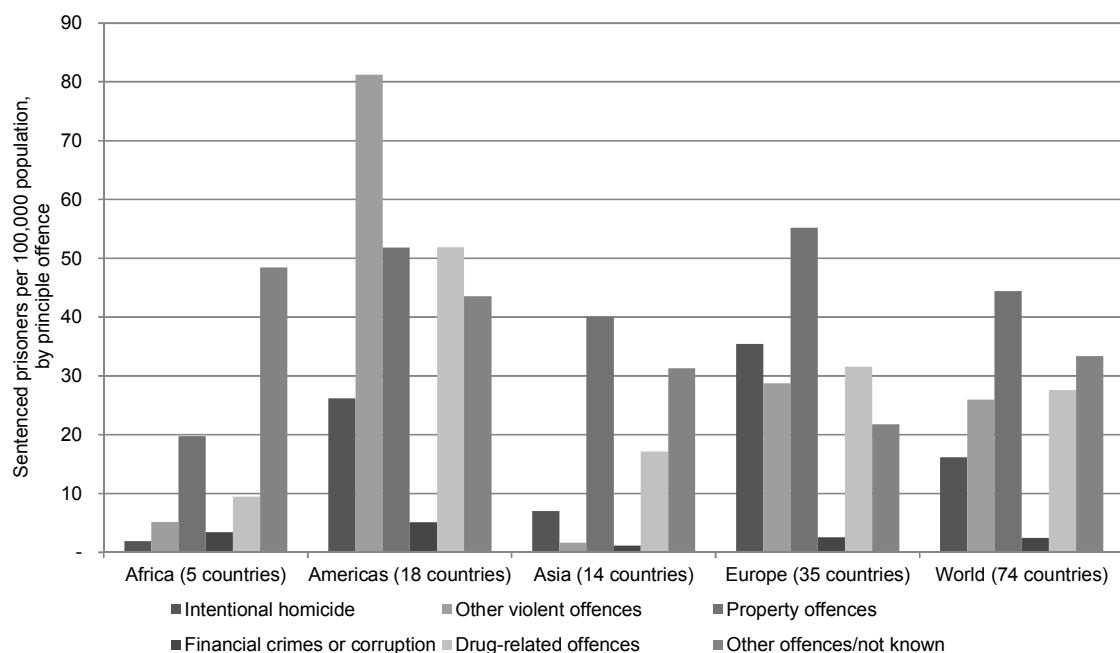
27. The proper classification of prisoners, which also takes account of their criminal record, among other elements, is essential to ensuring that prisoners are allocated to a prison regime in line with individually assessed risks and needs, including access to tailored rehabilitation programmes. Based on data for 74 countries worldwide, figure 15 shows the main offence groups for sentenced prisoners.²³ Globally, and in most regions, the largest share of sentenced persons in prison have been convicted for property offences (44 persons per 100,000 population, or 30 per cent of the total). About as many prisoners have been sentenced for violent offences, which can be divided into intentional homicide (16 persons per 100,000, or 11 per cent of the total) and other violent offences such as manslaughter, assault, robbery or sexual violence (26 persons per 100,000 population, or 17 per cent). Prisoners convicted for drug-related offences (drug possession and drug trafficking) account for 18 per cent of all prisoners (28 persons per 100,000 population), while financial crimes and corruption make up only 2 per cent (2 persons per 100,000 population).

²³ If the conviction is for more than one offence, a principle offence rule is usually applied whereby only the most serious offence should be counted.

28. There are some salient patterns in the rates of sentenced prisoners by principle offence at the regional level.²⁴ For example, in the Americas, the rate of prisoners sentenced for violent offences (81 persons per 100,000 population) is more than double the rate in Europe (29 persons per 100,000 population), while the rate of prisoners sentenced for intentional homicide is lower in the Americas (26 persons versus 35 persons per 100,000 population), despite a much higher homicide rate, signalling a higher rate of impunity in the Americas. There is also a higher rate of persons in prison for drug-related offences in the Americas (52 persons per 100,000 population) than in Europe or Asia (32 persons and 17 per 100,000 population, respectively), while the shares of prisoners sentenced for drug-related offences out of all sentenced prisoners are roughly equal (20, 17 and 18 per cent in the Americas, Asia and Europe, respectively).

Figure 15

Sentenced prisoners, by principle offence of final sentence, 2014 or latest year



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

Note: The world total also includes two countries from Oceania.

29. New data, available for a limited number of countries (29 countries worldwide), indicate that in these countries more than three quarters of all persons held in prison for drug-related offences are convicted of drug trafficking and less than a quarter for drug possession (see figure 16).²⁵ This pattern holds for all

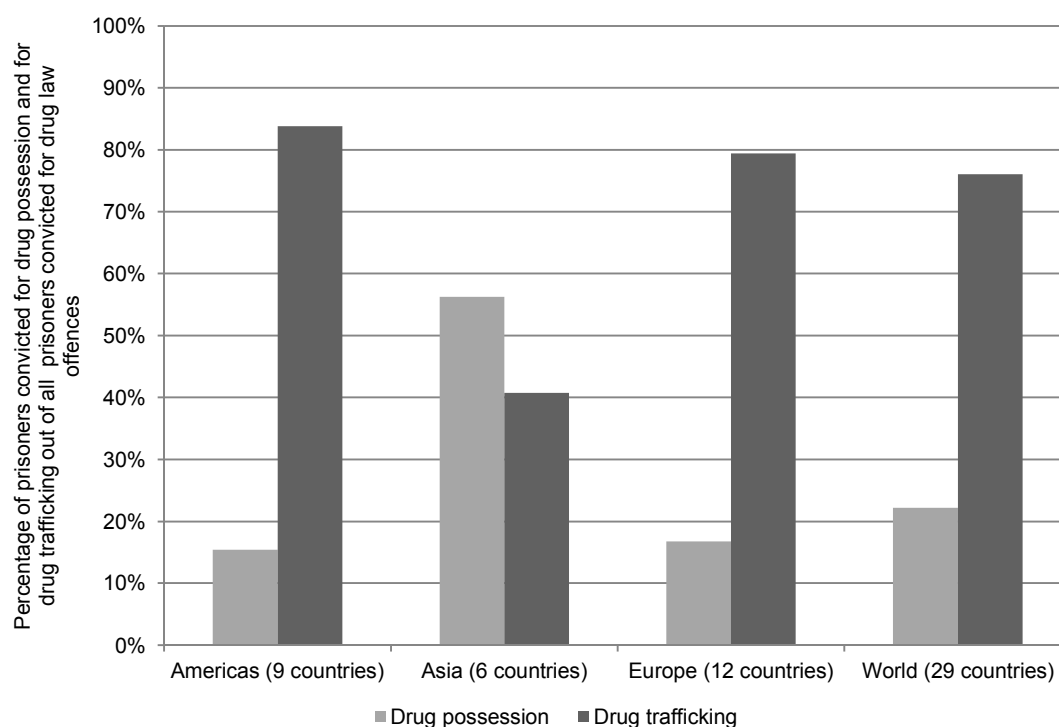
²⁴ Caution is required in the interpretation of results where the share of “other offences/not known” is atypically high (as in reporting countries in Africa and Asia).

²⁵ In the interpretation of these data, it should be taken into account that, despite a clear separation of the concepts in the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, at the national level there are some differences between countries in the various definitions of personal use offences and trafficking offences.

regions except Asia, where available data for six countries indicate that a majority (56 per cent) of drug-related offenders in prison are held for drug possession for personal use.

Figure 16

Prisoners convicted of drug possession and drug trafficking as a percentage of all prisoners convicted for drug law offences, 2014 or latest year



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

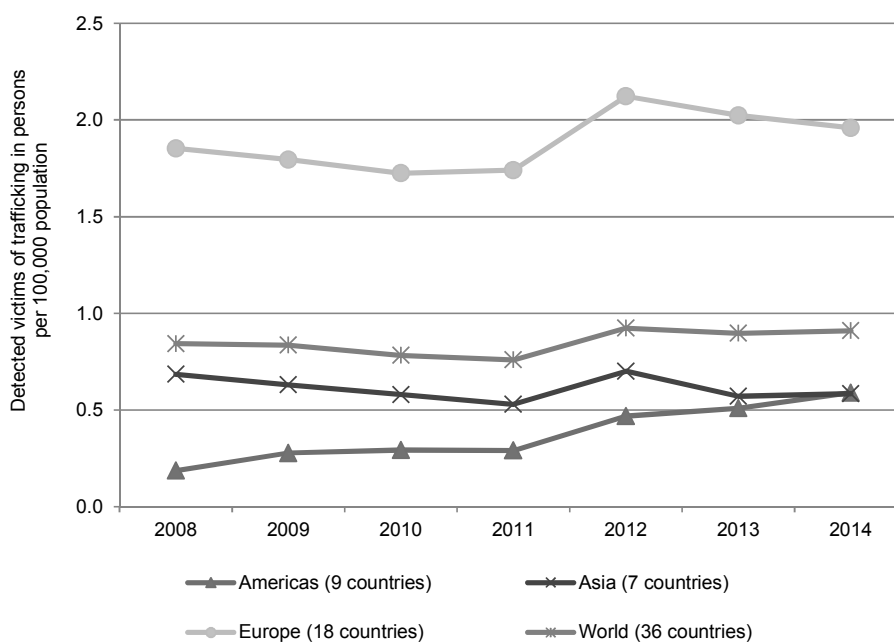
Note: The world total also includes one country from Africa and one from Oceania. Totals may not add up to 100 per cent due to other categories used by reporting States.

IV. Monitoring forms of illicit trafficking and organized crime

A. Trafficking in persons

30. The fight against trafficking in persons, a crime disproportionately affecting poor countries and vulnerable population groups within them, has been given a prominent role in the Sustainable Development Goals, where it is explicitly mentioned in three separate targets (targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2).

Figure 17
Recent trends of detected victims of trafficking per 100,000 population, by region, 2008-2014



Source: UNODC, Trafficking in Persons Database.

31. Monitoring trafficking in persons is particularly challenging because of its hidden nature and the complexity of identifying affected victims. Reflecting that complexity, the indicator proposed for monitoring trafficking in persons within the Sustainable Development Goals framework is composed of two distinct parts, referring respectively to the detected and undetected victims of this crime. From the available data, it emerges that the levels of detected victims (calculated per 100,000 population of the country where victims are detected) have been relatively stable over the last few years, although significant differences between regions emerge (see figure 17). In interpreting these data, it should be taken into account that higher levels in Europe can also be explained by the better identification and recording capacities in that region.

32. Analysis of data on the victims of trafficking in persons detected by national authorities around the world also shows that child trafficking has been increasingly detected. According to the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014*,²⁶ the share of children among total detected victims increased 5 per cent, from 27 per cent recorded in 2009 to 33 per cent in 2011, while in 2004 the same value had been about 13 per cent. The most recent figures referring to the year 2014 show a stabilization of the share of detected children among total victims detected.

33. Similarly, trafficking in males (boys and adult men) has been increasingly registered on a global scale. Underage boys accounted for about 12 per cent of the

²⁶ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.14.V.10.

total victims detected, while the share had been 10 per cent in 2009 and 3 per cent in 2004. The share of adult men went from 12 per cent in 2006 to 18 per cent in 2011, and more recent information confirms that the increasing trend continued in 2014.

34. Trafficking for the purpose of forced labour has been increasingly detected over the years, making up 32 per cent of the total in 2007 and rising to 40 per cent in 2011. More recent data confirm the detection of an increasing number of such cases in 2014. In addition, the variety of detected forms of exploitation other than forced labour and sexual exploitation have increased over the years, both in prevalence — passing from 3 per cent in 2006 to 7 per cent in 2011 and even more in 2014 — as well as in terms of the number of typologies of exploitation; more than 10 different types of exploitation have been reported, including pornography, benefit frauds, sham marriages and trafficking for the commission of crime.

B. Wildlife crime

35. Environmental protection is a major theme of the Sustainable Development Goals and countering criminal activities that contribute to the loss of biodiversity form an important part of the 2030 Agenda. Sustainable Development Goal 15 relates to the protection of terrestrial ecosystems in general, and target 15.7 specifically addresses wildlife crime (Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products).

36. Illicit trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna is a widespread organized criminal activity, involving transnational networks. As a crucial element to develop an effective response by the international community, UNODC, with the support of other international organizations,²⁷ is developing a global database of seizure incidents. A work in progress, the world wildlife seizures database (known as “World WISE”) currently contains information on some 164,000 seizures from 120 countries.²⁸

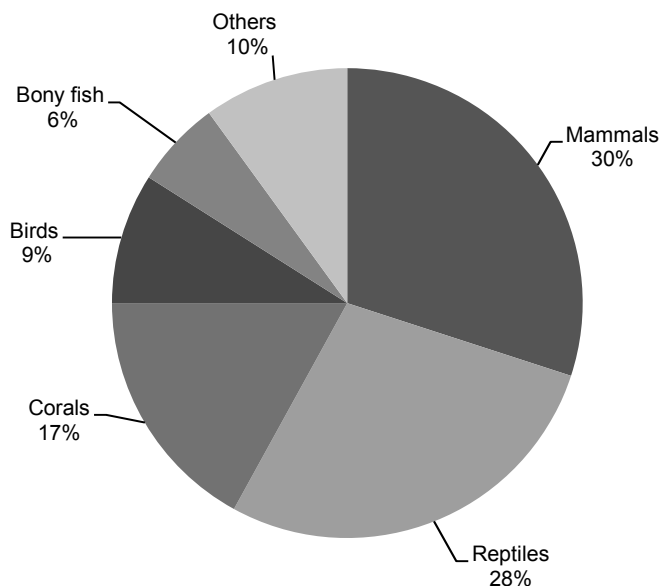
37. The database shows that, between 2004 and 2015, nearly 7,000 species were seized, including not only mammals but also reptiles, corals, birds and fish. Detected trafficking refers to several types of flora and fauna, and no single species is responsible for more than 6 per cent of the seizure incidents. While significant attention is often devoted to combating illegal trafficking in mammals, an overview of seizure incidents makes clear that reptiles and other classes also make up an important part (see figure 18). Almost every country in the world plays a role, and no single country is identified as the source of more than 15 per cent of the total number of seized shipments recorded in the database. In connection with seizure incidents, traffickers of some 80 nationalities have been identified, illustrating the

²⁷ International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, comprising the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the World Customs Organization, the World Bank and UNODC

²⁸ The database compiles data from various members of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, and it includes data submitted by parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, data from the World Customs Organization’s Customs Enforcement Network and other sources.

fact that illicit trafficking in wildlife is truly a global issue. All regions of the world play a role as a source or transit area or destination for contraband wildlife, although certain species are strongly associated with particular regions. In general, birds are most strongly associated with source countries in Central and South America, mammals with Africa and Asia, reptiles with Europe and North America, and corals with Oceania.

Figure 18
Share of all seizure incidents by taxonomic class



Source: UNODC world wildlife seizures database.

38. The global wildlife seizures database (“World WISE”) can be a valid data source for one of the proposed indicators to monitor progress in this area (Proportion of detected trade in wildlife and wildlife products that is illegal (indicator 15.7.2)) as it provides data on detected cases of wildlife trafficking. Other data sources, such as the legal trade data and the data on biological status of species remain essential to gathering all information needed for monitoring target 15.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

C. Illicit financial flows

39. The fight against illicit financial flows is an integral part of Sustainable Development Goal target 16.4.²⁹ Illicit financial flows have a direct negative impact on the ability of Governments to mobilize and manage domestic resources and thus on their efforts to implement policies for sustainable development. Because of this, the need to combat illicit financial flows goes to the core of the sustainable development agenda. While being so crucial, the concept of illicit financial flows

²⁹ Target 16.4 (By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime).

has not yet been explicitly defined in the international normative framework. The definition that is ultimately to be adopted can have a significant impact on the type of transborder financial flows subject to specific regulatory and legislative measures. At this stage, for international monitoring purposes, it appears that illicit financial flows should at least include all financial flows that have at some point broken the law.³⁰ For example, one frequently used definition refers to illicit financial flows as those funds “generated by methods, practices and crimes aiming to transfer financial capital out of a country in contravention of national or international laws”.³¹

40. At present, solid methodologies are not yet available to produce global or regional estimates of illicit financial flows. However, it can be envisaged that by considering each type of illicit financial flow separately, it is possible to develop specific methods to compile global and regional estimates. Such a process can build on available experience at the national and international levels.³²

D. Illicit trafficking of firearms

41. Illicit trafficking of firearms, which is explicitly addressed in target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, is another criminal offence intrinsically linked to organized and other serious crimes including terrorism, as firearms serve as a facilitator of violent crimes, as tools to project power and as lucrative trafficking commodities that fuel armed conflicts, crime and insecurity.

42. The size, patterns and routes of illicit trafficking of firearms remain largely unknown, as it is a highly hidden and complex trade whose points of departure from licit manufacturing and trade (diversion) remain difficult to detect. Also, it remains challenging to determine the origins and destinations of the manifold types of firearms, a long-lasting commodity that can be re-used almost endlessly. The fact that very little evidence and statistical data are collected and internationally shared also contributes to the lack of understanding.

43. To address this lack of knowledge, the first UNODC study on firearms was published in 2015, and that first collective exercise, although not global in coverage, has highlighted the value and usefulness of collecting this type of data at the international level.³³ For example, although the limited number of responses for the study does not allow for drawing conclusions on a global scale, the results indicate that a large proportion of firearm seizures by law enforcement agencies are conducted in relation to other offences, such as drug trafficking, the smuggling of

³⁰ See Economic Commission for Africa, “The state of governance in Africa: the dimension of illicit financial flows as a governance challenge” (E/ECA/CGPP/3/2); Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: Measuring OECD Responses* (Paris, 2014).

³¹ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: Measuring OECD Responses*, p. 16.

³² See, for example, Eurostat, “Illegal Activities in National Accounts”, 2013 (C3/GNIC/230); UNODC, *Drug Money: the Illicit Proceeds of Opiates Trafficked on the Balkan Route* (Vienna, 2015).

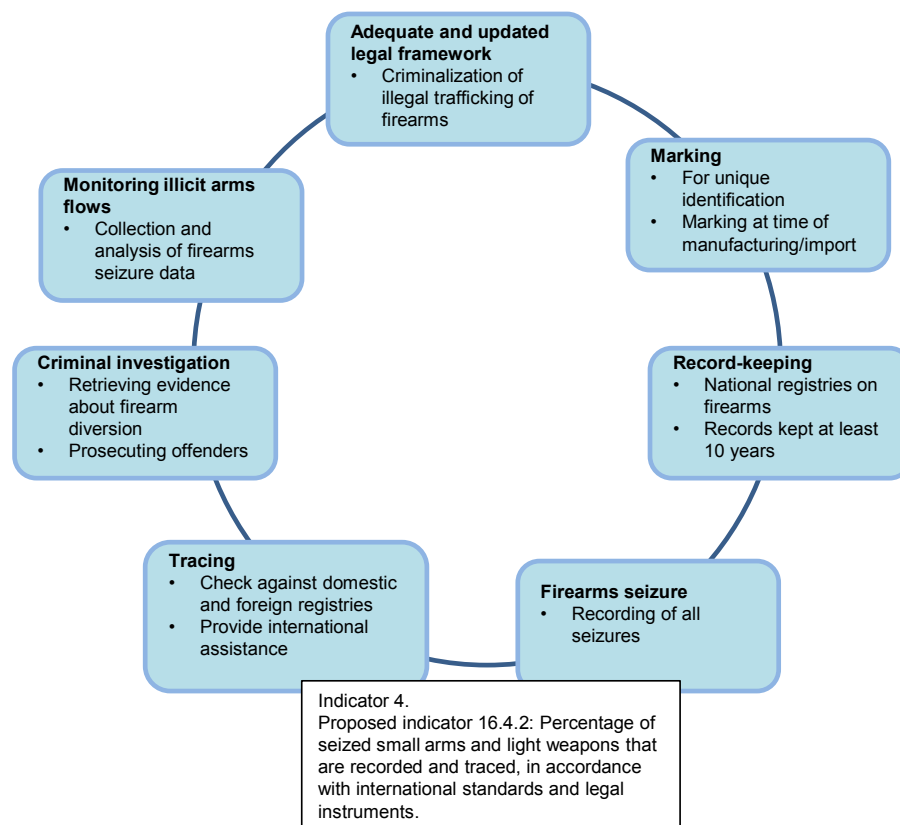
³³ UNODC, *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015* (Vienna, 2015). The study, developed pursuant to the mandate by the Conference of Parties to the United Nations, is based on firearms seizure data collected from 45 Member States that voluntarily contributed to the Study.

goods and/or participation in organized crime. This indicates that illicit trade in firearms is often connected with other forms of illicit trafficking perpetrated by organized criminal groups. The study also highlighted the existence of major challenges among several States related to the systematic and comprehensive collection and analysis of data on seized firearms.

44. The Arms Trade Treaty³⁴ and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,³⁵ provide the international legal instruments to regulate international trade in conventional arms and on the means to establish a comprehensive framework to exercise effective control on firearms and their movements. The pillars of that regime are the creation of national registries of firearms, proper marking of all firearms produced and imported, systematic recording and tracing of all seized firearms to identify the point of diversion from legal to illegal ownership and use, and international collaboration in firearms tracing (see figure 19).

Figure 19

National control framework to fight illicit trafficking of firearms



³⁴ Adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/234 B.

³⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2326, No. 39574.

45. The proposed Sustainable Development Goals indicator 16.4.2 (Percentage of seized small arms and light weapons that are recorded and traced, in accordance with international standards and legal instruments) will measure the progress in enforcing the control system that will enable national authorities in the fight against firearms trafficking, including through international collaboration.

V. Work towards better data

46. The approval of the Sustainable Development Goals and the related framework of indicators will require additional efforts to improve statistical data on crime and criminal justice at the country level. The ambitious set of targets and goals embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals needs to be accompanied by ambitious plans and activities to enable countries to produce the much-needed high-quality data for indicators selected to monitor targets under Goal 16 and other relevant targets.

47. Over the past few years, the work undertaken to implement the road map to improve crime statistics³⁶ has laid the foundations for better data on crime and criminal justice. Such activities have resulted in a number of outputs that offer Member States and the international community improved methodological guidance, technical assistance and international data collection and analysis on crime and criminal justice issues.

48. The year 2015 was marked by the historic milestone that was the adoption of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes³⁷ by the Statistical Commission of the United Nations and the endorsement of its implementation plan by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. As the custodian of the International Classification, UNODC is now leading the work to produce methodological guidance on its implementation; a technical advisory group has been established and the first volume of the implementation manual for the International Classification is expected to be finalized in 2017.

49. Important progress has also been made in the development of common standards for victimization surveys. UNODC together with the UNODC-National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) Centre of Excellence for Statistical Information on Governance, Victimization, Public Security and Justice, and in collaboration with the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, has led the initiative on a standard Latin America and Caribbean crime victimization survey instrument. Through extensive consultations with government officials, statistical offices and experts from Latin American and Caribbean countries, a common survey instrument has been produced. If utilized by Member States, the tool will improve the availability and quality of data on crime victimization, crime prevention, access to justice and corruption. Methodological and coordination work on victimization surveys will continue in order to improve international comparability and quality of data produced by crime victimization surveys.

³⁶ See E/CN.3/2013/11.

³⁷ Available at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/iccs.html.

50. In addition, UNODC continues to provide advice, technical assistance and training to Member States aimed at strengthening administrative crime and criminal justice statistics. In 2015, activities in this area included technical assistance on crime statistics delivered in several countries of Latin America, West and North Africa and West Asia.

51. In 2015, UNODC continued to gather data on crime through a number of important data collection exercises. The United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, thanks to its expanding network of national focal points covering 130 countries, can provide a good overview of global crime trends, though more work is needed to improve the quality and availability of data collected and disseminated. The global data collection on trafficking in persons patterns and flows, conducted annually by UNODC as per a General Assembly mandate, currently includes data for about 130 countries.

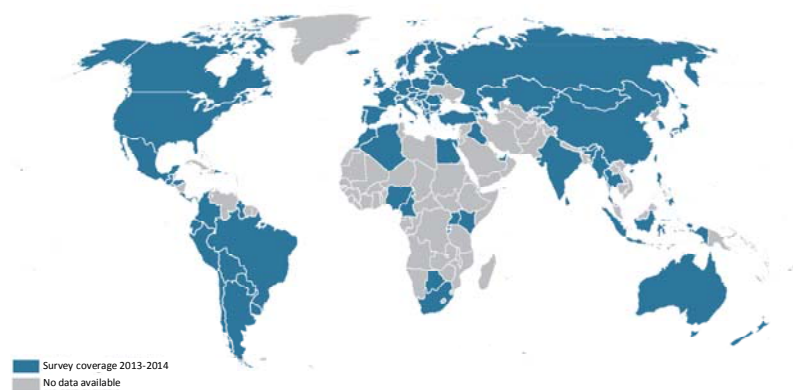
52. Other data collections were recently conducted by UNODC for two forms of illicit trafficking. As a response to the illicit trade of protected species of flora and fauna, a widespread organized criminal activity, UNODC has been asked to collect information on patterns and flows of illicit trafficking in wildlife and to report thereon. In addition, as part of its activities to monitor the implementation of the Firearms Protocol, UNODC maintains a data collection on firearm seizures, which has gathered statistical information from 45 countries.

53. Thanks to all such efforts, UNODC can now provide the international community with comprehensive data sets on a number of indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals,³⁸ and the Office can provide Member States with methodological guidance on the measurement of several topics related to homicide and violent crime, rule of law, access to justice, forms of illicit trafficking and organized crime (see figure 20). Further, a number of programmes to deliver technical assistance activities for measurement and monitoring in these areas are being implemented, and, subject to the availability of resources, those programmes can be strengthened further.

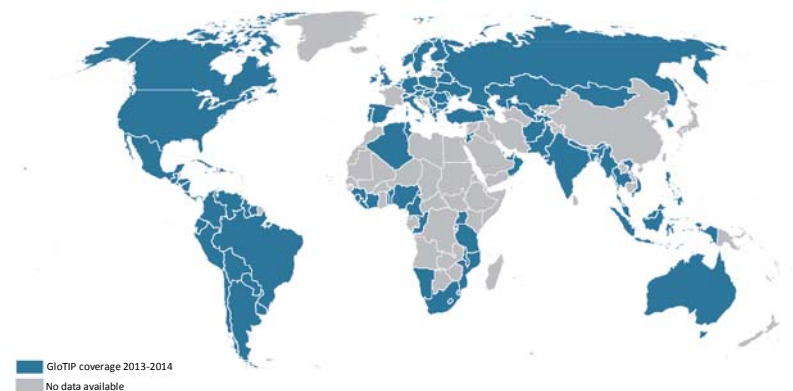
³⁸ At present, data from UNODC databases can be used to produce international data, with varying levels of country coverage, on intentional homicide, prevalence of violent crimes, crime reporting rate, bribery prevalence, trafficking in persons, unsentenced detainees, proportion of detected trade in wildlife and wildlife products that is illegal and percentage of seized small arms and light weapons that are recoded and traced.

Figure 20
Country coverage of data from mandated data collections managed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013-2014

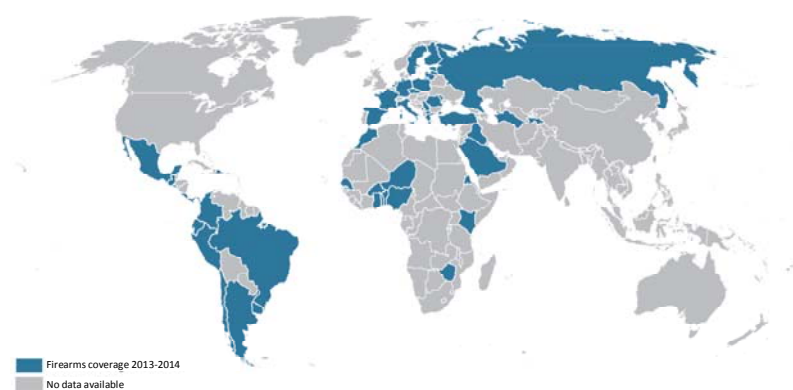
- (a) *United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems country coverage, 2013-2014*

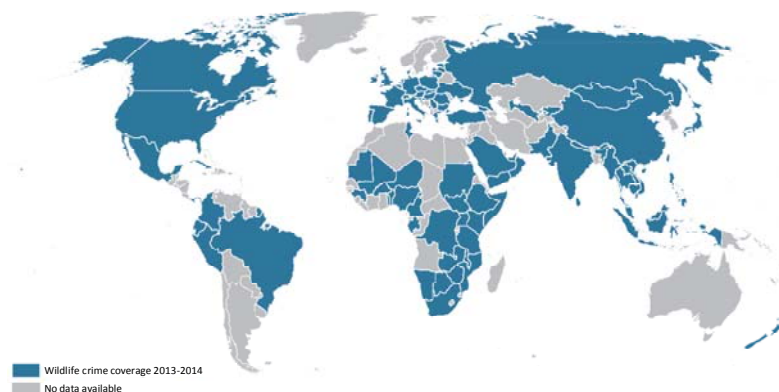


- (b) *Trafficking in persons database country coverage, 2013-2014*



- (c) *Firearm seizures database country coverage, 2013-2014*



(d) *World wildlife seizures database country coverage, 2013-2014*

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dashed lines represent undetermined boundaries.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

54. As the evidence presented in this report indicates, several challenges remain to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals targets for reducing violence affecting societies and vulnerable groups in particular. Levels of intentional homicide vary substantially across the world, and in recent years some regions have trends of increasing homicide levels, in some regions reversing previously positive tendencies. It emerges that a higher level of income inequality at the country level is associated to a significant degree with higher homicide levels. A further concern is that men of a very young age are disproportionately represented among both homicide victims and perpetrators, especially in areas with high homicide rates. Worldwide, cities are often places with higher levels of violence, but data also suggest positive trends of reductions in homicides in several big cities, which should be enhanced through targeted prevention policies. On the contrary, killings of women by their intimate partners or other family members — a widespread form of violence against women — continues to occur at similar, steady levels across the world, which is an indication that long-term, wide-ranging policies are required to eradicate gender-related killings — a truly global issue.

55. In monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals targets for promoting access to justice and the rule of law, the indicator framework for the Goals focuses on crime victims and alleged offenders. It is important to assess to what extent victims of crime report their experience to State authorities, which is a measure of access to justice and the rule of law. Available data indicate that crime reporting rates are typically lower where crime levels are higher: in poorer countries and in countries with higher levels of income inequality. All this suggests that more work is needed to ensure access to justice for those most in need of it. The treatment of alleged offenders is another important component of access to justice. High shares of unsentenced detainees among the prison population are a symptom of a

lack of efficiency in the criminal justice process. Globally, the share of unsentenced prisoners has declined slightly over the past decade, although there are wide variations among countries and regions, as lower-income countries typically have higher shares of unsentenced detainees. Pretrial detention is often paralleled by prison overcrowding, a major issue in several countries of the world.

56. Available information on the prevalence of bribery indicates that the Sustainable Development Goals target of reducing corruption will require particular efforts in lower-income countries, especially in the police and judiciary, which are the public sectors most relevant to promoting access to justice and the rule of law.

57. The fight against transnational forms of illicit trafficking is at the core of several of the Sustainable Development Goals targets. Available data indicate that trafficking in persons is a constant threat for vulnerable population groups in many countries around the world, with an increasing number of children among the victims detected. Newly available data on trafficking in wildlife — a crime against societies, cultures and the environment — indicate that that illegal trade threatens many protected species of flora and fauna and involves all regions of the world. Promising developments should allow the monitoring of two other forms of trafficking in the near future: illicit trade in firearms and illicit financial flows.

58. As the Sustainable Development Goals indicator framework suggests, regular monitoring of selected crimes (homicide, violent crimes, gender-related violence, bribery, trafficking in persons, illicit financial flows, illicit firearms trafficking and wildlife trafficking) and of certain aspects of criminal justice (crime reporting rate and the share of unsentenced prisoners in detention) are key to measuring progress in strengthening the rule of law and advancing towards sustainable development. Thanks to the work of several national and international agencies, methodologies and statistical data of good quality are increasingly available for such indicators and can form the basis for international monitoring of relevant dimensions of sustainable development.

B. Recommendations

59. It is recommended that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice:

(a) Note that several challenges exist, especially in lower-income countries and countries with higher levels of income inequality, to design strategies and measures aimed at making progress in the areas of public security and safety, access to justice and the rule of law, and note that further work is needed to analyse the link between development, public security and access to justice and to provide analyses that could inform effective policymaking;

(b) Encourage the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue its work on data collection, dissemination and analysis in areas related to the Sustainable Development Goals targets on public safety and security, justice and the rule of law and to report to the Commission regularly on progress made in those areas, also in view of contributions made by the Commission to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and other review mechanisms adopted for monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals at the global level;

(c) Note that to ensure public security and safety and to promote access to justice and the rule of law, it is important that Member States acquire the capacity to produce and disseminate relevant statistical data to inform evidence-based policymaking, and note that national authorities require high-quality disaggregated data, in line with international standards, in order to assess progress and identify suitable policies and measures;

(d) Encourage the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop and provide methodological guidance to countries for the production of statistical data and indicators included in the Sustainable Development Goals framework in the areas of public security and safety, corruption, trafficking, access to justice and the rule of law;

(e) Encourage the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to strengthen its capacity-building efforts to enable national statistical systems to produce high-quality, disaggregated statistical data to track progress on targets of relevance to its mandates in coordination with other entities of the United Nations system at the country level.
