



Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice



Kyoto, Japan, 20–27 April 2020

Distr.: General
11 February 2020

Original: English

Item 1 of the provisional agenda*
Opening of the Congress

State of crime and criminal justice worldwide

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution [74/171](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare an overview of the state of crime and criminal justice worldwide for presentation at the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

In keeping with the theme “Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda”, the present report examines data related to crime and criminal justice through the lens of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. It presents trends and patterns of crimes such as homicide (particularly relevant for target 16.1 of the Goals), trafficking in persons (targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2), migrant smuggling (target 10.7), firearms trafficking (target 16.4), wildlife trafficking (target 15.7) and organized crime (target 16.4), as well as regional data on prison conditions (target 16.3).

* [A/CONF.234/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/171, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare an overview of the state of crime and criminal justice worldwide for presentation at the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

2. The report also takes into consideration General Assembly resolution 72/192, in which the Assembly decided that the main theme of the Fourteenth Crime Congress would be “Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda”, and General Assembly resolution 73/185, in which the Assembly urged Member States to continue to recognize the cross-cutting nature of the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice and development, and recommended that such linkages and interrelationships be properly addressed and further elaborated in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular in connection with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16, which is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

3. Pursuant to the above-mentioned resolutions, this report examines developments in global crime through the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals, mainly focusing on the targets and indicators for which the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is the custodian in the global framework for monitoring progress made towards the Goals in the field of crime and criminal justice. The global indicator framework for such monitoring was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/313 of 6 July 2017, on the work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see resolution 71/313, annex). The present report attempts to demonstrate how the analysis of trends and patterns of crimes related to targets of the Sustainable Development Goals can increase the understanding of crime and how it can be prevented.

4. Tackling crime is integral to fostering sustainable development, as recognized in many of the targets under the Sustainable Development Goals. Crime can hinder development in many ways. There are direct, monetary costs incurred in preventing and controlling crime, such as the costs associated with policing, prosecutions, courts and prisons, as well as in providing support to victims of crime and implementing a range of personal security measures. In terms of its broader impacts on society, crime can force skilled workers to migrate abroad, impede access to employment and educational opportunities and destroy the trust upon which societies are based. Crime is also detrimental to economic growth, as it increases the cost of doing business, which in turn deters investment and has a negative effect on the affected country’s reputation among potential tourists. In some cases, crime can also undermine the State, for example, when tax money is either not collected or squandered owing to corrupt practices, causing citizens to lose faith in the public sector.¹

5. Some of the crimes discussed in this report are forms of organized crime. Combating all forms of organized crime requires a comprehensive and systematic approach, whether at the national, regional or international level. It is crucial to increase understanding of the prevalence and scope of these multi-faceted forms of crime as a first step. However, owing to the lack of advanced statistical and analytical

¹ See United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Global Study on Homicide 2019: Homicide, Development and the Sustainable Development Goals* (Vienna, 2019), booklet 4; John West, “Combating Asia’s economic crime”, in *Asian Century... on a Knife-edge: a 360 Degree Analysis of Asia’s Recent Economic Development* (Singapore, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Laura Chioda, *Stop the Violence in Latin America: A Look at Prevention from Cradle to Adulthood*, Latin American Development Forum Series (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2017); Laura Jaitman, ed., *The Costs of Crime and Violence: New Evidence and Insights in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Washington, D.C., Inter-American Development Bank, 2017); Tuesday Reitano and Marcena Hunter, “The crime-development paradox: organised crime and the SDGs” (February 2018).

tools to monitor levels, trends and patterns of organized crime, it is difficult to assess whether progress is being made, or whether organized criminal groups are maintaining or even increasing the extent of their illegal activities.

6. The targets covered in this report – those that are relevant to the Office’s role as custodian in the global framework for monitoring progress made towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the field of crime and criminal justice – include the following: 5.2 (relating to violence against women and trafficking in persons); 8.7 (trafficking in persons); 10.7 (aimed at implementing well-managed migration policies; in that connection, this report focuses on the smuggling of migrants); 15.7 (trafficking in wildlife); 16.1 (homicide); 16.2 (trafficking in persons); 16.3 (aimed at promoting the rule of law; in that connection, this report focuses on prison conditions); 16.4 (firearms trafficking and organized crime); and 16.5 (corruption and bribery).

7. This report draws mainly on UNODC data collected in the framework of the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems; data on trafficking in persons, firearms and wildlife, and organized crime from other sources, and analyses published in, inter alia, the *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, the *World Wildlife Crime Report: Trafficking in Protected Species*, the *Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants 2018* and the *UNODC Global Study on Firearms Trafficking 2020*, as well as the forthcoming UNODC regional report on organized crime in the Western Balkans.

II. Homicide

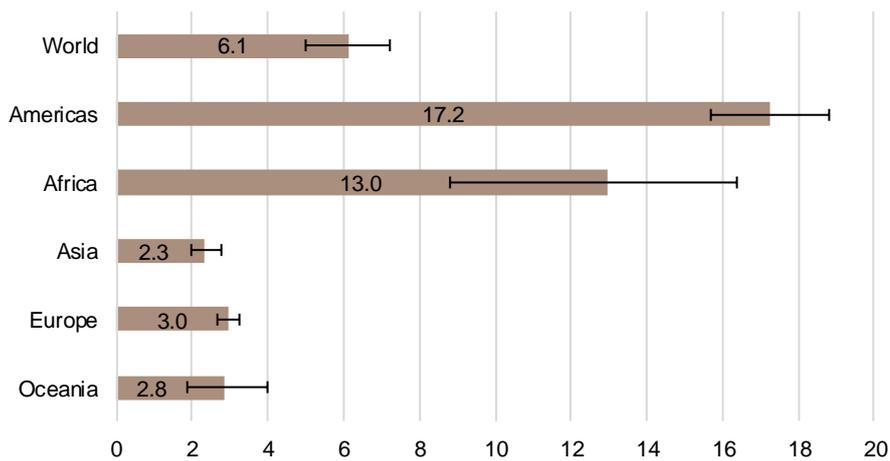
Target 16.1. Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

8. Crime is not the only cause of violent death, but it is the leading cause. It is estimated that between the years 1990 and 2017 approximately 2 million people were victims of war and conflict worldwide, compared with just under 12 million people who were victims of homicide. In 2017, about half a million people were murdered, compared with about 90,000 who died in conflict and about 25,000 who were victims of terrorism. Organized crime alone is estimated to have been responsible for about 1 million deaths between 2000 and 2017, which is approximately how many people were killed in all conflicts worldwide during that period.

9. The overall risk of homicide has been declining steadily for a quarter of a century. In 1993, there were 7.4 homicide victims per every 100,000 persons worldwide, compared with a rate of 6.1 per 100,000 in 2017.² This global rate obscures the stark regional differences, however (see figure 1). Two thirds of the homicides committed globally are committed in Latin America and the Caribbean and in sub-Saharan Africa. The homicide rate in the Americas is more than seven times higher than the rate in Asia, and national rates within each region show even greater variation. Even within countries, the problem of homicide is often highly localized.

² While the rate has decreased owing to population growth, the number of homicides has increased, from an estimated 362,000 in 1990 to 464,000 in 2017.

Figure 1
Homicides per 100,000 population, by region, 2017

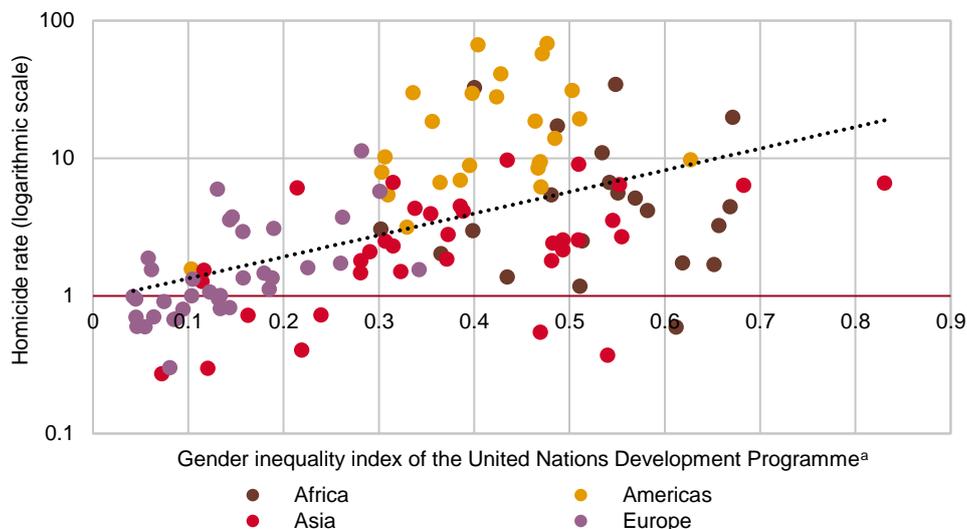


Source: UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 1, p. 11.

Note: Error bars represent the regional and/or global sum of lower and upper estimates at the national level.

10. Scientific literature has documented an association between lethal violence, income inequality and socioeconomic development.³ While some development indicators, such as youth unemployment and gender inequality, predict lethal violence levels with some accuracy globally, a broader analysis presents a more complicated picture. The degree to which homicide rates can be explained using the available development indicators differs across regions. In Asia and Europe, more than 70 per cent of the variability in homicide rates can be explained by differences in levels of development. In Africa and the Americas, where the variability in homicide rates is much greater, only 34 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively, of that variability can be explained in terms of development. There appears to be an additional element in certain countries in Africa and the Americas that aggravates homicide levels beyond what would be expected.

Figure 2
Gender inequality index and homicide rate, by region, 2012–2016 (average)



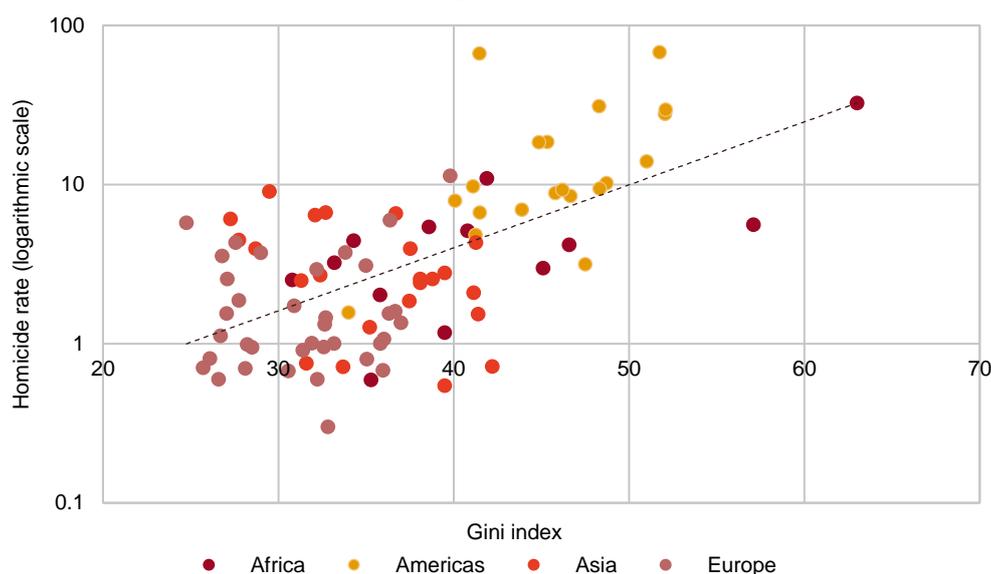
Source: UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 4, p. 41.

Note: Each dot represents a single country.

^a See United Nations Development Programme, “Gender Inequality Index”, available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>.

³ See UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 4; World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, D.C., 2011).

Figure 3
Homicide rate and Gini index,^a by region, 2012–2016 (average)



Source: UNODC, Global Study on Homicide 2019, booklet 4, p. 26.

Note: Each dot represents a single country.

^a The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution; a Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.

11. In the Americas, organized crime, including drug trafficking, and street gangs appear to be driving much of the lethal violence. For some time, South America and Central America have been home to the most violent countries in the world in terms of homicide rates, which are highly volatile. This situation cannot be explained by developmental factors alone. Much of the lethal violence is linked to changes in the balance of power between organized crime groups – changes that are often related to shifts in the drug trade. This can clearly be seen in relation to the rural lethal violence associated with the sudden increase in the amount of cocaine crossing the northern triangle of Central America between 2007 and 2011, which subsided after the flow of cocaine moved elsewhere, contributing to a drop in the annual number of homicides in some Central American countries between 2011 and 2018.

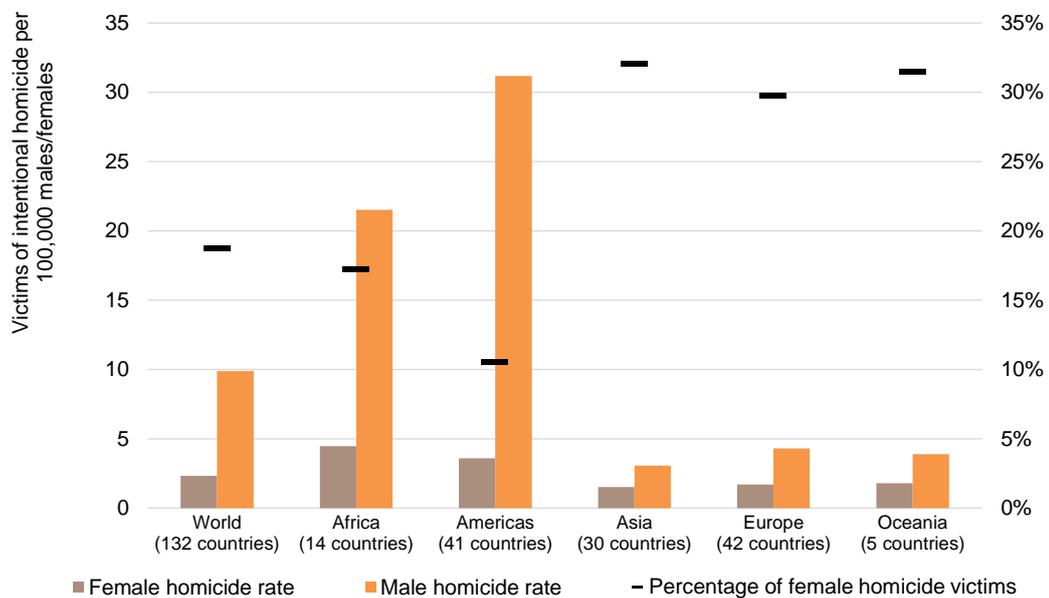
12. In addition to whatever role they play in the drug trade, street gangs represent a direct threat to security in the Americas. Street gangs represent a threat to many countries in the Americas, independent of their association with the drug trade. Street gangs form in insecure areas and, once established, flourish until State control is regained. In some countries with high rates of homicide, as much as 30 per cent of the homicides can be directly linked to gang members, accounting for thousands of deaths per year. The mass incarceration of street gang members has often made matters worse, causing previously unrelated groups to merge into polarized mega-gangs. On the other hand, truces negotiated with gangs appear to have produced reductions in homicide rates in some countries.

13. In Africa, data on homicide are lacking, and research indicates that, just as in the case of births, in parts of Africa, many homicides may be unrecorded. As a result, the nature and extent of homicide in Africa is unknown, and this lack of knowledge obstructs the design of interventions to address it. The nature of violence varies across countries. In some areas, interpersonal violence dominates, while in others, high levels of violence are driven by political conflicts. Evaluating such dynamics and understanding whether criminal violence is a predictor of conflict are undermined by the lack of solid data in many parts of the continent.

14. Homicide is highly gendered: globally, most of the victims (81 per cent) and the known perpetrators (more than 90 per cent) are male. Although women were the victims in 82 per cent of the homicides perpetrated by intimate partners in 2017, they

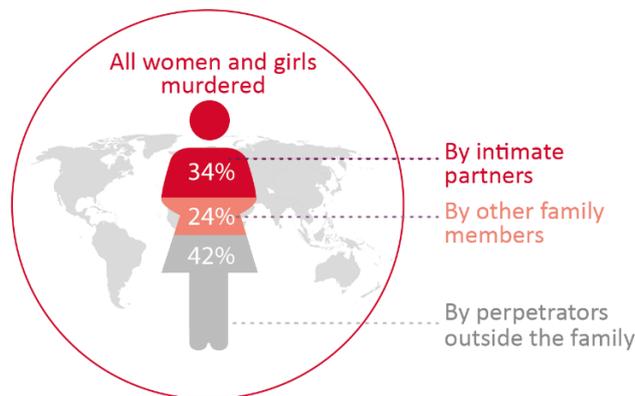
are far less likely to be murdered in other contexts. A total of 42 per cent of female victims were murdered by people outside their family, and only in the wealthiest and least violent countries do women and men face a similar risk of being murdered. Countries with a high proportion of male homicide victims usually have a known organized crime problem. When a country experiences sudden changes in murder rates, the changes generally involve a change in the number of male victims, often associated with political or gang-related violence.

Figure 4
Homicide rate, by region and sex, 2017



Source: UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 2, p. 60.

Figure 5
Perpetrators of homicides involving female victims, by relationship to the victim, 2017

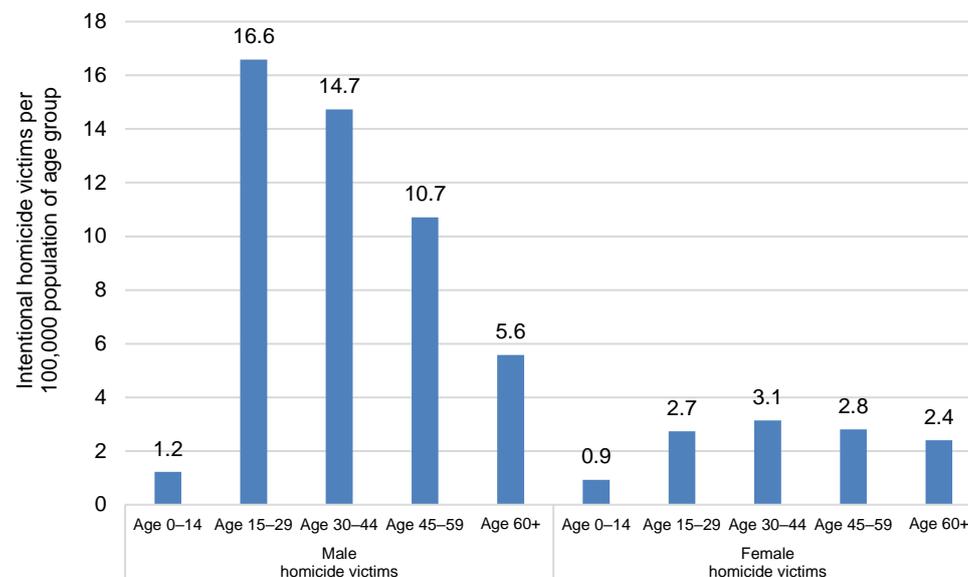


Source: UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 1, p. 24.

15. The homicide of young children (aged 0–14 years) is rare globally, and the rate of approximately one victim per 100,000 children of that age group annually has remained steady over the last decade. Among children aged 0–9, girls are almost as likely as boys to be murdered, but this parity disappears quickly as they age, with males being almost 10 times more likely to be murdered than females by the age of 18 to 19. In many countries, declines in the rate of homicide are associated with an ageing population and a shrinking young population. People aged 15–29 represent the group most likely to be murdered in most countries globally, and their death rates have surged in some countries while receding in others. According to data from 15 countries

in the Americas, in 2016, adolescents aged 18–19 years were murdered at a rate of 46 per 100,000. In the Americas, males between the ages of 15 and 29 were murdered at a rate of 64 per 100,000 in 2017, 10 times the global average.⁴

Figure 6
Global homicide rate, by sex and age group, 2017



Source: UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 2, p. 62.

III. Trafficking in persons

Target 16.2. End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

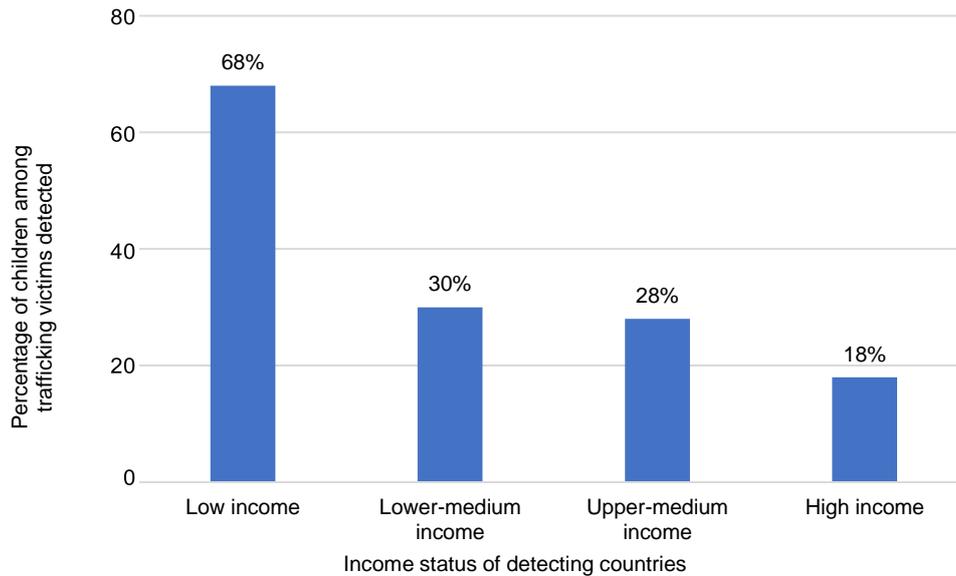
Target 5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Target 8.7. Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms

16. While children comprised about one third of the trafficking victims detected globally in 2016, they comprised almost 70 per cent of the victims detected in low-income countries (see figure 7). Most of the children detected in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia were trafficked for the purpose of forced labour, an offence that occurs in the context of the phenomenon in which poor households draw on all available sources of income in order to survive. The trafficking of girls for sexual exploitation is more commonly detected in the poorest countries of Latin America.

⁴ According to the UNODC *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, young men in the Americas represent the largest group of homicide offenders and victims of homicide in the world.

Figure 7

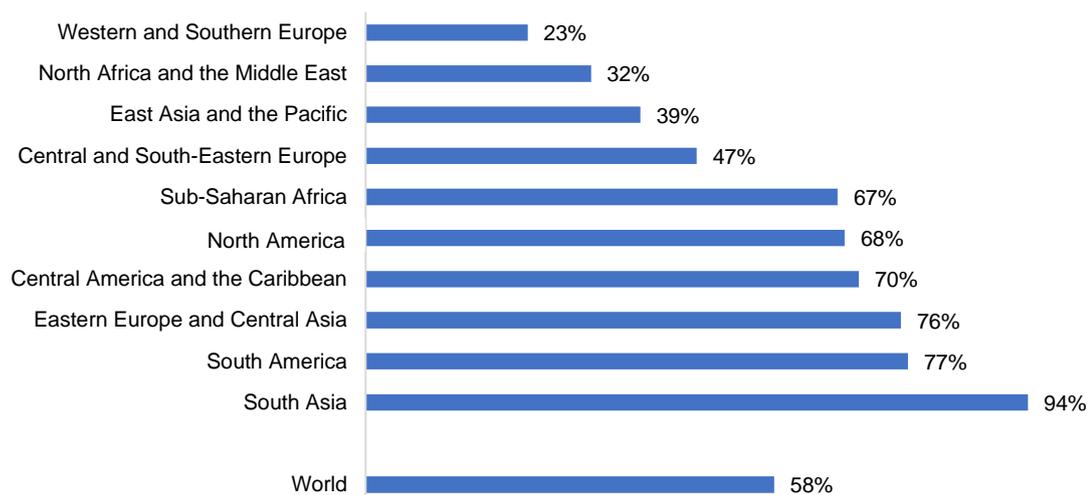
Proportion of children among all trafficking victims detected, by income status of the detecting country, 2016

Sources: UNODC, “Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal”, Case Law database, and World Bank.

17. The form that trafficking in persons takes varies greatly between regions. In Europe, North America, and East Asia and the Pacific, the most commonly detected victims of trafficking are adult women trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In the Middle East, detected victims include both adult men and women trafficked for forced labour. South Asia and Central Asia present a mixture of victim types, and countries in sub-Saharan Africa detect a higher proportion of victims involved in forced labour. Trafficking in Latin America mostly involves the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation. Trafficking for exploitation in begging and for organ removal purposes are more commonly detected in North Africa.

18. Most victims of transcontinental trafficking are moved from the global South to the wealthiest economies. Long-distance trafficking flows, however, are limited, involving approximately 10 per cent of all detected victims worldwide. One in every three victims detected is trafficked within the same region, from poorer to relatively wealthier countries. In 2016, 58 per cent of the victims whose citizenship was reported were detected in their home countries, up from 43 per cent in 2014. Developing countries typically detect significant levels of domestic trafficking, often from their rural areas, or to their more affluent commercial or touristic areas.

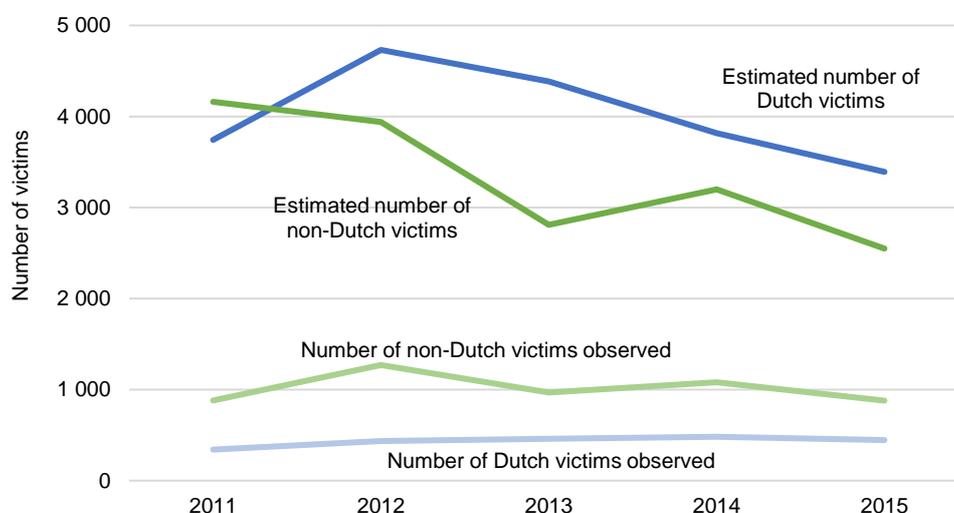
Figure 8
Proportion of trafficking victims detected in their own country, by subregion, 2016 (or most recent data)



Source: Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018, p. 42.

19. While data on the number of detected victims of trafficking in persons is available from more than 140 countries, statistics on detected victims alone are not sufficient to reveal the actual extent of the crime. The multiple systems estimation methodology, a statistical technique that can be used to estimate the total number of victims, has been applied by UNODC, in close partnership with the relevant national authorities, to national datasets on human trafficking in four countries: Ireland, the Netherlands, Romania and Serbia. When the underlying data are reliable, the application of the methodology can yield detailed results with a range of policy applications. Results from the studies undertaken so far indicate that, for every detected victim of trafficking, there are on average four to five undetected victims. Child victims appear to be less likely to be detected.

Figure 9
Observed and estimated number of victims of trafficking in the Netherlands, by citizenship (Dutch or non-Dutch), 2011–2015



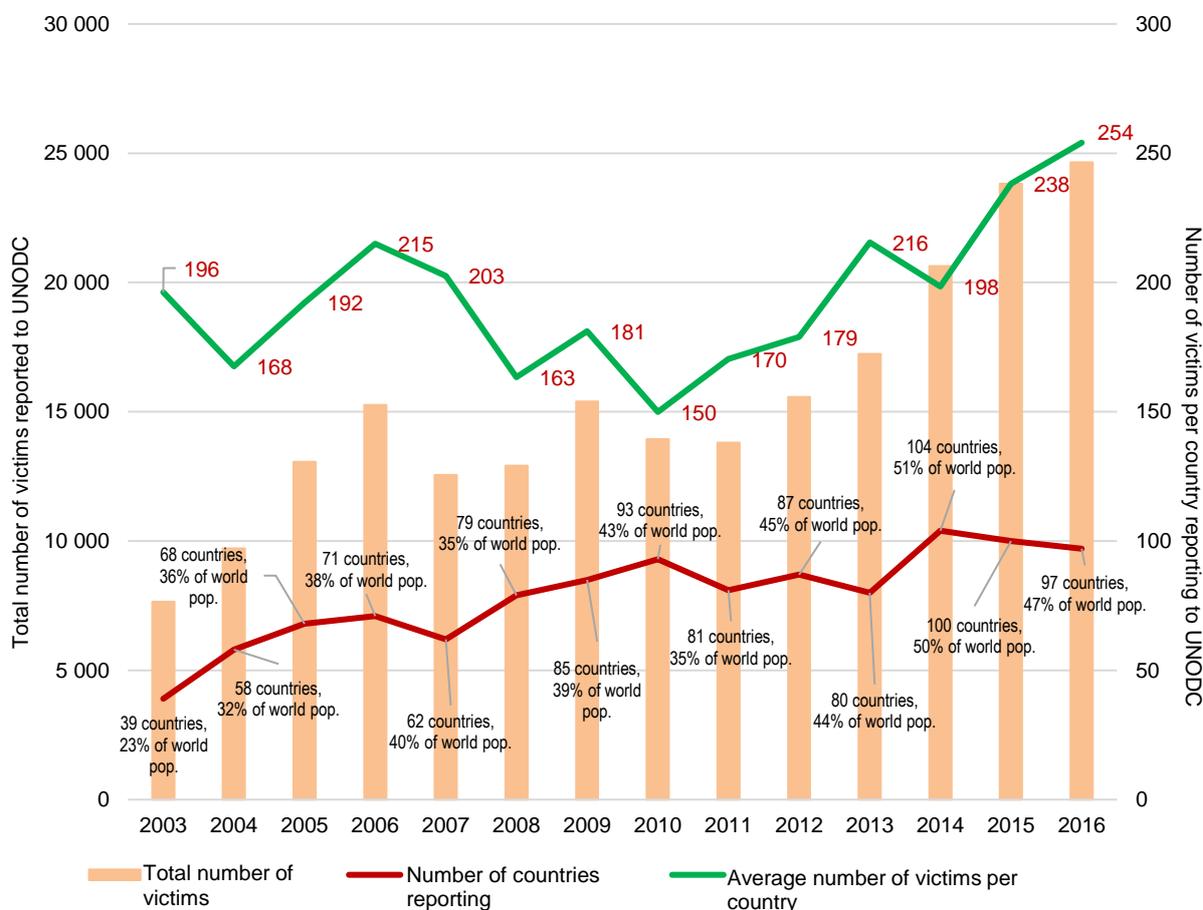
Source: Analysis by UNODC of data from the research brief entitled “Monitoring target 16.2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: a multiple systems estimation of the numbers of presumed human trafficking victims in the Netherlands in 2010–2015 by year, age, gender, form of exploitation and nationality”, published by UNODC and the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children of the Netherlands in 2017.

Note: The estimates were made using the multiple systems estimation methodology.

20. Over the past five years, countries have detected more trafficking victims and convicted more traffickers than in the previous five years. In 2010, countries reporting data on trafficking in persons to UNODC detected an average of 150 trafficking victims; by 2016, that number had increased to 254, accompanied by an increased number of convictions. Such an increase in detections may not have a single cause; in some cases it may reflect an increase in trafficking and in others it may be a result of increased enforcement.

21. Compared with the rest of the world, countries in Africa and Asia are characterized by low rates of conviction for trafficking in persons (0.04 convictions per 100,000 people in Africa and 0.09 in Asia) and a lower number of victims detected (0.3 victims per 100,000 people in Africa and 0.5 in Asia). At the same time, Africa and Asia are the main regions of origin of transregional trafficking globally. While most trafficking in persons remains limited in geographical reach, large numbers of victims from these two regions have been detected, with more than 60 countries reporting the detection of African and Asian victims in the period 2014–2016.

Figure 10
Trends in the total number of detected trafficking victims, average number of detected victims per country and number of reporting countries, by year, 2003–2016



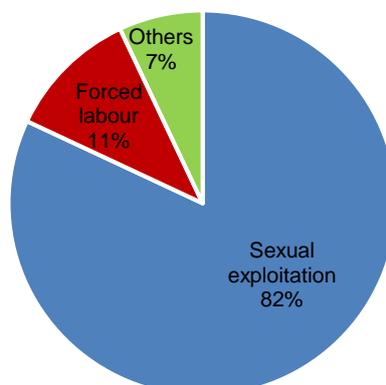
Source: Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018, p. 7.

22. Trafficking in persons is a highly gendered crime: globally, most of the victims detected (70 per cent) are either adult women or girls. Although most traffickers are men (60–65 per cent of those convicted), women’s participation in this crime is high compared with most other crimes. This gender ratio has remained steady over the last five years. Among the victims, about 80 per cent of females are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, while more than 80 per cent of males are trafficked for exploitation in forced labour. The trafficking of adult women for the purpose of sexual exploitation is the most common form of trafficking in persons detected

globally. Female victims are also exploited for the purposes of, inter alia, forced labour, domestic servitude, and forced and early marriage.

Figure 11

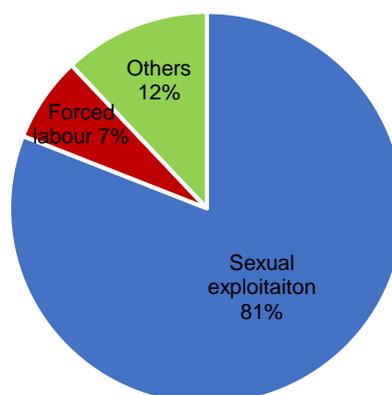
Detected adult female victims of trafficking, by form of exploitation, 2017



Source: UNODC, “Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal”, Case Law database.

Figure 12

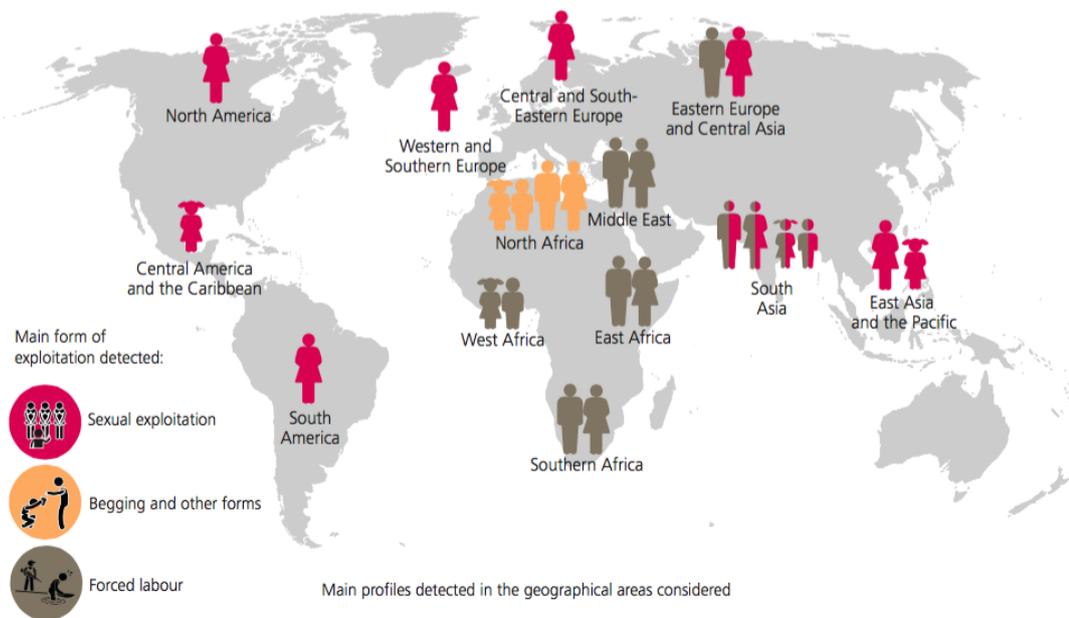
Detected girl victims of trafficking, by form of exploitation, 2017



Source: UNODC, “Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal”, Case Law database.

23. Globally, people trafficked for the purpose of forced labour account for 30–40 per cent of the total number of detected human trafficking victims. This form of trafficking is more frequently detected in sub-Saharan Africa (where it accounts for 63 per cent of the trafficking victims detected), North Africa and the Middle East (55 per cent), Central Asia (45 per cent) and South Asia (49 per cent). Victims are exploited in a wide range of labour markets, including domestic servitude, farm labour, construction and the fishing industry. Addressing trafficking for the purpose of forced labour requires interventions that are designed to address the exploitation and abuses encountered in different labour markets.

Figure 13
Profiles of detected victims in terms of gender, age group and main forms of exploitation, by subregion, 2016



Source: *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, p. 27.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

IV. Smuggling of migrants

Target 10.7. Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

24. Globally, more than 20 million people are refugees, more than 41 million have been displaced within their own countries and almost 4 million people are stateless.⁵ Opportunistic smugglers take advantage of the challenges that these groups often face when seeking international protection. In 2017, at least 6,000 migrants and refugees lost their lives while being smuggled, while migrant smuggling generated an estimated revenue of between \$5 billion and \$7 billion globally.

25. Smuggling routes are extremely flexible and are quickly modified to counter smuggling interventions. For example, over the years, the crossing points used by smugglers to enter North America have gradually shifted from the western to the eastern parts of the land border between Mexico and the United States of America. Similar shifting patterns have been recorded elsewhere in the world, including in relation to routes from North Africa to Europe and from the Horn of Africa to the Middle East. National border enforcement activities often do little to stem the flow of migrants, often diverting it to more dangerous routes.

26. While most smuggled migrants are young men, the age profile of smuggled migrants depends heavily on their country of origin. The direction of smuggling flows is almost always from poorer or more unstable countries to wealthier and more stable ones. Among the largest flows are those involving the smuggling of people from Central America to North America; the smuggling of migrants from Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa to Europe; and the smuggling of people from the Horn

⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018* (Geneva, 2019), p. 2.

of Africa to the Middle East; as well as the flow of people within South-East Asia and South Asia.

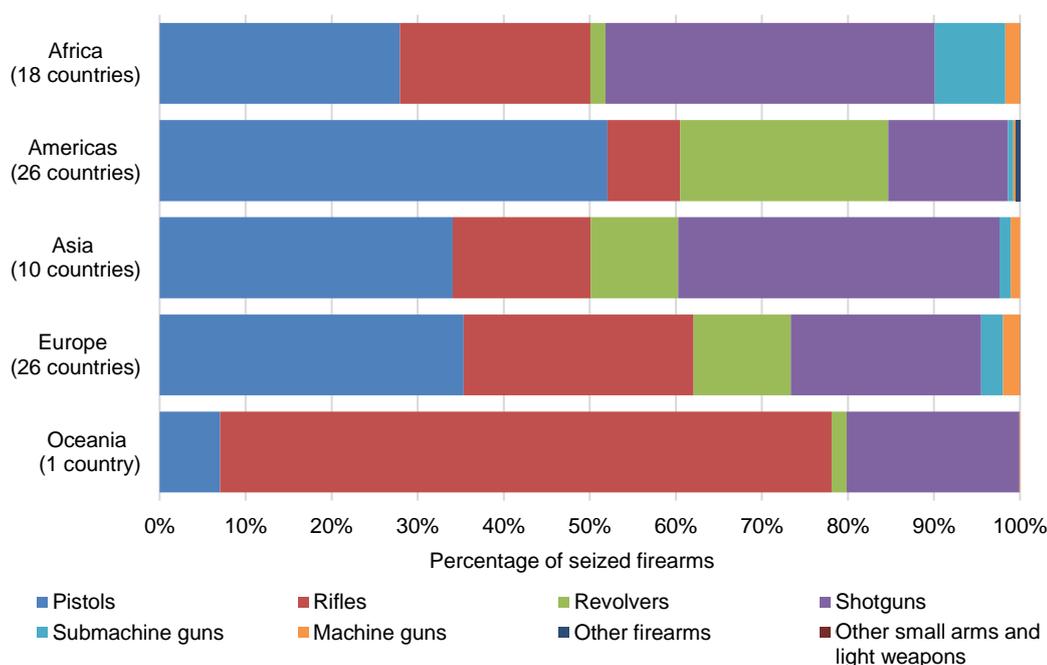
V. Firearms, organized crime and illicit financial flows

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

27. Over half a million firearms were seized annually in both 2016 and 2017. The type of weapon seized varied greatly by region, with pistols dominating in the Americas, shotguns featuring prominently in Africa and Asia, and rifles being the most commonly seized type of weapon in Oceania. While the legal justification for most seizures is illicit possession, the criminal contexts of firearms seizures vary by region. Aside from arms-related offences, in Europe, firearms were most often seized in connection with drug trafficking offences, while in the Americas and Africa they were most often associated with violent crime.

Figure 14

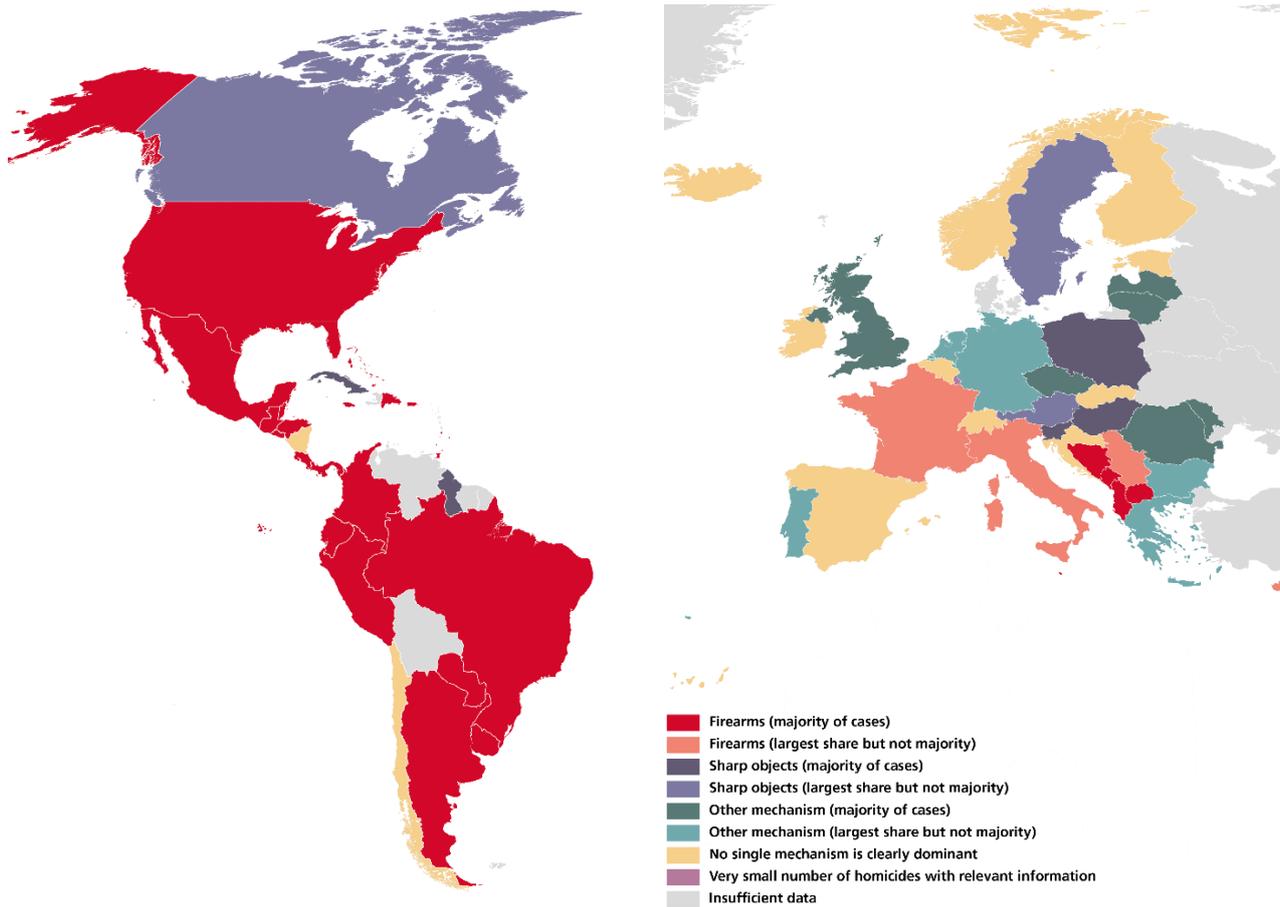
Distribution of seized firearms by type and region, 2016–2017



Source: UNODC, “Statistics and Data”, Illicit Arms Flows database.

28. Globally, 54 per cent of homicides were committed with firearms in 2017, taking the lives of an estimated 240,000 victims. There are pronounced differences between countries and regions regarding the mechanisms used in the perpetration of homicide (see figure 15). Homicides involving firearms in the Americas alone accounted for 27 per cent of global homicides in 2017. As with the proportion of male victims, when homicide rates change rapidly in a country, most of the homicides involve the use of firearms. The countries with the highest proportion of homicides committed with a firearm are generally those that have a known organized crime problem. Data from a number of countries show that most gang- and organized crime-related homicides involve firearms.

Figure 15
Most prevalent mechanism used in the perpetration of homicide in the Americas and Europe, 2013–2016

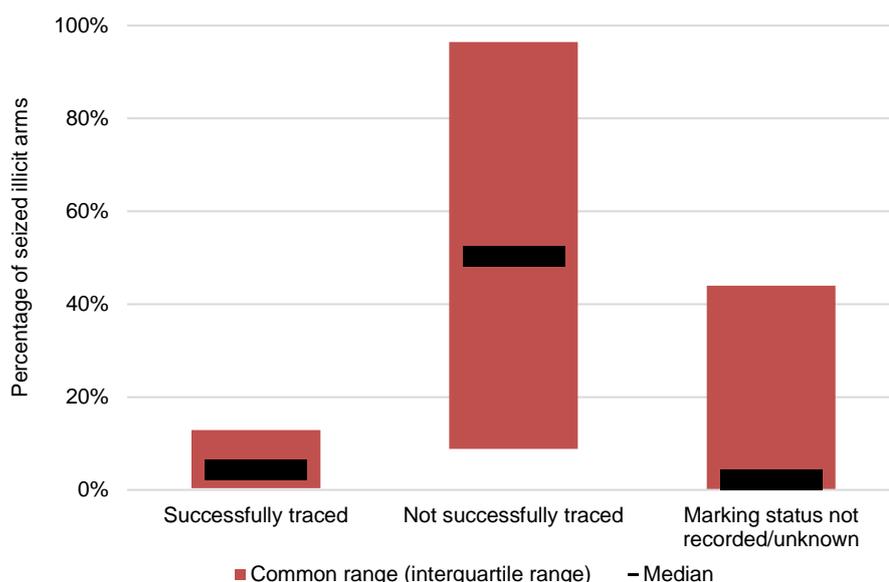


Note: The calculation presupposes three categories of mechanism (firearms, sharp objects and “other”); only cases in which a reliable breakdown into these three categories was available are considered. The calculation adjusts for homicides involving an unknown mechanism.

Source: UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 3, p. 78.

29. The international community has instituted several measures intended to prevent and counter illicit arms flows, including requirements on the marking of weapons that have been manufactured licitly. According to data from 18 countries, over the period 2016–2017, more than 90 per cent of seized firearms were marked. However, the success rate in tracing these marked weapons was typically less than 13 per cent (see figure 16).

Figure 16
Seizures of illicit arms, proportion by tracing outcome, 2016–2017



Source: UNODC, “Statistics and Data”, Illicit Arms Flows database.

30. Every year, organized crime and the trade in illegal goods, such as trafficking in wildlife and firearms, generate billions of dollars’ worth of illicit financial flows.⁶ Proceeds of crime are transferred abroad, often to safe havens, and are laundered and otherwise re-utilized. Illicit financial flows originating in the legal economy, such as tax evasion and trade misinvoicing, divert resources needed for development. All of these activities are intimately linked to the transfer of large amounts of illicitly acquired assets, a proportion of which crosses borders. Illicit financial flows and the related illegal economy weaken State institutions by fuelling organized crime, corruption and violence, thus undermining the rule of law. Furthermore, they discourage public and private investment and deprive the licit economy of resources needed for sustainable development in all its dimensions.

31. The measurement of illicit financial flows poses several conceptual and operational challenges because such flows are hidden and complex in nature. Moreover, they are generated in relation to very diverse activities such as trade on illegal markets, tax evasion and corruption. A disaggregated measurement of illicit financial flows is therefore needed to identify the main sources and channels of illicit financial flows and to guide national and international interventions targeting them.

32. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the UNODC – the custodian agencies for indicator 16.4.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals – have developed a statistical definition of indicator 16.4.1 and a comprehensive statistical framework for its measurement. The framework identifies various illicit financial flow typologies that need to be measured separately.⁷ In addition, owing to the progress made by national statistical systems in measuring the

⁶ The International Monetary Fund “consensus range” of between 2 and 5 per cent of global gross domestic product was made public in 1998, indicating approximately \$1.6 trillion to \$4 trillion per year in today’s money; see Michel Camdessus, “Money laundering: the importance of international countermeasures”, 10 February 1998. See also UNODC, *Estimating Illicit Financial Flows resulting from Drug Trafficking and Other Transnational Organized Crimes: Research Report* (Vienna, 2011).

⁷ In October 2019, the framework developed by UNODC and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was reviewed and endorsed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, the technical body of the Statistical Commission tasked with developing and implementing the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. See indicator 16.4.1 of Sustainable Development Goals, on illicit financial flows, available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/>.

economic value of illegal activities and related financial flows, national estimates of selected types of illicit financial flows should become available in the near future. Existing UNODC research on the market sizes and values of crimes such as drug trafficking, migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons can also inform such estimates.⁸

VI. Corruption

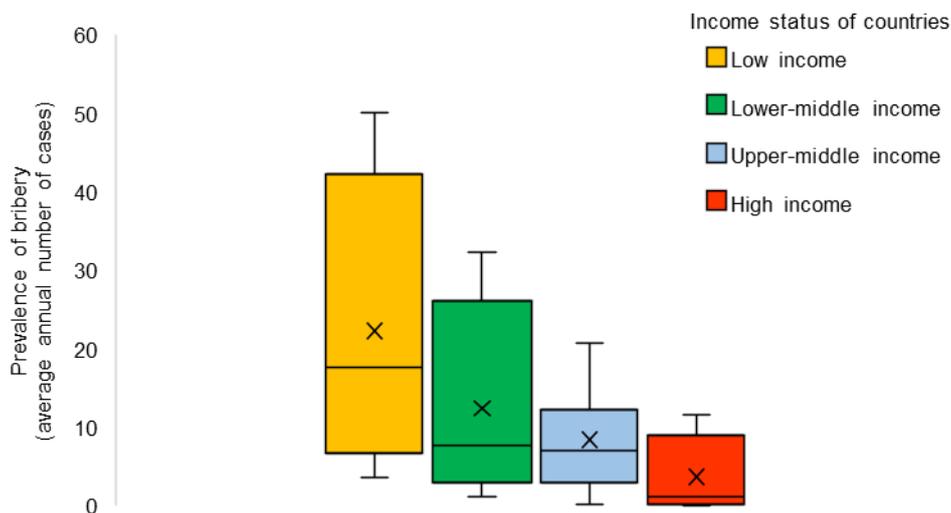
Target 16.5. Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

33. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges that corruption represents a severe impediment to sustainable development. It has a detrimental impact on political, social, cultural, institutional and organizational structures, and economic and structural policies, and can affect numerous aspects of everyday life.

34. While not many countries have conducted nationwide population surveys on the experience of bribery – one of the many manifestations of corruption – a common theme emerging from the surveys conducted is that no country is immune to the detrimental effects of bribery.⁹ Available data from 38 countries across the world suggest that high-income countries have the lowest prevalence of bribery (accounting for an average rate of 3.7 in the past 12 months), while the populations in countries with the lowest incomes (accounting for an average rate of 22.3 in the past 12 months) bear the heaviest bribery burden when accessing public services.¹⁰

Figure 17

Average prevalence of bribery in the past 12 months in 38 countries, by income status



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems. Latest data available for the period 2004–2018.

35. The vulnerability of citizens to the paying of bribes depends not only on the economic development of the country in which they live, but also on demographic

⁸ See UNODC, *World Drug Report 2019* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.XI.8) and previous editions; *Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants 2018* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.IV.9); *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.IV.2) and previous editions.

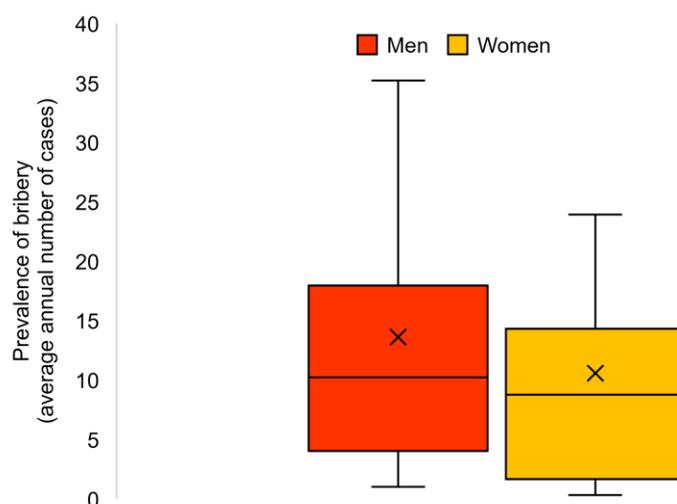
⁹ The United Nations Convention against Corruption identifies a set of relevant criminal offences, including bribery of national public officials, bribery of foreign public officials and officials of international organizations, and bribery in the private sector.

¹⁰ The prevalence of bribery (indicator 16.5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals) is measured in terms of the proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months.

characteristics such as the sex of the bribe-payer. Sex-disaggregated data available from 18 countries points to a clear pattern: in 17 out of 18 countries, men are more likely than women to pay bribes when in contact with public officials; on average, the prevalence of bribery among men (13.6 per cent) is 3 per cent higher than that among women (10.6 per cent). Because men and women typically have different types of interaction with public officials and seek different services, they may experience bribery differently.

Figure 18

Average prevalence of bribery in the past 12 months in 18 countries, by sex

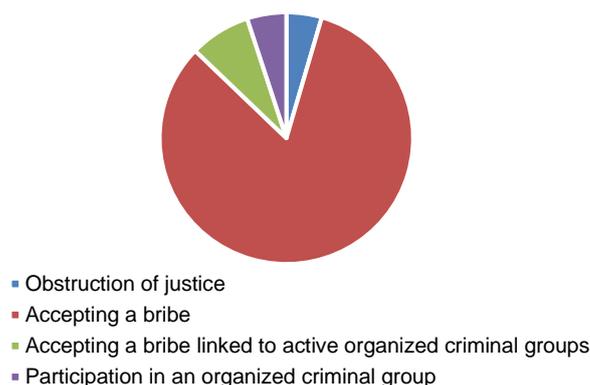


Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems. Latest data available for the period 2004–2018.

36. Corruption has been identified as one of the main enablers of organized crime. During research conducted recently by UNODC on organized crime in the Western Balkans, one prisoner interviewed stated that migrant smuggling would not be possible if the police at the border did not allow themselves to be corrupted. Another prisoner reported that “the risk is very low because everyone is involved in bribery and corruption: police and customs officers, judges and lawyers, political parties, etc. The authorities know what I am doing; I pay them off with lunches and other types of bribes.” A review of the convictions of public officials for corruption in the Western Balkans during the period 2012–2017 shows that the majority involved the acceptance of a bribe (330 convictions), while approximately 10 per cent (31 convictions) involved the acceptance of a bribe linked to organized crime.

Figure 19

Convictions of public officials for corruption in the Western Balkans, by type of corruption, 2012–2017



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

VII. Wildlife crime

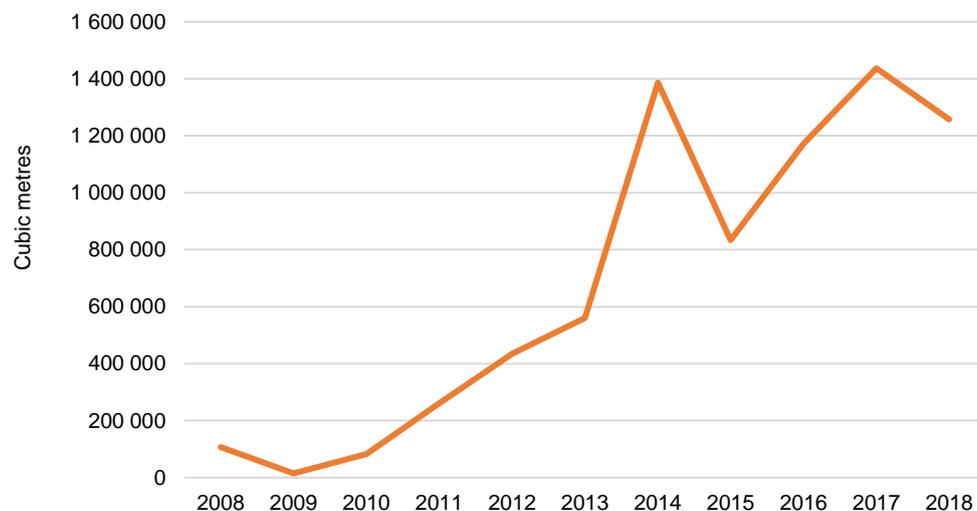
Target 15.7. Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products

37. The illegal wildlife trade comprises not one market, but many. Each wildlife product is subject to its own dynamics and trends, some growing while others fall. In terms of value, the most lucrative markets for contraband wildlife involve timber and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, however, terrestrial animal species are the most threatened by poaching. According to a UNODC valuation exercise,¹¹ some of the most profitable markets are those for rosewood, ivory and pangolins.

38. “Rosewood” is a trade term, not a botanical one; the rosewood species illegally traded in the largest volumes over the last five years appears to be *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, which is endemic to West Africa. In 2014, more than 1.3 million tons of rosewood were illegally exported from West Africa, equivalent to about 7 million trees. In some countries, export volumes were equivalent to 100 20-foot containers per day. Oversupply seems to have depressed the markets for rosewood in 2015, but they rose to a new record by 2017. Traders are diversifying into a wider range of species, including those not traditionally deemed “rosewood”.

Figure 20

Rosewood exports from West Africa, 2008–2018

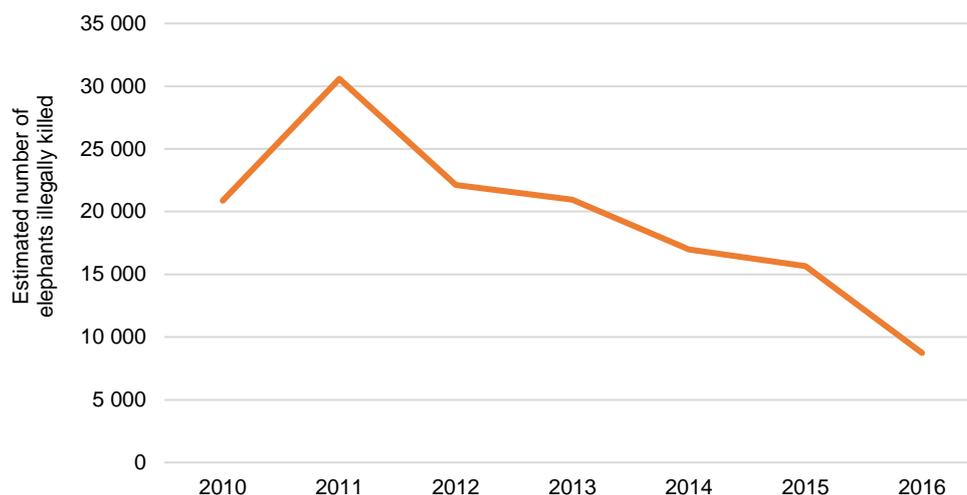


Source: UN Comtrade – International Trade Statistics Database.

39. In contrast, the market for ivory tusks appears to be in decline. Models based on observed poaching incidents show a decline in the number of illegally killed elephants (see figure 21), and ivory prices in both East Africa and Asia have been falling since 2014. A recent surge in very large seizures of ivory may be attributable to the sale of ivory stocks in response to falling prices. The decline in the market for ivory may be related in some way to international policy innovation, as several key markets recently curtailed legal ivory sales.

¹¹ See online, “Methodological annex to the World Wildlife Crime Report: trafficking in protected species”. Available at www.unodc.org/.

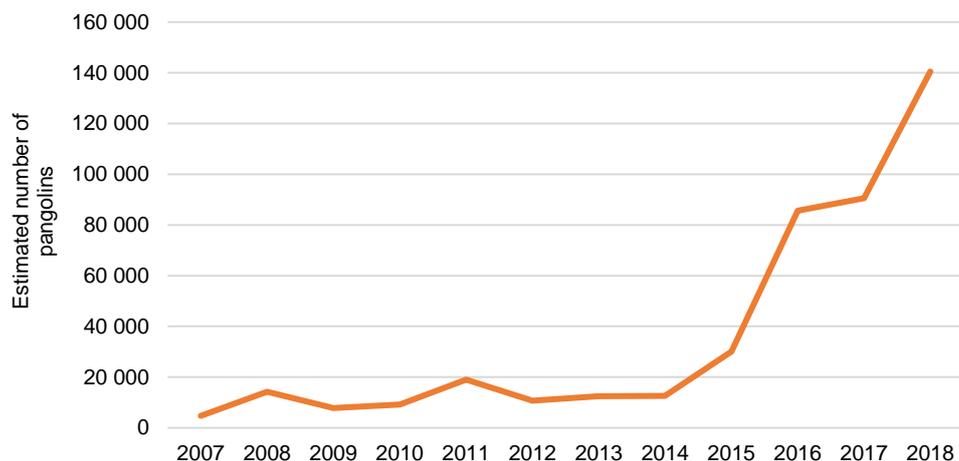
Figure 21
Estimated annual number of elephants illegally killed in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa, 2010–2016



Source: UNODC modelling of data from the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants Programme of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

40. Pangolins are scaly anteaters found in both Asia and Africa. Although they are mammals, they were little known until recently, owing to their solitary nature and nocturnal habits. They came to the attention of the public as a result of a series of remarkable seizures of their scales, with each seizure representing tens of thousands of individual animals. It remains unclear whether the dramatic rise in pangolin seizures is a product of growing demand, speculation or simply increased awareness and regulation.

Figure 22
Estimated number of pangolins represented by seizures of pangolin scales, 2007–2018



Source: UNODC, World Wildlife Seizure (World WISE) database.

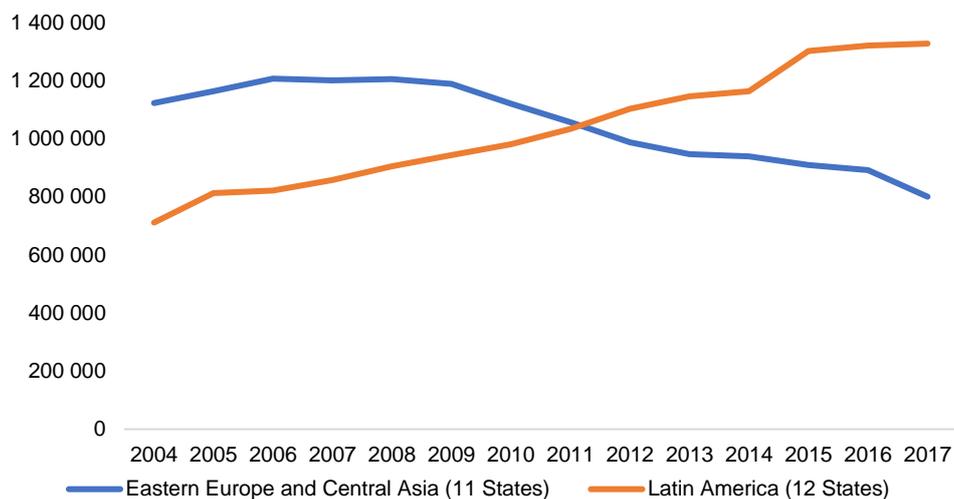
VIII. Prisons

Target 16.3. Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

41. Delays in the administration of justice in many parts of the world can be attributed to several factors and have significant human rights implications. The factors may include lack of coordination in national justice systems, an either

insufficient or excessive amount of evidence to be considered, judicial and court cultures that prevent speedy resolutions, or the lack of capacity of the criminal justice system to process the criminal cases.¹² Long remand periods have contributed to prison overcrowding. According to the most recent data collected by UNODC, approximately 25 per cent of the 91 countries reviewed were operating their prisons at more than 120 per cent of capacity. In some cases, the rapid growth of the prison population was the main issue, as many of the most overcrowded prison systems had doubled, tripled or even quadrupled their prison populations between 2005 and 2015, often in response to high crime rates (see figure 23). Some countries in Eastern Europe have seen their prison populations decrease, while many in Latin America have seen them increase.

Figure 23

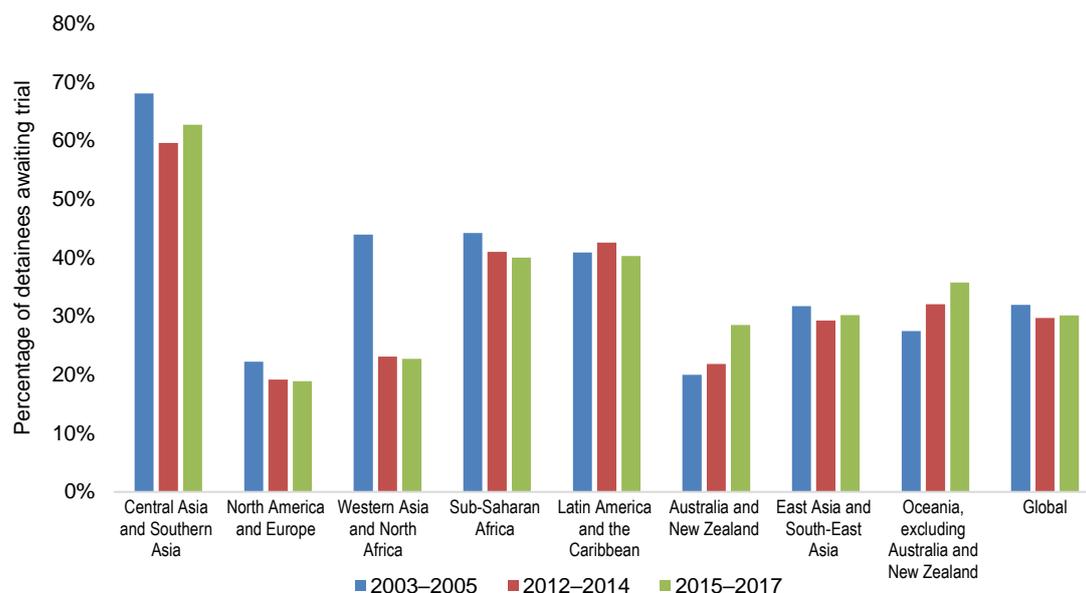
Estimated prison population in two regions, 2004–2017

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

42. Unsented prisoners comprise about half the prison population in the countries with the most severe overcrowding in South-East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa. In some of those countries, inmates who have been incarcerated for more than one year on remand comprise between 10 and 25 per cent of the prison population.

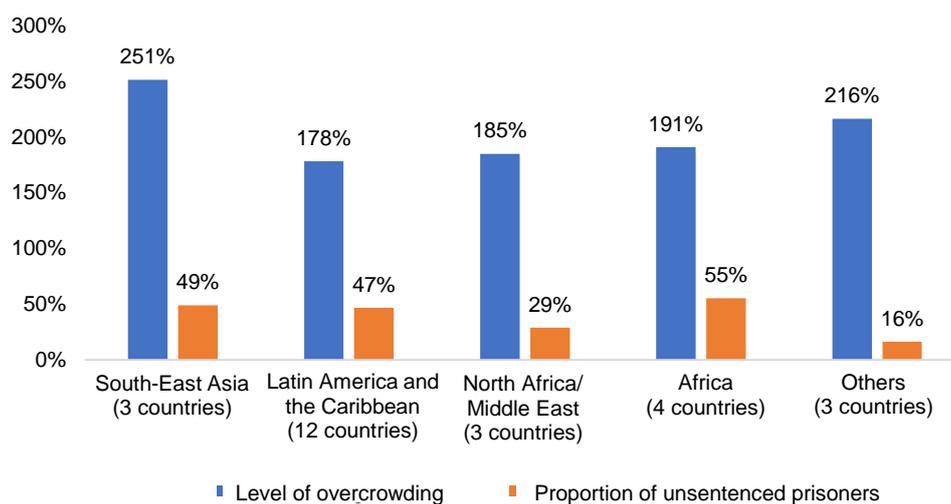
¹² Naomi Burstyner and Tania Sourdin, "Justice delayed is justice denied", *Victoria University Law and Justice Journal*, vol. 4, No. 1 (2014), pp. 46–60.

Figure 24
Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of the prison population, by region, 2003–2017



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

Figure 25
Overcrowding and proportion of prisoners awaiting trial among the 25 countries with the most overcrowded prison systems, by region, 2017 (or most recent data)



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

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

43. Achieving the target of significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere (target 16.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals) demands increased attention and resources for crime prevention from the international community. Reducing violence requires targeted approaches tailored to local circumstances, with a focus on the Americas and Africa, including the promotion of sustainable development. Older children and young adults require special protection from violence, in particular in the Americas. To reduce violence, vulnerable countries have to be especially shielded from international flows of illicit drugs.

44. Policies to eliminate trafficking in persons (targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2) have to be tailored to the needs identified in each geographical context. The multiple systems estimation methodology provides countries with a sound, cost-effective way of estimating prevalence and reporting on indicator 16.2.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
45. Facilitating safe and orderly migration (target 10.7) and preventing the smuggling of migrants requires reducing the space and opportunities for smugglers to operate. Safe migration policies should look beyond border enforcement and consider a broader geographical approach, including cooperation with countries of origin.
46. Reducing illicit arms flows (target 16.4) requires an understanding of regional markets. Increased efforts are needed to successfully trace the illicit origin of seized firearms. Reducing violence globally hinges on reducing homicide involving firearms. Moreover, measuring illicit financial flows is crucial to designing targeted and effective responses. The Office's ongoing research, using a sound methodological approach, is aimed at enabling such measurement at the national level.
47. To end the poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both the demand and supply of illegal wildlife products (target 15.7), each illicit wildlife market must be assessed with a view to devising tailored solutions for each of them. More research is required on the demand for protected species, their parts – such as pangolin scales – and products made from these species.
48. Combating all forms of organized crime (target 16.4), promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensuring equal access to justice for all (target 16.3) require a better understanding of the gendered roles of women and men in organized crime, with a view to developing effective prevention methods.
49. Prison overcrowding, resulting from several factors, including the large number of persons being incarcerated while on remand, is a grave concern in some parts of the world.
50. The Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice may wish to consider the following recommendations:
- (a) Since more men than women are involved in homicides globally, countries are encouraged to address the vulnerabilities underpinning lethal male violence, in particular as it affects young men, with a view to developing effective interventions aimed at reducing lethal violence;
 - (b) Addressing trafficking in persons requires a gendered approach. Countries are urged to consider the gender perspective in all aspects of the response to trafficking, including the protection of victims' rights, the responses of the criminal justice system and prevention efforts. Assistance is particularly needed in Asian and African countries to increase identification, protection and law enforcement capacities;
 - (c) Ensuring safe migration and preventing the smuggling of migrants requires countries to address both push and pull factors that can lead to migrant smuggling, including social, economic and cultural factors related to smuggling;
 - (d) Effective tracing systems are required at the national level in order to capitalize on successful firearms marking programmes aimed at tackling firearms trafficking;
 - (e) Countries, international organizations and civil society organizations are encouraged to monitor global wildlife markets with a view to protecting emerging endangered species. An assessment of the reasons behind the decline of markets such as the market for ivory should be made and the lessons learned should be applied to other markets;
 - (f) To ensure a decisive and efficient criminal justice response to transnational organized crime, sectors of the criminal justice system should have the capacity to investigate, prosecute and convict criminals, using effective national coordination

mechanisms. In addition, the effective use of the mechanisms of international law, including law enforcement cooperation and information exchange among countries, should be strengthened;

(g) Countries are encouraged to address the challenge of prison overcrowding through appropriate criminal justice reforms, including by reviewing penal policies and practical measures to reduce pretrial detention, with a view to enhancing the use of non-custodial sanctions and improving access to legal aid to the extent possible.
