

Global progress report on Sustainable Development Goal 16 indicators:

A wake-up call for action on
peace, justice and inclusion



SDG 16

Sustainable Development Goal 16



Global progress report on
Sustainable Development Goal 16 indicators:
A wake-up call for action on peace, justice and inclusion



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



Acknowledgements

This report was jointly produced by the Data, Analytics and Statistics Section (DASS) of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Human Rights Indicator and Data Unit of the Methodology, Education and Training Section of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Global Policy Centre for Governance (Oslo Governance Centre), of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Based on data from the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023, these agencies acknowledge the invaluable contributions from other agencies that regularly produce statistics on goal 16 indicators for which data were used in this report, namely the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the World Bank Group, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Financing for Sustainable Development Office (FSDO), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UNESCO-UIS). The agencies also express their appreciation to the national institutions which have produced and submitted data to assess goal 16 monitoring.

Cover, design and production:

David Gerstl, Suzanne Kunnen, Katja Zöhner

Disclaimers:

The contents of this report can in no way reflect the views or policies of UNODC, OHCHR, UNDP or contributory organizations, nor do they imply any endorsement. The designations employed and the presentation of material in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of these agencies concerning the legal status of any country, territory or city or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit purposes without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made. UNODC, OHCHR and UNDP would appreciate a copy of any publication that uses this report as a source.

Financial support:

The production of this report was made possible due to financial contributions from the Kingdom of Norway.

Contact:

UNODC (unodc-ddds@un.org), OHCHR (OHCHR-SDGindicators@un.org), UNDP OGC (sdg16indicators@undp.org).

Cover picture: © UNODC/suz

Icon source: Adobe Stock, Noun Project

Table of contents

Preface.6
1 Background8
2 Key findings and policy implications	10
3 Progress made in improving data availability	21
4 Progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16 based on measurement of indicators	24
5 Impact of setbacks in progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16 on economic development.44

Preface

We are at the halfway point to 2030. The world we live in today is drastically different from in 2015 when an ambitious set of goals for people, planet and prosperity was agreed.

We know that progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is dangerously off-track and that progress towards goal 16, through which countries aspire to establish more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, is worryingly slow. In some cases, it is even moving in the wrong direction.

Worldwide, trust in institutions is waning as government systems are buckling under the weight of expectations from their citizens. Waves of unconstitutional transitions of power are undermining the rule of law and human rights and weakening governance systems.

In this year's report on the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Secretary-General has raised the alarm on the pace of achievement of the goals. "Unless we act now," he emphasizes, "the 2030 Agenda will become an epitaph for a world that might have been."

In the case of goal 16, we see that progress on violence reduction, access to justice, inclusive governance and peaceful societies is stagnating or in reverse. The situation for women across some indicators is worse than for men – there are more women victims of sexual violence (though men continue to bear the brunt of overall violence), they feel less safe walking around the area they live, and face significant barriers in achieving equal representation and justice.

When the goals were being formulated eight years ago, goal 16 held the promise of achieving more inclusive, just and peaceful societies, but we lacked the data to track progress.

Since 2015, UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR, as custodians of 18 of the 24 indicators under goal 16, have been working closely with national institutions and experts to develop the methodologies and increase the availability of nationally relevant and globally comparable data on human rights, justice and governance.

This year, for the first time, data are available on all goal 16 indicators, although for some the country coverage continues to be limited and more investment is needed to expand data availability.

Several tools have been developed in a relatively short period of time to meet the demands of measuring governance, corruption, crime, access to justice and to provide guidance on applying a human rights-based approach to data. New initiatives and partnerships have been developed to enhance cooperation on measuring goal 16.

However, much more investment is needed to ensure the production of accurate, reliable and disaggregated data if no one is to be left behind. Such data are critical for informing national policymaking and priority setting, as well as increasing transparency and accountability to citizens.

The data showcased in this report illustrate in stark terms where we are today on goal 16. Countries are backsliding on their human rights obligations, violence and insecurity are pervasive, corruption and unresponsive Governments corrode weakened social contracts and justice continues to be elusive for the most marginalized. Without addressing some of the deep-seated causes of inequality and exclusion captured within goal 16, progress on sustainable development overall will not be achieved.

This report draws on available data to urge policymakers to recognize that the current pace of change is insufficient to address some of the most significant challenges facing people today:

- **Violence is rising and the nature of conflict is evolving.** Although the perception of safety remained stable in the period 2016–2021, intentional homicide reached a peak in 2021. The following year, according to data on 12 of the deadliest armed conflicts around the world, at least 16,988 civilians were killed in war operations, a 53 per cent increase compared with 2021, and the first increase since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.
- **Trafficking in persons appears more hidden than before.** 2019–2020 saw a decrease in numbers of victims detected in general, but an increase in the percentage of child victims detected, from 28 per cent in 2014 to 35 per cent in 2021.
- **The gap in people's ability to access justice continues to be significant.** Less than half the population report crimes such as robbery, phys-

ical assault and sexual assault and the total number of persons in detention has continued to grow over the past two decades, with the share of unsentenced detainees increasing in 2021. With the inclusion of access to dispute resolution mechanisms in the 2030 Agenda, countries are now beginning to collect data on the indicator.

- **There is a clear correlation between bribery affecting individuals and businesses.** This illustrates a common pattern of corruption in countries. Notably, the proportion of people who were asked to pay or paid a bribe to a public official differs depending on the income level of countries – with a higher level of prevalence in low- and middle-income countries than in upper middle-income and high-income countries.
- **Women are underrepresented at senior levels of decision-making.** Women continue to face glass ceilings that limit their career aspirations in public service. Women are less equally represented in senior levels in public service roles and in supreme and constitutional courts than in lower-level positions.
- **It is becoming more dangerous and deadly for human rights defenders and journalists.** There was a 40 per cent increase in killings and a nearly 300 per cent increase in enforced disappearances from 2021 to 2022.
- **Discrimination is prevalent worldwide, with one in six people having experienced discrimination during the previous 12 months.** Women are twice as likely as men to experience discrimination based on sex or marital status. One in three persons with disabilities experience discrimination, twice the rate of persons without disabilities. Racial discrimination, related to ethnicity, colour or language, is among the most common grounds of discrimination.

Today, we have more available data on goal 16 than ever before. Far more data are still needed but this clearly shows that urgent action is necessary if wholesale reversals in progress across goal 16 are to be prevented.

The current trajectory is not inevitable. We have seven years in which to make the changes needed and recalibrate our efforts. We have seven years in which to make the changes needed and recalibrate our efforts.

We have increasing evidence of the interlinkages between addressing peaceful, just and inclusive societies and ending poverty and inequality. We know that reducing homicide can have a significant impact on GDP, that the quality of governance systems influences development outcomes, and that the realization of human rights is at the core of leaving no one behind.

If collective action, political commitment and courageous choices are combined, achieving the targets towards peace, justice and inclusion is still possible. However, greater investment in high-quality, timely and disaggregated data on goal 16 is essential if evidence-informed choices are to be made and if the focus is to remain on those most at risk of being left behind.



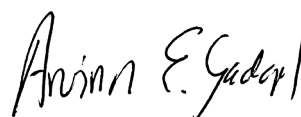
Angela Me

Chief
Research and Trend Analysis Branch, UNODC



Francesca Marotta

Chief, Methodology, Education and Training
Section, UN Human Rights



Arvinn E. Gadgil

Director
UNDP Global Policy Centre for Governance

1 Background

Interconnected nature of the targets and indicators under Sustainable Development Goal 16

The aim of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (goal 16) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 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”. Following on from the Millennium Development Goals, this represents an important additional dimension to the new development paradigm.¹

With the 2023 SDG 16 Summit taking place at the United Nations in New York in September 2023 and the review of progress towards goal 16 at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2024 on the horizon, this report on indicators illustrates the status of progress to date towards goal 16, the targets that are unlikely to be met at the current rate of progress, latest trends and policy implications.

Jointly produced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), collectively custodians of 18 of the 24 goal 16 indicators, this is the first report to bring together an analysis of the progress made towards all the goal 16 targets for which there are sufficient data. The report also highlights the urgency to address violence, justice, human rights and governance concerns in order to achieve more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, thus enabling progress across all aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A series of ground-breaking methodological standards have been developed and capacity development initiatives implemented to support countries in improving awareness and knowledge of goal 16. Measurement approaches in the thematic areas addressed by goal 16 were at a nascent stage when the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were approved in 2015, but progress has been made since then from a methodological and data availability point of view in enabling national statistical systems to monitor progress on goal 16.

The inclusion of goal 16 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was recognition that peace, justice, inclusion and development are deeply interlinked.

Figure 1: Main topics measured by goal 16 indicators



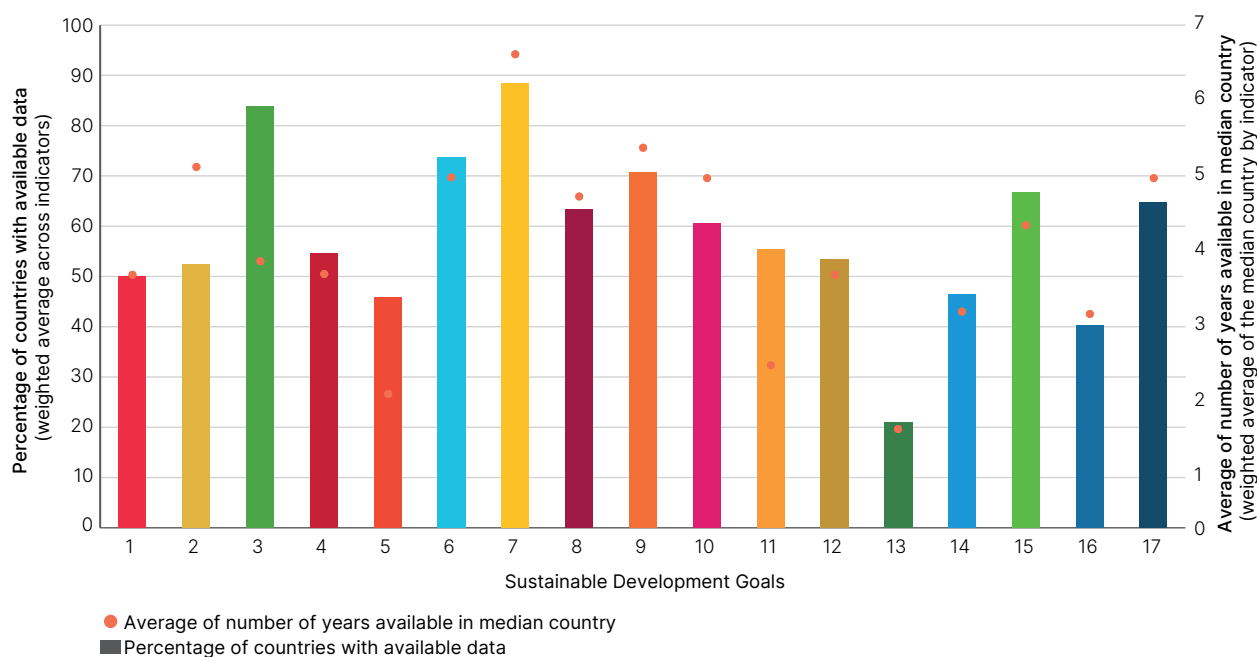
¹ United Nations, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

They are necessary for creating the basic conditions to implement and achieve the other goals. However, midway through the implementation period of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the progress made by Member States in making data available to monitor goal 16 is showing mixed results for different targets and with just seven years to go until 2030, there is a need to accelerate progress on the measurement of goal 16 indicators.

Data availability has improved significantly since 2015, but significant gaps remain and data continue to be insufficient for accurately assessing the implementation progress of all targets and indicators. Currently, goal 16 is one of the SDGs with the least amount of data. On average, across all goal 16 targets, only 40 per cent of countries have reported data for at least one year since 2015 (figure 2),² limiting the information that could drive evidence-informed policies to accelerate progress towards goal 16.

As countries are beginning to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic impact, other crises have emerged. The armed conflict in Ukraine has contributed to a surge in food and energy prices worldwide. High levels of inflation and the significant debt burden facing many countries are compounding uncertainty further and making it difficult, not least for those already living on the margins of society, to make ends meet. Climate change and biodiversity loss have led to unpredictable weather patterns, with extreme heat, drought and flooding occurring in different parts of the world, claiming lives and livelihoods.³ As these intersecting crises unfold, the relationship between the State and its population is being called into question with renewed urgency. In this context, the call of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to promote peaceful and inclusive societies by providing access to justice for all could not be more significant.⁴

Figure 2: Proportion of countries or areas with available data (weighted average across indicators) since 2015, by goal



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics, SDG Indicator Database. Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/analytics/RegionalSummaryWorld?datapoint=1&nature=All>.

² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics, SDG Database. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/analytics/DataAvailability>.

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2022).

⁴ United Nations, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1).

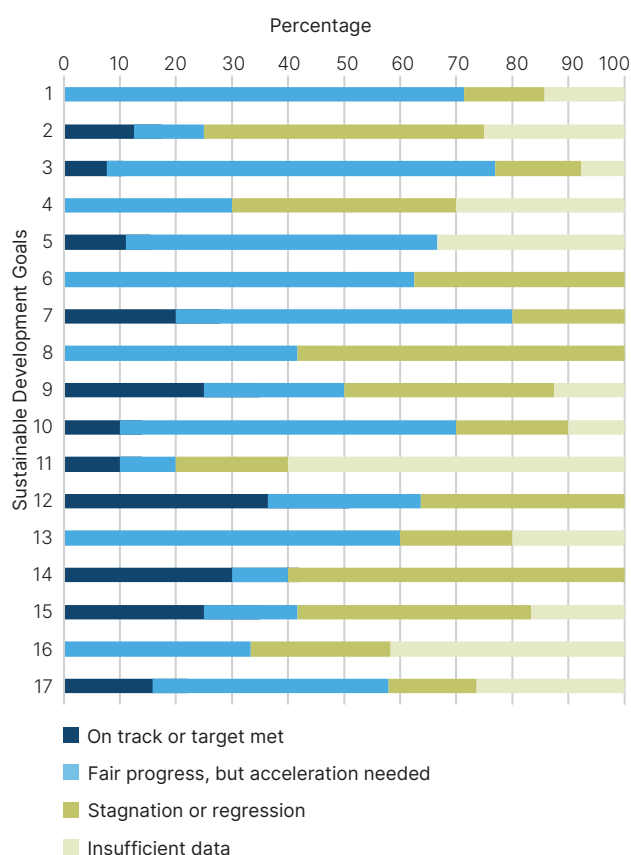
2 Key findings and policy implications

Available data show that little or no progress towards goal 16 has been made since the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. Fair progress has been made in roughly one third of the targets under goal 16, while about one quarter have stagnated or regressed and more than 40 per cent of the targets still lack sufficient data for follow-up (figure 3).⁵ Indeed, the aim of goal 16, to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive societies at all levels, remains in the balance at the global level. That said, in some aspects, it is not possible to define progress because data systems remain underdeveloped and global and regional trends are not fully accessible. Where data allow trends to be

assessed, however, many of the goal 16 targets seem to be off track given that 2030 is just over seven years away.

Although the data gap remains substantial and the lack of progress towards goal 16 at the global level may be alarming, there are important achievements to be acknowledged, not least in terms of the increase in data availability and the partnerships established for improving data development. For example, progress is visible both in terms of the increase in the number of indicators included in the SDG Global Database since 2015, and in the additional data provided by different goal 16 indicators that were not previously available. Likewise, access to information has increased, as the numbers of countries that have adopted laws guaranteeing public access to information has increased by almost one third since 2015.

Figure 3: Progress assessment of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals based on the assessment of their targets, 2023 or latest available year



Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 (United Nations publication, 2023).

⁵ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 (United Nations publication, 2023). Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>.

Nevertheless, most of the latest available data show that the progress made has stagnated or regressed since 2020. For example, in 2022, the global number of homicides hit a 20-year high and there was also an unprecedented increase in direct civilian deaths resulting from new or ongoing conflicts. Furthermore, the number of victims of trafficking in persons detected fell for the first time in 20 years, most likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on anti-trafficking responses and the ability to identify victims. At the same time, structural inequalities and new challenges are posing an increasing burden on human rights institutions, with the global population of prisoners rising again and the number of killings of journalists and human right defenders increasing substantially.

In addition to the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had the effect of reducing the capacity of countries to detect trafficking in persons, the release of a large number of people from prisons around the world during the pandemic mostly benefitted sentenced detainees, increasing the global percentage of unsentenced detainees held in prisons.

Children continue to experience high levels of violence. Globally, almost half of them are victims of violence at the hands of their caregivers and child victims continue to account for the majority of victims of trafficking detected in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, and some parts of Asia. Some













subregions have achieved universal birth registration, yet others still face many challenges, with the birth of around 1 in 4 children under the age of 5 worldwide having never been officially registered.

Women and men are affected differently by the challenges addressed in goal 16. Women remain underrepresented at senior decision-making levels and overrepresented at lower levels in public service. Women's representation in parliament is growing too slowly to reach parity with that of men by 2030. Men represent the vast majority of victims of violence worldwide and are those most exposed to challenges related to access to justice. This is shown, for example, by the fact that men make up a far larger share of incarcerated people than women, although women in prison account for a larger share of those detained without sentence, and once arrested for trafficking in persons, have a greater likelihood of being convicted. Women also account for the vast majority of victims of trafficking in persons, not to mention of domestic violence. Women also feel less secure in public than men and their share of conflict-related deaths is on the increase.

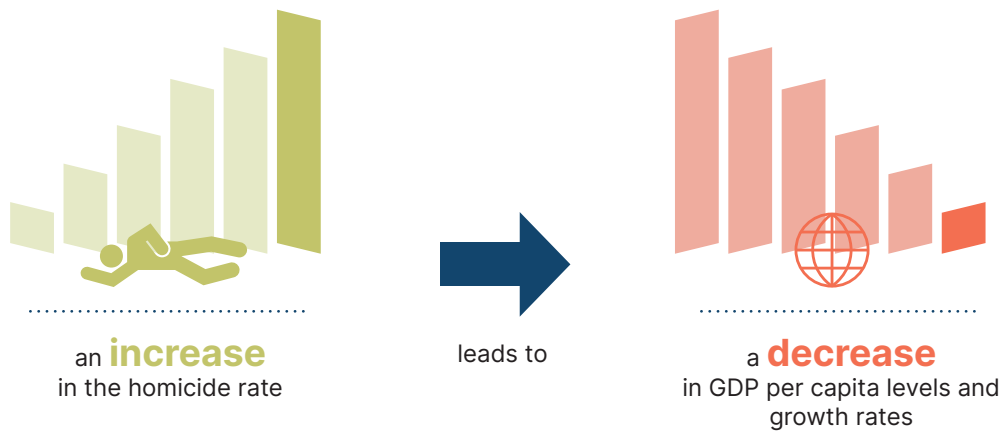
Lack of progress on goal 16 affects the achievement of all the other SDGs. Poverty and corruption are interrelated: countries with lower levels of income have higher levels of bribery. Corruption, as measured through administrative bribery, remains prevalent globally, with 20 per cent of people who access a public service reporting having paid a bribe to do so. Violence also negatively correlates with education and poverty levels. The impact of goal 16 on the other SDGs can be quantified through the negative impact of homicides on economic growth, as an increase in the homicide rate leads to a decrease in GDP per capita levels and growth rates (figure 4).

Just seven years remain in which to accelerate the transformative action requisite to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The enhanced availability of data for measuring goal 16 indicators can help ensure that the process of achieving goal 16 is headed in the right direction. An integrated and sustained strategy for improving national capacities to collect and use data in order to deliver better results will be critical to the achievement of the aim of more peaceful, just and inclusive societies. By reviewing the best data available at the global level for most of the goal 16 indicators, an overview of the status for each indicator is presented below.

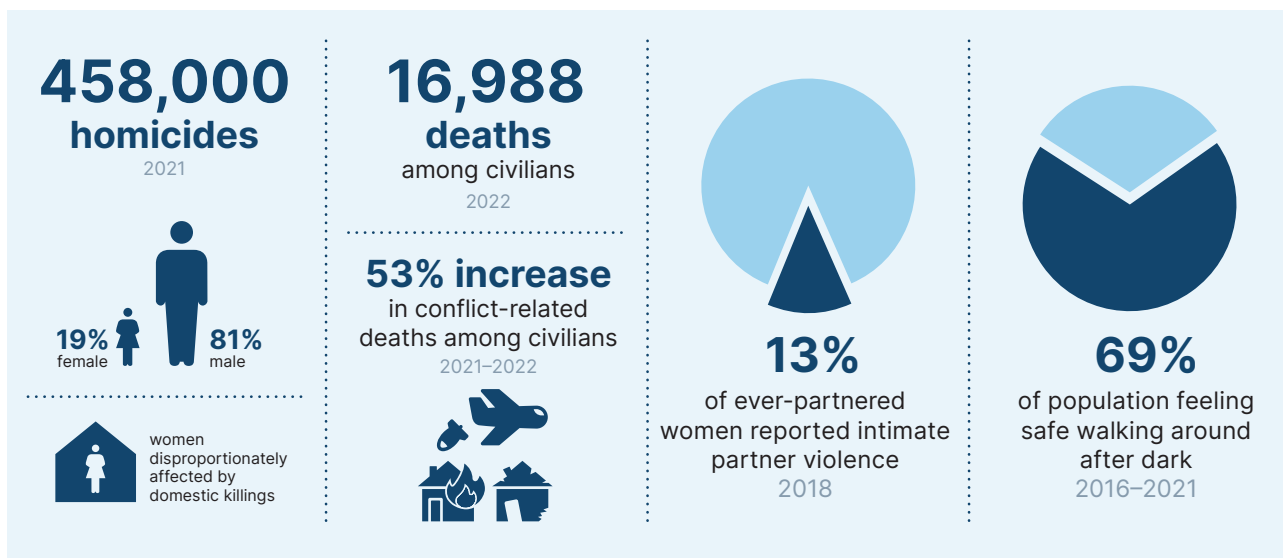
Figure 4: Goal 16 indicators: main progress and setbacks

 Main Progresses	 Main Setbacks
 <p>Increase in the number of countries that adopted laws to guarantee public access to information</p>	 <p>Homicide at a 20-year high in 2021</p>
 <p>Some progress on the proportion of children under the age of 5 who were registered at birth</p>	 <p>Increase in conflict-related (civilian) deaths in 2022; the first increase since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.</p>
 <p>Some progress in the number of independent national human rights institutions</p>	 <p>Decrease in the number of victims of human trafficking detected due to the reduced capacity of anti-trafficking responses and the ability to identify victims</p>
 <p>Increase in data availability for goal16 indicators</p>	 <p>Increase in the number of unsentenced prisoners, in particular among women</p>
	 <p>Government budget deviations on the rise</p>
	 <p>Increase in the number of killing of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists in 2022</p>

How setbacks in goal 16 indicators may influence other goals:



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

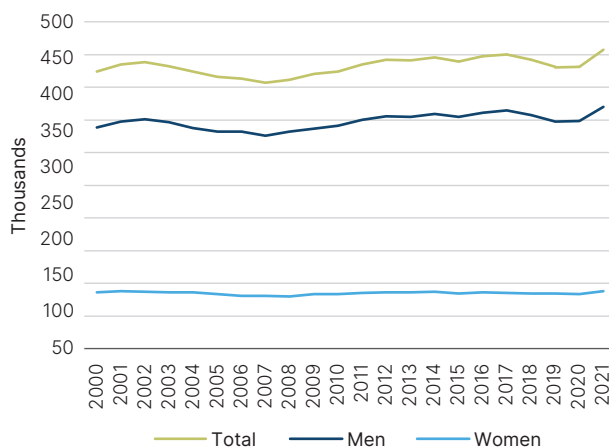


Violence is unlikely to be halved by 2030. In 2021, homicide reached its highest level since 2000. Men continue to account for more than 80 per cent of all victims, but women continue to be disproportionately affected by domestic killings.

Conflict-related deaths have decreased significantly since 2015, yet the increase of more than 50 per cent in the number of conflict-related deaths among civilians from 2021 to 2022 is derailing the global path to peace. Furthermore, there has been limited progress in reducing both non-lethal violence and the perception of insecurity, with women reporting feeling less safe in public than men across all regions.

Key Policy Implications: Violence-related episodes have an important gender dimension to be considered if future actions are to help reduce violence worldwide. Although a significant advance has been made in terms of collecting sex-disaggregated data, future policy options should be designed to act more directly in order to prevent the disproportionately greater risk of women suffering intimate partner violence than men and the increasing risk of civilian deaths, including among women living in areas affected by conflict.

Figure 5: Global number of victims of intentional homicide, 2000-2021



Source: UNODC data.

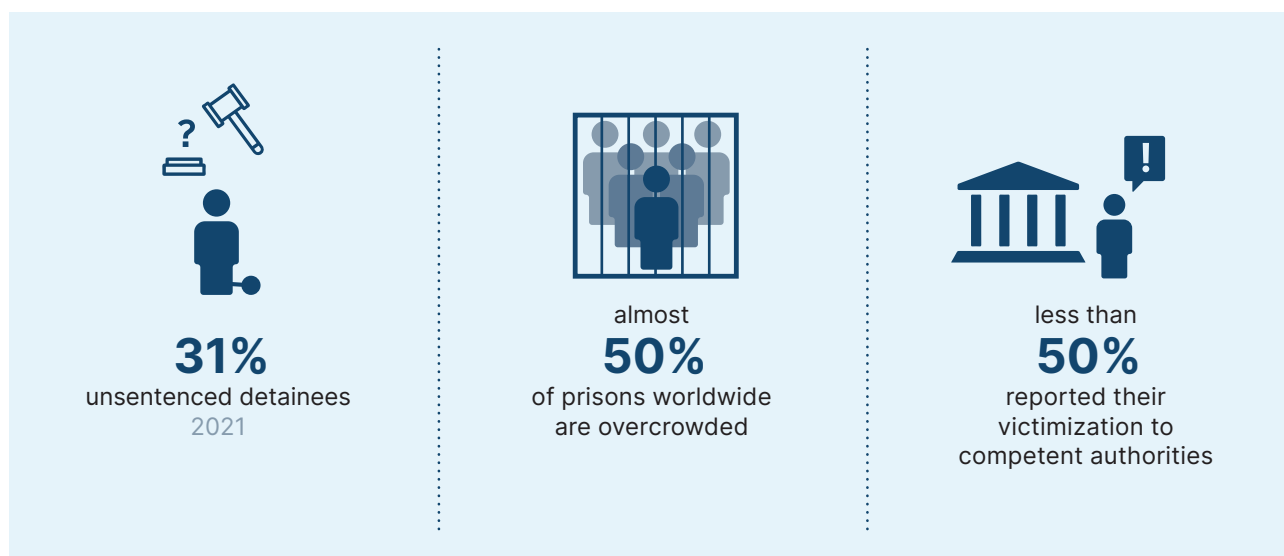
Target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children



This target is far from being achieved. Violence against children remains prevalent in the domestic sphere and in exploitative situations. More than half of all children in most reporting countries continue to experience physical punishment or psychological aggression as a form of discipline and child victims of trafficking in persons are almost twice as likely to be subjected to physical or extreme violence as adult victims. The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have exacerbated the situation of victims of trafficking in persons, with the total number of detected victims decreasing at the global level, mainly due to a reduction in the capacity of national authorities to identify victims and prevent traffickers from operating.

Key Policy Implications: National justice systems should enforce current laws that address violence committed against children, particularly in low- to middle-income countries, where a significant portion of victims of trafficking in persons is composed of minors.

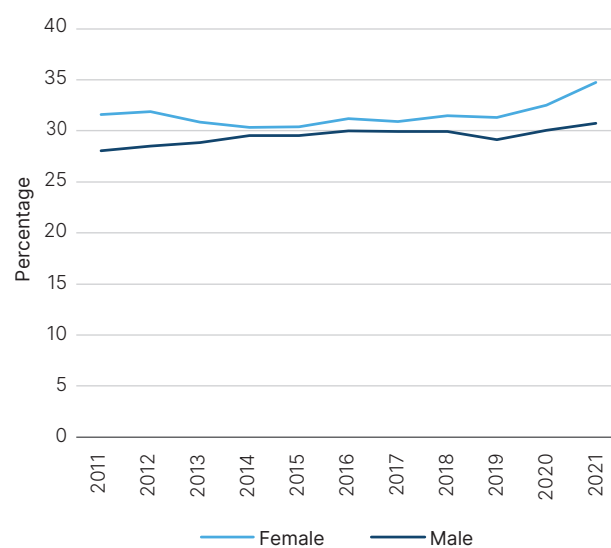
Target 16.3: Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all



Little progress has been achieved to date in ensuring justice for all. The share of unsentenced prisoners remains constant, at around 30 per cent of the global prison population, and overcrowding in prisons is reported by almost half of countries with relevant data. Moreover, less than half of the population who fall victim to violence in countries with available data report their victimization to competent authorities, with victims of sexual assault reporting less than victims of other crimes, which implies continuing overall distrust of criminal justice institutions. In terms of access to dispute resolution mechanisms, a limited number of countries have reported to date, as the indicator is relatively new and was only included in the SDG framework in 2020.

Key Policy Implications: Globally, prison conditions are falling short of the goal of promoting increased access to justice and legal defence mechanisms to everyone. Future policy alternatives aimed at containing the growing share of unsentenced prisoners, in particular among women, should consider potential structural inequalities within the justice system that could be contributing to this concerning trend.

Figure 6: Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of the overall prison population at the global level, by sex, 2011–2021



Source: UNODC data.

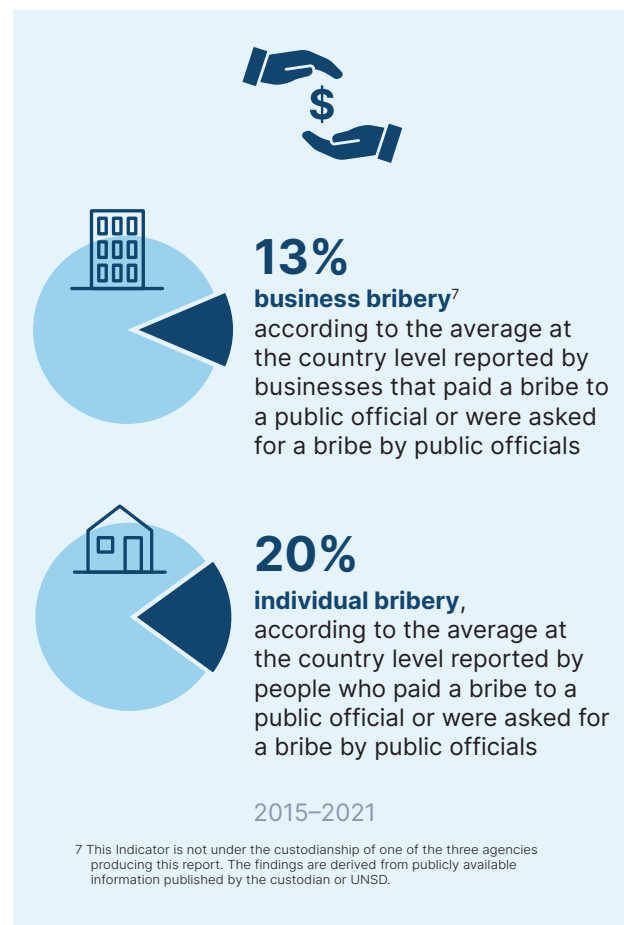
Target 16.4: Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows



Understanding the global magnitude of and trends in illicit flows related to illicit markets and financial flows remains a challenge. Efforts to reduce and monitor illicit arms flows remain limited. Tracing the origin of weapons seized is challenging for many countries owing to a lack of resources and capacity, with Member States successfully tracing an average of just one third of potentially traceable weapons seized between 2016 and 2021. The few countries where elements of illicit financial flows have been measured suggest that the share of such flows related to drug markets can be substantial, even surpassing the value of some agriculture exports.

Key Policy Implications: To improve monitoring of illicit markets that are constantly adapting, the availability of data related to illicit financial flows should be expanded to include different crime opportunities at an increasing pace.

Target 16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery



Bribery continues to be an issue in all regions, although its prevalence varies significantly depending on a country's income level. The prevalence of bribery reported by businesses tends to be lower than that reported by individuals, which is likely the result of underreporting, but the size of individual bribes paid by businesses are potentially much larger.

Key Policy Implications: Reducing corruption at the global level requires the strengthening of the capacity of national institutions to detect the presence of and monitor trends in different forms of corruption. Moreover, gender and cultural aspects should be included as relevant factors in the implementation of national information systems and anticorruption policies.

Targets 16.6 and 16.7: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions, and ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

16.6



Budget deviations are on the rise

Average approved government budget deviations reached almost 10 per cent in some regions⁸
2020–2021

⁸ This Indicator is not under the custodianship of one of the three agencies producing this report. The findings are derived from publicly available information published by the custodian or UNSD.

16.7



Women are underrepresented

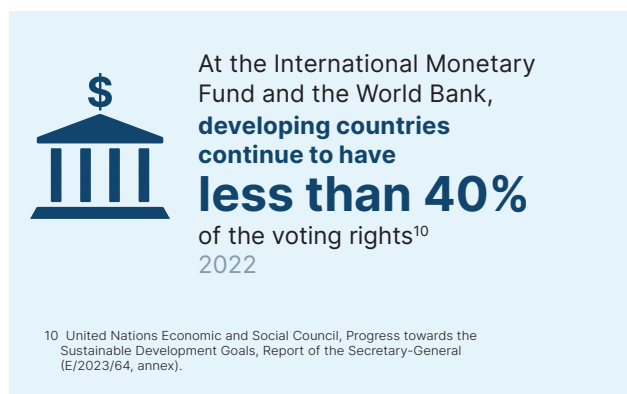
at higher levels of decision-making in national institutions, with a gender parity of 0.86 in public service.⁹
2022

⁹ A value of 1 indicates parity, while a value under 1 indicates underrepresentation and over 1 indicates overrepresentation.

Data are still scarce, but the latest figures reveal that approved government budget deviations are increasing, after a significant decrease observed between 2015 and 2019. Women are overrepresented at lower levels of decision-making in the public sector but underrepresented at higher levels in national institutions. The same trend is observed in the judicial system.

Key Policy Implications: To ensure better targeted service delivery that accelerates progress across all the SDGs, an evidence-based approach to monitoring public expenditure and satisfaction with public services is required. In addition to further investment in disaggregated data for improving understanding of representation and participation in decision-making processes, there is a need for increased investment in addressing barriers to the participation of women at senior decision-making levels in the public sector and judiciary.

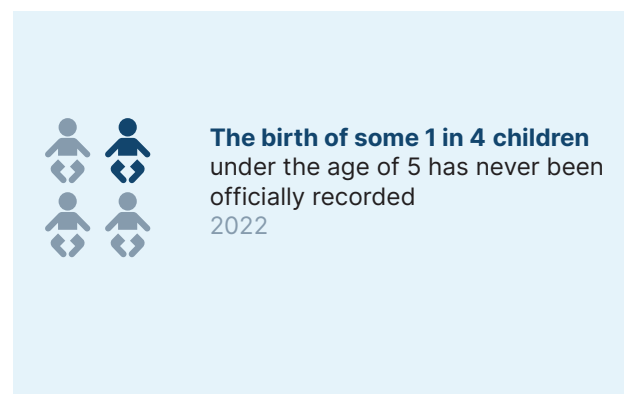
Targets 16.8: Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance



Developing countries continue to be underrepresented in the International Monetary Fund and International Finance Corporation.

Key Policy Implications: The voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making, norm-setting and global economic governance need to be broadened and strengthened.

Targets 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity to all, including birth registration



In 2022, the birth of almost one quarter of children under the age of 5 worldwide was not registered, denying legal identity and access to social services to the most vulnerable. Some progress has been achieved, however, as the proportion of those whose birth is registered increased from 71.2 in the period 2010–2016 to 77.2 in 2022. Recently, legal identity has also been granted not only via birth registration but also via national identity systems.

Key Policy Implications: Investment in developing and maintaining comprehensive civil registration, vital statistics, and identity management systems that span from birth to death, especially the birth certificate, is vital.

Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms



The global number of killings and enforced disappearances of journalists and human rights defenders increased significantly in 2022. The average number of human rights defenders, journalists or trade unionists killed worldwide every day increased by 20 per cent from 2015–2021 to 2022 to reach 1.2. On the other hand, access to information has improved, as the numbers of countries that have adopted laws guaranteeing public access to information has increased by almost one third since 2015.

Key Policy Implications: To counter the current lack of progress in the goal of enhancing the protection of fundamental freedoms to all citizens worldwide, it is necessary to strengthen protective regulations, policies, and accountability mechanisms, including independent national human rights mechanisms, in favour of human right defenders and professionals who help ensure public access to information.

Target 16.a: Strengthen relevant national institutions

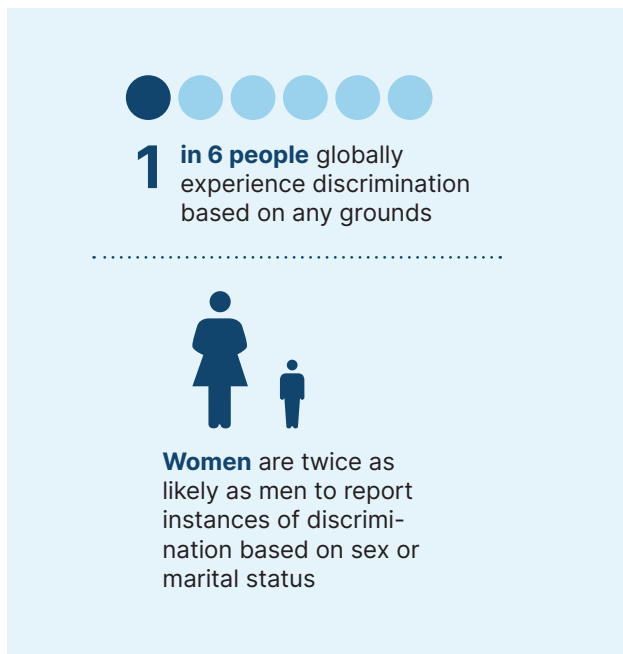


Global progress in establishing or strengthening such institutions continued steadily in 2022; however, six out of ten countries worldwide still lack independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles.¹¹ States need to accelerate the growth rate of strong and independent national human rights institutions by more than fourfold if universal coverage is to be achieved by 2030.

Key Policy Implications: The current pace of progress to strengthen relevant national institutions will depend on gradual and constant increases in the number of countries across regions that seek international accreditation of their independent human right institutions in line with the Paris Principles adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (48/134).

¹¹ Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (General Assembly resolution 48/134).

Target 16.b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws



One in six people globally experience discrimination based on any grounds, with racial discrimination being one of the most common forms. Women are twice as likely as men to report instances of discrimination based on sex or marital status, while one third of people with disabilities report having felt discriminated against.

Key Policy Implications: The promotion and enforcement of non-discriminatory laws around the world need comprehensive policy measures and accountability mechanisms, including better data collection on the population groups that experience direct or indirect discrimination based on grounds prohibited by international human rights laws.

3 Progress made in improving data availability

Methodological development for the SDG indicators has improved significantly since 2015. Across all 169 SDG targets, all indicators had an internationally agreed methodology by March 2020 and the number of indicators included in the Global SDG Database has increased from 115 in 2016 to 225 in 2023. Geographic coverage is still challenging, however, with less than half of the 193 countries or areas having internationally comparable data for several cross-cutting goals, including goal 16.¹²

Indicators for measuring the progress of goal 16 have also been improved greatly in terms of methodological development and data availability. The two indicators for target 16.4, for example, indicator 16.4.1 on illicit financial flows and indicator 16.4.2 on tracing firearms, had no established and internationally agreed methodology in 2015 and no data available, but great progress has been made. UNODC and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have collaborated on the development of a Conceptual Framework for the Statistical Measurement of Illicit Financial Flows and have supported countries in its implementation for measuring indicator 16.4.1.¹³ As a result, there are currently data for nine countries on illicit financial flows related to crime in the Global SDG Database, whereas there were none at all in 2015. Although the number of countries remains very limited, this shows exponential growth and offers hope of speedy future development. Work is also ongoing on the development of detailed guidelines for the measurement of illicit financial flows and supporting countries in producing their own estimates.

Furthermore, UNODC has developed the Illicit Arm Flows Questionnaire (UN-IAFQ) in order to collect the data necessary for indicator 16.4.2 and complementary information. As a result, there are currently data for 24 countries in the Global SDG Database, covering the period 2016–2021. Yet while data on arm seizures are generally available in countries, there is still a need for national agencies to improve recording of the sta-

tus of arms seized in terms of tracing in a centralized and standard manner.

Some progress has also been made in measuring the achievement of target 16.5 on eliminating corruption. UNODC and UNDP have developed international standards for conducting population and business surveys to produce data for the two indicators, 16.5.1 and 16.5.2. Indicator 16.5.1, on individuals, is derived from household surveys on corruption experience and/or victimization surveys with a module on bribery. These household surveys are usually conducted every three to five years, meaning that few countries release data annually. In total, 137 countries have had at least one data point since 2015, although the data for a large majority of countries are collected by Transparency International through its Global Corruption Barometer. Moreover, the Manual on Corruption Surveys provides guidance on the measurement of bribery and other forms of corruption through sample surveys.¹⁴

Data on indicator 16.5.2 are collected through the Enterprise Surveys conducted by the World Bank in client countries. A World Bank Enterprise Survey is a firm-level survey of a representative sample of an economy's private sector in which business owners and top managers are the respondents. The surveys cover a broad range of business environment topics, including access to finance, corruption, infrastructure, competition and performance measures. The surveys are comparable as the survey methodology is applied in a consistent manner across countries, allowing for comparable data at the global level. In total, 94 countries have had at least one data point on the prevalence of bribery experienced by businesses since 2015.

12 The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 – Special Edition (United Nations publication, 2023).

13 UNCTAD and UNODC, Conceptual Framework for the Statistical Measurement of Illicit Financial Flows (Vienna, 2020).

14 UNODC, UNDP and the UNODC-INEGI Center of Excellence in Statistical Information on Government, Crime, Victimization and Justice, Manual on Corruption Surveys (Vienna, 2018).

From definition of indicators to development of global standards

The 24 indicators identified at the global level for measuring progress towards goal 16 can be split into two broad categories depending on the data source: indicators based on administrative data; and survey-based indicators (figure 7). Depending on the data source, different methodological tools and capacity building initiatives that can aid countries in the production of goal 16 data have been developed by UNODC, UNDP and OHCHR.

Manual on Corruption Surveys

The Manual on Corruption Surveys provides countries with practical guidance for developing, planning and implementing sample surveys on households and businesses in order to measure the prevalence of bribery at the national level (indicators 16.5.1 and 16.5.2), the modalities and scope of bribery, public attitudes towards corruption and anti-corruption measures. Additionally, direct capacity-building is provided to help Member States implement corruption surveys.

Figure 7: Indicators under goal 16, based on data collection level

 Administrative data indicators	 Survey-based indicators
16.1.1 Intentional homicide	16.1.3 Physical, psychological, sexual violence
16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths (civilians)	16.1.4 Perception of safety
16.2.2 Human trafficking	16.2.1 Physical/psychological aggression
16.3.2 Unsensented detention	16.2.3 Sexual violence by age 18
16.4.1 Illicit financial flows	16.3.1 Reporting of violence
16.4.2 Firearms trafficking	16.3.3 Access to dispute resolution mechanisms
16.6.1 Government expenditures	16.5.1 Bribery (population)
16.7.1 Responsive and inclusion decision-making	16.5.2 Bribery (businesses)
16.8.1 Voting rights	16.6.2 Satisfaction with public services
16.10.1 Attacks against human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists	16.7.2 External political efficacy
16.a.1 National human rights institutions	16.9.1 Birth registration
	16.10.2 Public access to information
	16.b.1 Discrimination experience

To respond to the urgency of collecting and using statistics to inform policymaking and to address the methodological and capacity challenges facing countries, UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR launched the SDG16 Survey Initiative, which was welcomed at the fifty-third session of the United Nations Statistical Commission and piloted in eight countries. By increasing the availability of high-quality data and research on goal 16, policymakers will be able to make evidence-informed decisions to address global challenges on peace, justice and inclusive institutions for all, and enable progress on all other development goals. The SDG 16 Survey Initiative Questionnaire and Implementation Manual cover the areas of governance, access to justice, discrimination, corruption, violence and trafficking in persons.^{15, 16} The survey can be used to fill data gaps for the national monitoring of goal 16 and help inform the design of evidence-based policies and programmes.

Regional training workshops on measuring goal 16

In cooperation with UNDP and OHCHR, UNODC has organized a series of interactive regional training workshops (each with six to eight sessions) to provide national data producers with the methodological tools needed to measure progress on goal 16, and to promote a “data community” among data producers and data users for the exchange of experiences and challenges. The initiative began in 2020 with the Regional Training on Measuring SDG 16 in Africa. In 2021, the geographical scope and reach of the workshops was expanded to include countries in other regions and there was a second workshop in Africa in late 2022.¹⁷ Overall, more than 3,800 national data producers from more than 140 countries have attended the regional workshops on goal 16 since 2020.

15 UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR, SDG16 Survey Initiative Questionnaire.

16 UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR, SDG16 Survey Initiative Implementation Manual.

17 SDG16 Hub, Regional Training on Measuring SDG 16 in Africa II.

Statistical framework for measuring femicide

Gender-related killings of women and girls are a key analytical disaggregation of indicator 16.1.1 (homicide), which highlights the gender dimension of homicidal violence. Following the endorsement of the Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”) by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2022, UNODC, in collaboration with development partners, is embarking on piloting the framework in selected countries around the globe.¹⁸ The pilot exercise consists of three parts: the first will focus on the assessment of the institutional capacities to record data on femicide and the data itself; the second will support countries improving their system; and the third part is aimed at producing a baseline figure of femicides in the pilot countries.

Statistical framework to measure corruption

Although corruption is recognized as a key obstacle to sustainable development, a more unified and collaborative evidence-based approach to reducing corruption in its many forms is necessary. To support Member States in improving data collection on corruption in line with international standards and best practices, UNODC has developed a set of methodological guidelines and provided capacity building in relation to the measuring of bribery, including a new statistical framework to measure corruption.¹⁹ The main goal of this framework is to enable the creation of national information systems able to detect the presence, measure the magnitude of and monitor trends in different forms of corruption. The fifty-fourth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission welcomed this framework in early 2023 and encouraged UNODC to provide technical support to enable national statistical offices to take an active role and collaborate with other relevant national institutions towards the measurement of corruption across countries.

Estimation of undocumented conflict-related deaths

A significant portion of conflict-related deaths are never documented because of the challenges of collecting such data in volatile and often dangerous contexts. This limits the extent to which indicator 16.1.2 can fully capture the extent of the impact of conflict situations on the lives of civilians. In order to improve the accuracy and coverage of this indicator, OHCHR is using cutting-edge data science and statistical techniques, such as natural language processing and multiple systems estimation, for producing reliable estimates of deaths that have remained undocumented.

The results of the estimation of the number of civilian deaths during the 10 years of the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic have been presented before the Human Rights Council, advancing coverage of indicator 16.1.2, and raising global awareness of the brutal impact of the conflict on the lives of civilians.²⁰

Cooperation between national statistical agencies and human rights institutions to enhance availability of goal 16 data

OHCHR has supported ground-breaking partnerships between national statistical offices and national human rights institutions (indicator 16.a.1) for improving data availability in response to the pledge to leave no one behind made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These partnerships are currently in place in a dozen countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. In addition to improving inclusive data collection and disaggregation, this initiative has enhanced data availability for SDG 16 indicators 16.1.2, 16.10.1 and 16.b.1/10.3.1. Global monitoring data are now available for these indicators in over half of United Nations Member States. For example, national human rights institutions in Kenya and the Philippines are collaborating with their statistical counterparts in identifying groups left behind and collecting data on violence against human rights defenders, as well as on conflict-related deaths in the case of the Philippines.

¹⁸ UNODC, UNODC-INEGI Center of Excellence, UN Women, Global Centre of Excellence on Gender Statistics (CEGS), “Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”)”.

¹⁹ UNODC, “Statistical framework to measure corruption”, 2023.

²⁰ Civilian Deaths in the Syrian Arab Republic, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/50/68).

4 Progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16 based on measurement of indicators

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

Reducing homicide is crucial if this target is to be met, given that homicide kills more people than most other forms of violence, including armed conflict and terrorism combined. However, projections based on trends observed since 2015 suggest that the target of halving the global 2015 homicide rate by 2030 will not be reached.

Indicator 16.1.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age

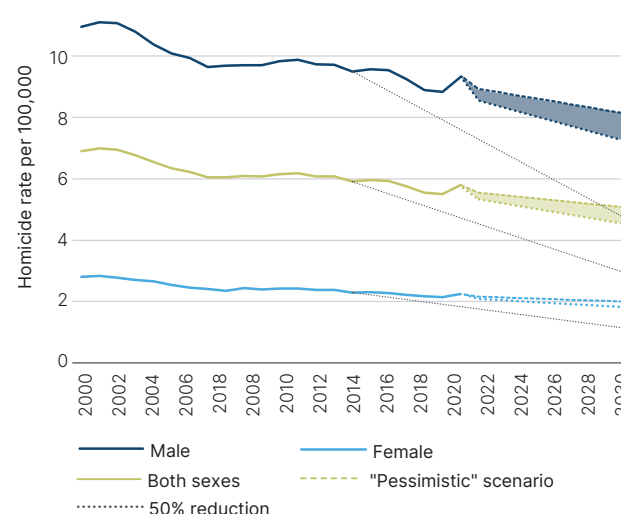
Globally, an annual average of roughly 440,000 deaths were caused by intentional homicide in the period 2019–2021. Although comparisons with data on other forms of fatal violence are challenging, the annual average number of homicides is far higher than the available estimates of conflict-related deaths²¹ and deaths attributable to terrorism.^{22, 23}

There were an estimated 458,000 intentional homicides worldwide in 2021, the largest number in the past two decades. The noticeable spike in killings in 2021 can be partly attributed to the economic repercussions of COVID-related restrictions, as well as the escalation of gang-related and sociopolitical violence

in several countries. Taking the increase in the global population since 2015 into account, the global homicide rate in 2021 can be calculated at 5.8 per 100,000 population, marginally lower than the 5.9 per 100,000 in 2015.

If the increase in homicide in 2021 is a reflection of a long-lasting trend reversal, target 16.1 will definitely not be met. Moreover, even in an “optimistic” scenario in which 2021 can be seen to be an exceptional year with no bearing on future homicide trends, projections based on the period 2015–2020 suggest that the reduction by 2030 will amount to less than 24 per cent of the homicide rate in 2015, also falling short of the target of halving the 2015 rate (figure 8).

Figure 8: Trends in and projections of the global homicide rate per 100,000 population, by sex, 2000–2030



Source: Estimates based on UNODC homicide statistics.
Note: Projections for years 2022 to 2030 represent linear extrapolations of trends observed for the years 2015 to 2020 (“optimistic scenario”, dotted line) and for the years 2015 to 2021 (“pessimistic scenario”, dashed line).

21 See SDG indicator 16.1.2 compiled by OHCHR.

22 Conflict death estimates are from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset. Available at <https://ucdp.uu.se/exploratory>, and include deaths resulting from state-based violence, non-state violence, and one-side violence.

23 Terrorist killings estimates are from the Global Terrorism Database. Available at <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>. The Global Terrorism Database defines a terrorist attack as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.” This definition does not coincide with the United Nations definition (United Nations International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, 1999: E/RES/54/109).

Women are more affected by domestic killings than men

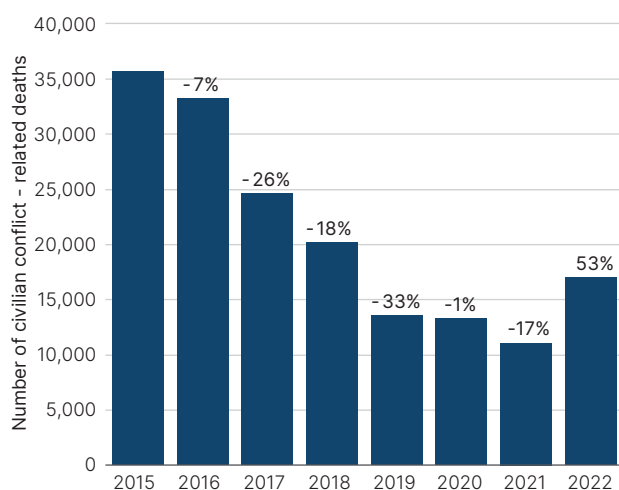
Although 81 per cent of homicide victims worldwide in 2021 were men, women continue to be disproportionately affected by homicide in the home. In 2021, 56 per cent of female homicide victims were killed by intimate partners or family members, while that was the case for just 10 per cent of male homicide victims, suggesting that the home remains the most dangerous place for women. If the homicide rate continues to decrease at the pace recorded over the period 2015–2020, projections of sex-specific trends indicate that there will be a similar decrease in the homicide rates of both sexes, which would fall short of reducing the combined homicide rate by 50 per cent by 2030 (figure 8).

Indicator 16.1.2: Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause

Annual number of conflict-related civilian deaths increased in 2022, for the first time since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Indicator 16.1.2 measures the impact of armed conflict in terms of loss of life, with a focus on civilian deaths, of which there was an unprecedented increase in 2022 for the first time since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. Based on data from 12 of the deadliest armed conflicts worldwide, at least 16,988 civilians were killed in war operations, a 53 per cent increase from 2021 (figure 9). Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe accounted for 90 per cent of those deaths, with 4 in 10 occurring in Ukraine and a 23 per cent increase in conflict-related casualties taking place in Sub-Saharan Africa. Other

Figure 9: Documented number of civilian conflict-related deaths and percentage change from previous year, 2015–2022

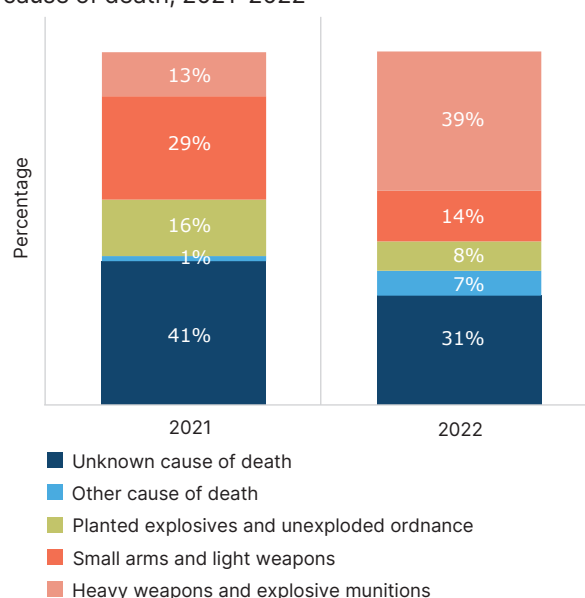


Source: Data collected by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for the purposes of goal 16 indicator 16.1.2 – Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age, and cause.

parts of the world also saw increases in deadly incidents against civilians.

A significant change was also observed in terms of the weapons causing civilian conflict-related deaths in 2022. The use of heavy weapons and explosive munitions rose from 13 per cent in 2021 to 39 per cent in 2022, signaling a shift in conflict dynamics, with possibly more indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks increasing the risk to civilian life (figure 10). The data also suggest an increased risk of death for women living in areas affected by conflict in 2022, with 15 per cent of civilians killed in 2021 being women but rising to 19 per cent in 2022, the highest proportion of civilian women killed since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015.

Figure 10: Distribution of conflict-related deaths, by cause of death, 2021–2022



Source: Data collected by OHCHR for the purposes of SDG indicator 16.1.2 – Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause.

Indicator 16.1.3: Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months

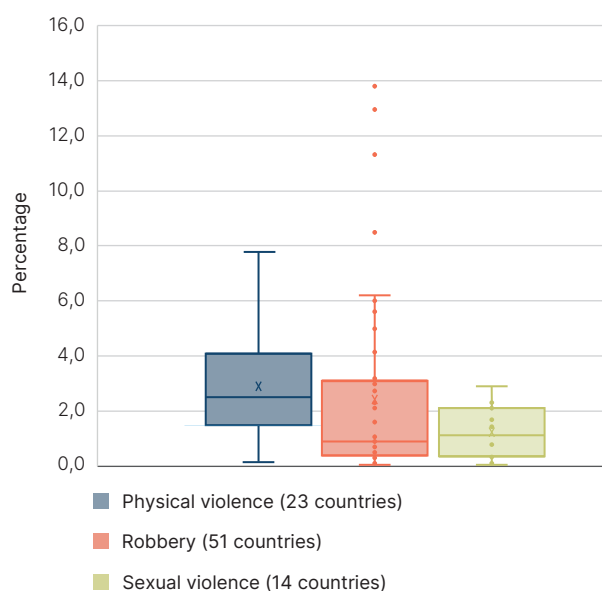
Data limitations make measuring the prevalence of non-lethal violence a challenge at the global level

For the period 2010–2021, 23 countries or territories reported at least one datapoint on the overall prevalence of physical violence (both sexes), while 51 reported on robbery (a sub-component of physical violence) and just 14 reported on sexual violence, with large data gaps in Africa, Asia and Oceania in particu-

lar.²⁴ Experiences of physical, psychological and sexual violence tend to be heavily underreported to the authorities, which means that survey data, rather than administrative data, are required for measuring progress on indicator 16.1.3. Survey data also suffer from underreporting, however, especially in relation to stigmatized types of violence such as rape or sexual assault, about which respondents may be unwilling to speak.

With these limitations in mind, the available data suggest that an average of 2.9 per cent of the population experienced physical violence in the previous 12 months, with somewhat lower averages being recorded in the case of robbery (2.4 per cent) and sexual violence (1.2 per cent) (figure 11). The small number of countries with data on physical and sexual violence makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about regional differences. In the case of robbery, however, coverage is sufficient to indicate that its prevalence is, on average, higher in the Americas, at 4.8 per cent (19 countries), than in Europe, at 1.0 per cent (18 countries). Indeed, several countries in Latin America recorded a particularly high prevalence of robbery, with more than 11 per cent of the population being victimized in the previous 12 months.

Figure 11: Proportion of population subjected to violence in the previous 12 months, selected countries, latest available year



Source: Data: Based on the latest available year of survey data since 2010 from 23 countries (physical violence), 51 countries (robbery) and sexual violence (14 countries).

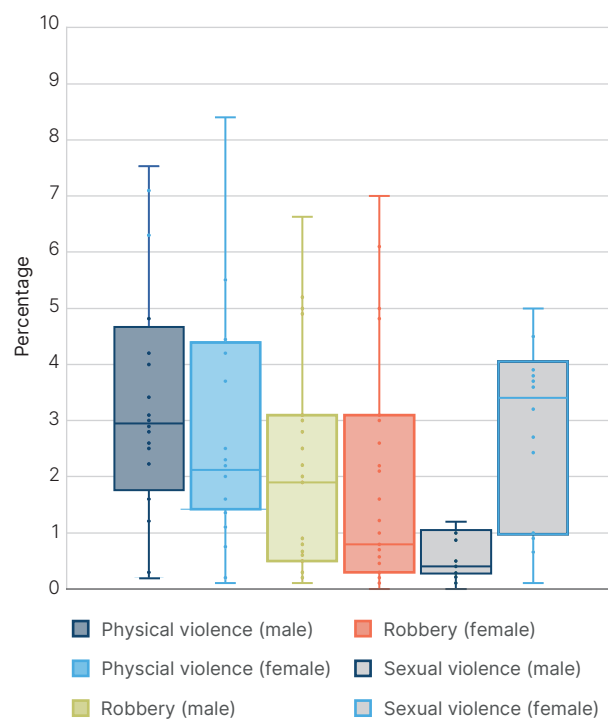
Note: The boxes show the middle half of the data (interquartile range). Data points above and below the whiskers are considered outliers: they exceed a distance of 1.5 times the interquartile range above the third quartile and below the first quartile.

²⁴ There is no consensus at the international level on the precise definition of psychological violence, which means that comparable data are very limited at the global level.

Women are disproportionately affected by sexual violence, while men bear the brunt of physical violence

Available sex-disaggregated survey data from 20 countries indicate that men are more exposed than women to physical violence, with a median prevalence of 3.0 per cent versus 2.1 per cent among women. A similar pattern can be observed in the 31 countries with sex-disaggregated data on robbery, where the median prevalence of robbery stood at 1.9 per cent among men, compared with 0.8 per cent among women. By contrast, women are clearly more at risk of sexual violence than men, with a median prevalence of 3.4 per cent compared with 0.4 per cent among men, based on data from 14 countries (figure 12).

Figure 12: Proportion of population subjected to violence in the previous 12 months, by sex, selected countries, latest available year



Source: Data: Based on the latest available year of survey data since 2010 in 20 countries (physical violence), 31 countries (robbery) and 14 countries (sexual violence).

Note: The boxes show the middle half of the data (interquartile range), while the whiskers indicate a distance of 1.5 times the interquartile range above the third quartile and below the first quartile. Data points above the whiskers ("outliers") are not displayed visually but included in the analysis.

Available trend data indicate very limited global progress in reducing non-lethal violence

Survey data on the prevalence of physical and sexual intimate partner violence against women and girls show that, globally in 2018, 13 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15–49 had been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a male partner or ex-partner in the previous 12 months, compared with

the marginally higher 16 per cent in 2000.^{25, 26} This suggests that, globally, there has been very limited progress in tackling this type of non-lethal violence over the past two decades.

Indicator 16.1.4: Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live after dark

Feeling unsafe in public undermines well-being and hinders development

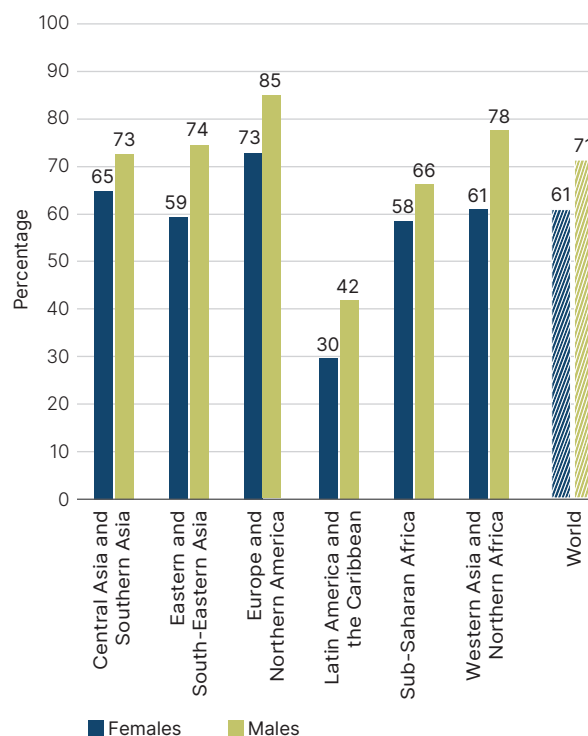
While the reduction of violence and related deaths is the focus of target 16.1, evidence on violence and death rates can only provide part of the picture of how people experience insecurity in their everyday lives. By providing a perception-based measure of insecurity, indicator 16.1.4 gives a more holistic picture of people's experiences of safety, crime and violence. This is important because people's perceptions of safety may be shaped by various factors, some independent from their actual experiences of violence.²⁷ Personal experience of crime undoubtedly influences perceptions, but other factors such as media coverage and public discourse on crime also affect perceptions of safety.²⁸ Feeling unsafe in public can negatively influence well-being and, for example, lead people to have less contact with others, reduce their trust and engagement in the community, therefore representing an important obstacle to development.

Perceptions of insecurity remained stable in the period 2016–2021

Based on available survey data from 114 countries across all regions, an average of roughly 69 per cent of the population reported feeling safe or very safe walking alone around the area they live after dark;²⁹ this average remained stable in the period 2016–2021. Stark differences in perceptions of safety are observable across regions. On average, Australia and New Zealand, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are where respondents feel least safe, while Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Europe and Northern America, and Western Asia and Northern Africa are where respondents feel comparatively safer.

Women feel less safe than men across all regions. At the global level, based on available sex-disaggregated data from 106 countries for the period 2019–2021,³⁰ the proportion of women who reported feeling safe walking alone around the area they live was an average of 10 percentage points lower (at 61 per cent) than that of men (71 per cent). This pattern is observable across all regions, but is particularly pronounced in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, as well as Western Asia and Northern Africa (figure 13). This indicates that women consistently feel more vulnerable than men, even if they are less likely to become victims of homicide than men, for example. This indicates that levels of non-lethal violence, such as rape, robbery or harassment, and sociocultural factors may also play a role in shaping women's perception of safety.

Figure 13: Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live after dark, by sex, 2019–2021 average



Source: National data collected via the United Nations Crime Trends Survey and the Gallup World Poll.

Note: Regional perceptions of safety refer to 3-year averages weighted by countries' population size. Most surveys include the qualifications "after dark" or "at night" in the question wording. Data coverage: Central Asia and Southern Asia (12), Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (12), Europe and Northern America (21), Latin America and the Caribbean (11), Sub-Saharan Africa (33), Western Asia and Northern Africa (16), Oceania including Australia and New Zealand (1). Due to limited data availability, estimates by sex are not provided for Oceania including Australia and New Zealand.

25 Trend data on physical and sexual intimate partner violence against women and girls (SDG indicator 5.2.1) are more widely available, partly due to the Domestic Violence Module of the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), with more than 70 countries reporting at least two data-points since 2000. See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-02-01.pdf>

26 UNSD, 2023 SDG Progress Report; See also, Sardinha, L. et al., "Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence against women in 2018", *The Lancet* (2022) pp. 803–813.

27 Gray, E., Jackson, J. and Farrall, S., "Reassessing the fear of crime", *European Journal of Criminology*, vol. 5, No. 3 (2008), pp. 363–380.

28 For a review of the literature on fear of crime, see Rader, N., "Fear of crime", *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, Oxford Research Encyclopedias (2017).

29 Most surveys include the qualifications "after dark" or "at night" in the question wording.

30 The sample includes all 106 countries with sex-disaggregated data on indicator 16.1.4 for at least one survey year in the period 2019–2021.

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

Indicator 16.2.1: Proportion of children aged 1–17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month

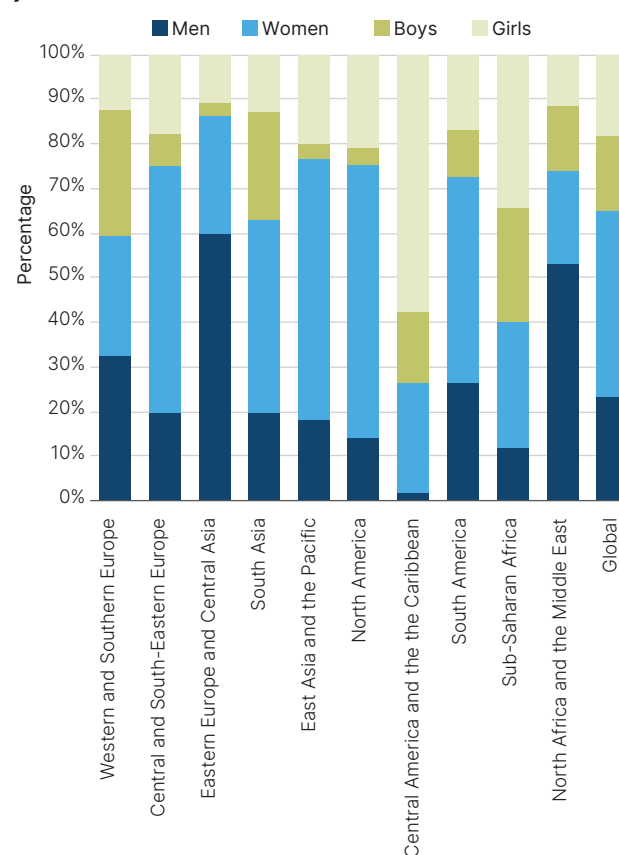
In 2020, children remained at a high risk of violence, torture and trafficking. In 93 mostly low- and middle-income countries with comparable survey data on the indicator, which is compiled by UNICEF for global monitoring and reporting on indicator 16.2.1, the proportion of children experiencing violent discipline was above 50 per cent in most countries. Indeed, in two out of three of them more than 70 per cent of children aged 1–14 years were subjected to physical punishment or psychological aggression as a form of discipline.³¹

Indicator 16.2.2: Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation

UNODC statistics on victims of trafficking in persons for the period 2019/2020 show a decrease of 11 per cent in the number of victims of trafficking in persons detected at the global level. The reduction is most likely to reflect a reduction in the capacity of authorities to identify victims more than a decrease in the number of victims, especially in low- and medium-income countries. Child victims of trafficking are almost twice as likely to be subjected to physical or extreme violence as adult victims. Globally, the percentage of victims of trafficking in persons detected who are children increased from 28 per cent in 2014 to 35 per cent in 2021. Typically, girls are detected as being trafficked for sexual exploitation, which accounted for 75 per cent of all trafficked girls detected in 2020, less common reasons are forced labour (9 per cent) and others (16 per cent) such as forced marriage and begging. Boys, on the other hand, are more frequently detected as being trafficked for the purpose of criminal activity and begging, which accounted for 66 per cent of all trafficked boys detected in 2020, and for forced labour (21 per cent). Nevertheless, boys are also trafficked for sexual exploitation (14 per cent).³²

The countries that saw the largest decreases in the number of victims of trafficking in persons detected in 2021 were characterized by a large share of child victims, with 60 per cent of the victims detected in Sub-Saharan Africa being children, more than 70 per cent in Central America and the Caribbean and 40 per cent in South Asia (figure 14). Therefore, in regions where children are more likely to be trafficked than adults, authorities faced more challenges in identifying and assisting victims during the COVID-19 pandemic than elsewhere.

Figure 14: Distribution of victims of trafficking in persons detected, by age and sex, 2020 or most recent year



Source: UNODC elaboration based on national data.

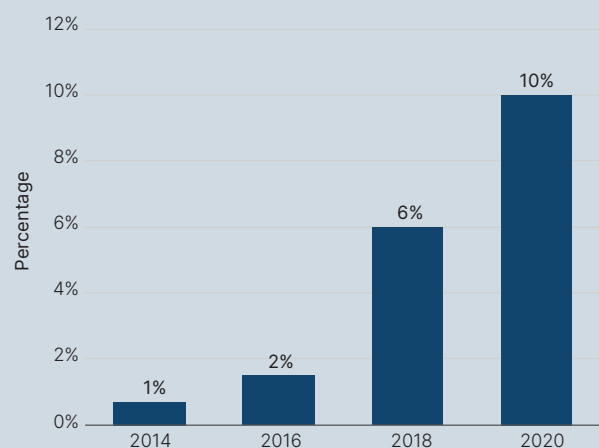
³¹ UNICEF global databases, 2023, based on DHS, MICS and other nationally representative surveys conducted between 2006 and 2022.

³² UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022, (United Nations publication, Sales no.: E.23.IV.16).

Trafficking of boys for the commission of crime

Trafficking in persons for the purpose of exploitation in criminal activities is a form of trafficking that is on the rise and is gaining increased attention in different parts of the world. About 10 per cent of the total number of victims of trafficking in persons detected in 2020 were exploited for the commission of crime (figure 15). This form of trafficking has been detected in a dozen countries in all regions, including Europe, South America and Central America. Recruiting migrant children for the purpose of drug trafficking has also been documented along migration routes from the Middle East to Europe.

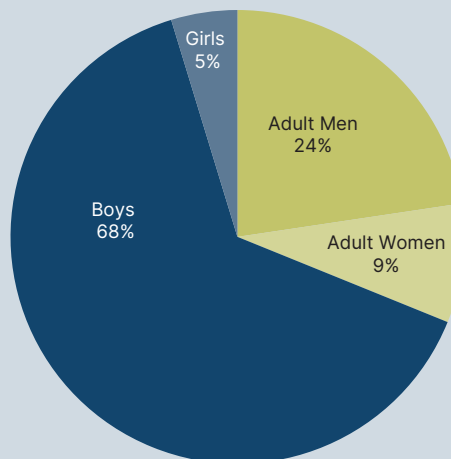
Figure 15: Proportion of detected victims trafficked for the purpose of forced criminality, as a percentage of total victims of trafficking in persons, selected years



Source: UNODC elaboration based on national data.

This form of trafficking entails recruiting and exploiting persons, often children, for the purpose of committing crime for the monetary benefit of their traffickers. Crimes recorded range from petty crimes, such as shoplifting, pickpocketing and other forms of petty theft, to more serious crimes, such as forcing children to grow, transport, traffic or sell drugs.

Figure 16: Distribution of detected victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced criminality, by age group and sex, 2020 or latest available year



Source: UNODC Elaboration based on national data. Based on 3,711 detected victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced criminality whose age and sex were reported in 14 countries.

In addition to economic need, the need to form part of a group seems to be a significant factor in enticing children to be recruited or deceived by traffickers. For example, in the so-called “county lines” cases in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, traffickers target the children of separated parents or those in the care of social services, including children with behavioural or developmental disorders. Trafficked children, as well as victims who become emotionally attached to their traffickers, may also be incited to use drugs or alcohol, thereby increasing the control that traffickers have over them

Indicator 16.2.3: Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18

Sexual violence is one of the most grievous violations of children's rights. As such, it is the subject of dedicated international legal instruments aimed at protecting children against its multiple forms. Acts of sexual violence, which often occur together and with other forms of violence, can range from direct physical contact to unwanted exposure to sexual language and images. "Sexual violence" is often used as an umbrella term to cover all types of sexual victimization.³³ Although children of every age are susceptible, adolescence is a period of pronounced vulnerability, especially for girls.

Just 55 countries (mostly low- and middle-income) have internationally comparable data on sexual violence against girls for the period 2014–2021 and only 12 produce such data on boys. Among the regions with representative estimates, the prevalence of sexual violence in childhood among girls varies, from 1 per cent in Central and Southern Asia to 6 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa and 7 per cent in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand). In more than one third of countries, at least 5 per cent of young women reported experiences of sexual violence in childhood, while the share was smaller among men in those countries with data (figure 17).

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

Very little progress has been made in promoting the rule of law and ensuring equal access to justice for all. The available data highlight stark inequalities and divergent trends in some indicators, in particular between rich and poor countries and between men and women.

Indicator 16.3.1: Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms

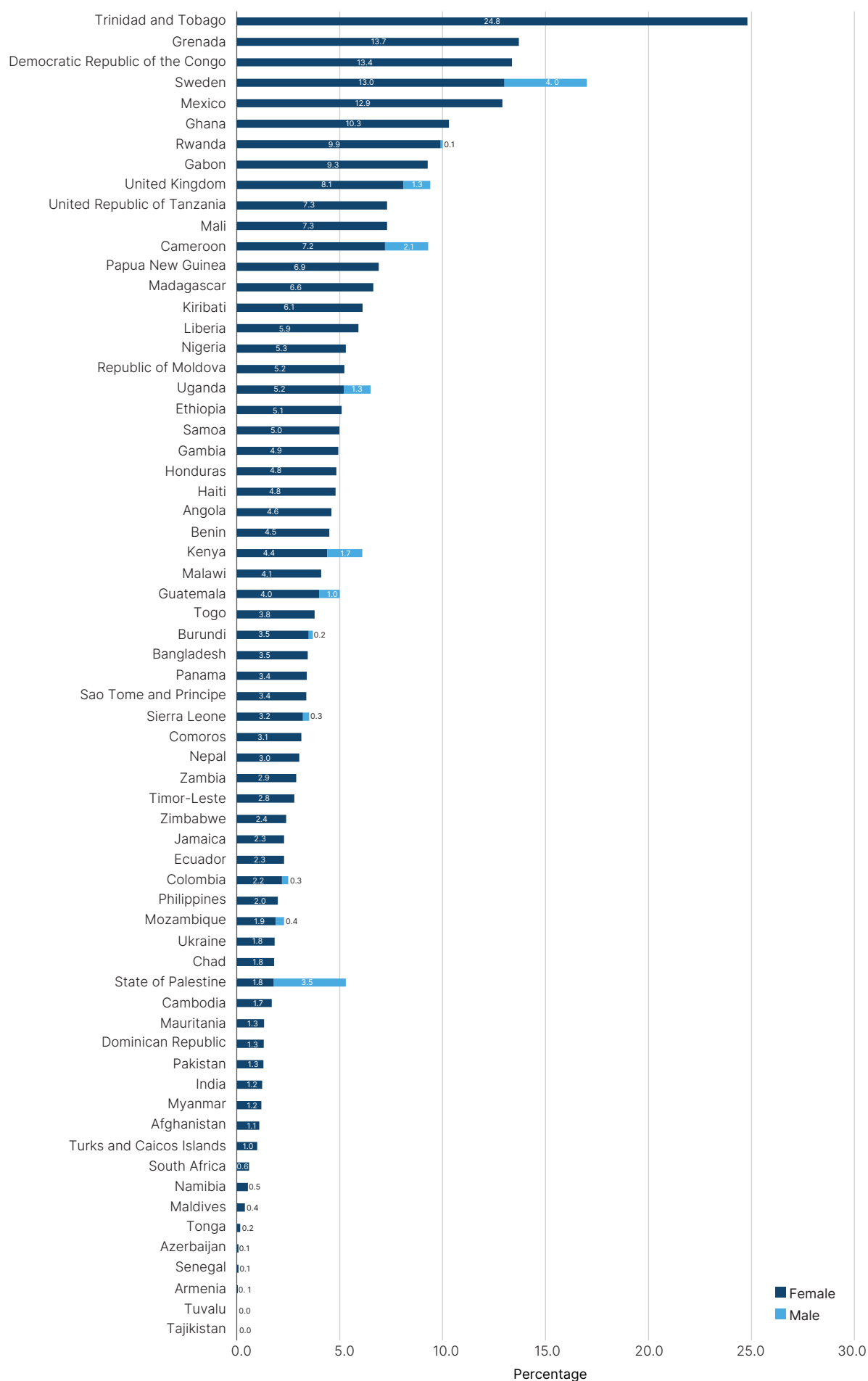
Reporting to competent authorities is the first step in seeking justice for crime victims, because if competent authorities are not alerted, they are not in a position to conduct proper investigations and administer justice. However, lack of trust and confidence in the ability of the police or other authorities to provide effective redress, or objective and subjective difficulties in accessing the authorities, can negatively influence the reporting behaviour of crime victims. As such, reporting rates provide a direct measure of the confidence of crime victims in the ability of the State to provide assistance and bring perpetrators to justice.

Data from 33 countries indicate that the proportion of the population who fell victim to robbery in the previous 12 months and reported their victimization to competent authorities varies from 1 to 83 per cent, with a global average of 42 per cent (figure 18). The average for physical assault is slightly lower: among the 33 countries with relevant data, 34 per cent of victims of physical assault reported their victimization to competent authorities. By contrast, among the 19 countries with available data at least, reporting by those who fell victim to sexual assault was the lowest among the three crime types, at an average of 19 per cent, although it varied from 1 to 60 per cent among the countries with available data.

Gender disaggregated data for 12 countries show that, other than in Germany and New Zealand, women are more likely than men to report physical assault to competent authorities (figure 19). The reporting rate and associated gender gap is highest in countries in Latin America, including Chile, Mexico and Paraguay, and Cabo Verde. By contrast, the differences in reporting rates between men and women tend to be smaller in the case of victims of sexual assault and robbery.

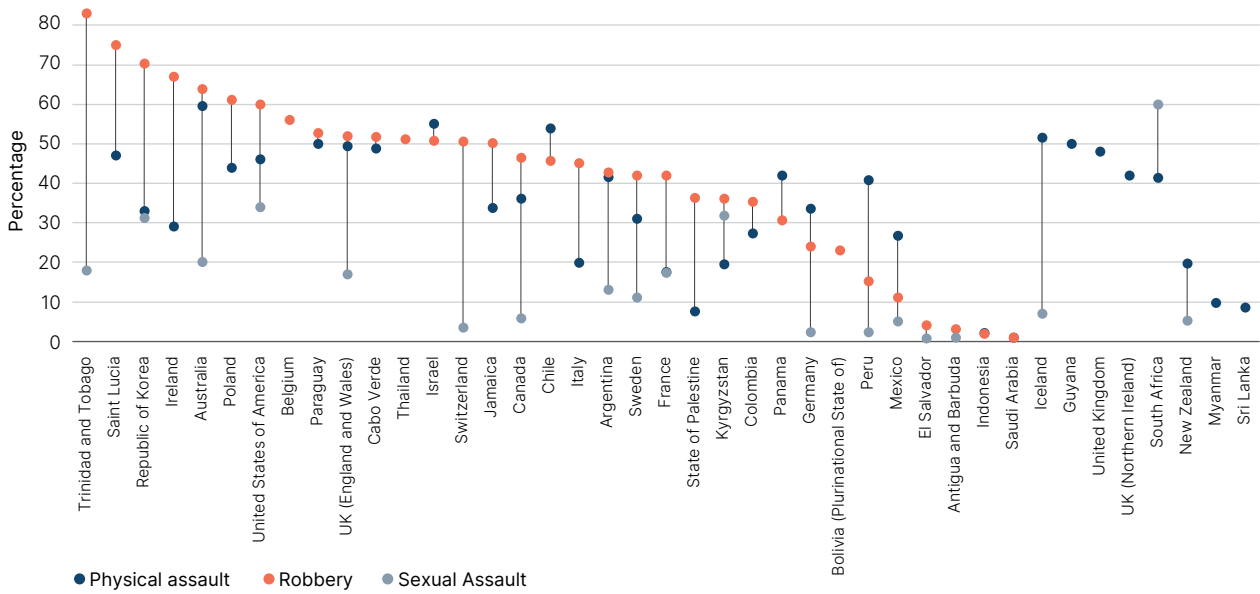
³³ "Sexual violence against children encompasses both sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and can be used as an umbrella term to refer jointly to these phenomena, both with regard to acts of commission and omission and associated to physical and psychological violence." Interagency Working Group on Sexual Exploitation of Children, Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Luxembourg, ECPAT International, 2016), p. 16.

Figure 17: Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18, in countries and areas with available data, 2014–2021



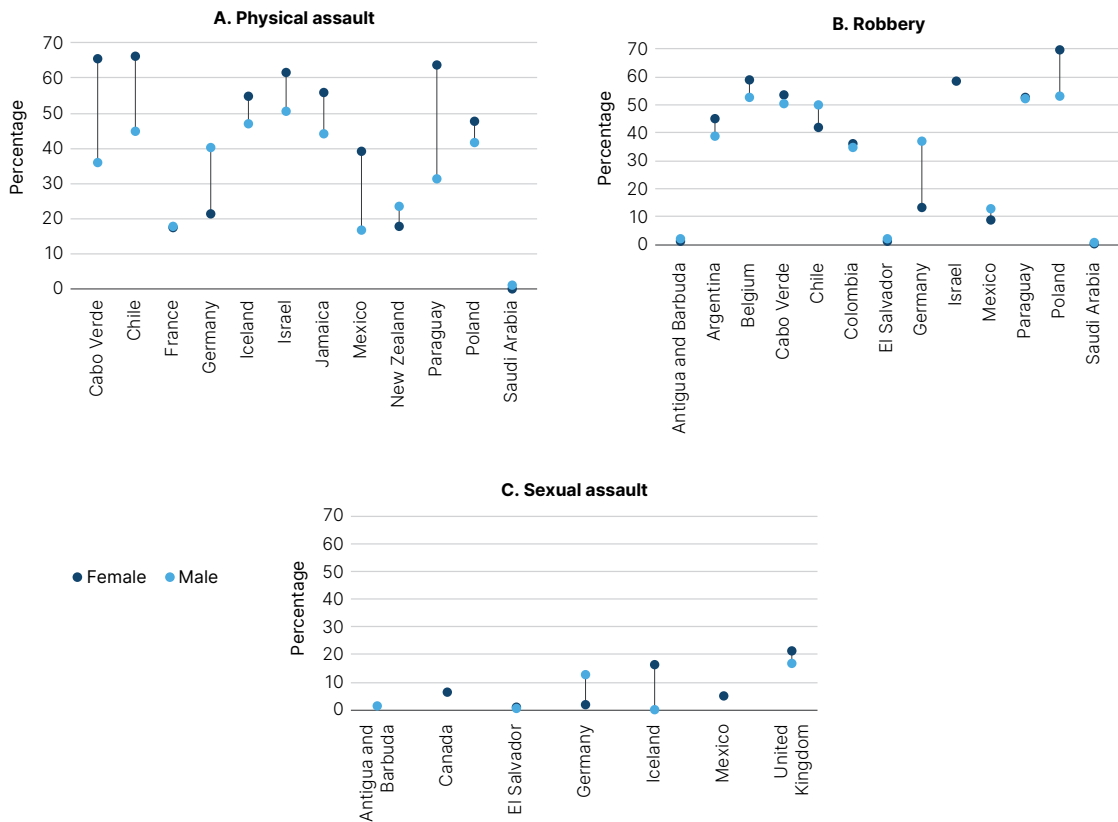
Source: UNICEF, Sexual Violence, “In more than one-third of countries, at least 5 per cent of young women reported experiences of sexual violence in childhood”, June 2023.

Figure 18: Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms, by type of crime, latest available year



Source: United Nations Crime Trends Survey (UN-CTS).

Figure 19: Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms, by type of crime and sex, latest available year



Source: United Nations Crime Trends Survey (UN-CTS).

Indicator 16.3.2: Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population

Access to justice is a fundamental human right, and monitoring progress towards reducing the number of unsentenced detainees is critical to achieving this. The total number of persons in detention worldwide continued to grow over the past two decades, from an estimated 9.6 million in 2000 to 11.2 million in 2021, an increase of around 17 per cent.³⁴ In 2021, there were roughly 142 prisoners per 100,000 population globally, compared with 150 per 100,000 in 2015 and 156 per 100,000 in 2000.

The vast majority of prisoners are men, while women make up a small minority. In 2021, there were 10.5 million male prisoners and 0.7 million female prisoners worldwide. Globally 94 per cent of all prisoners are men, but the proportion is slightly higher in Western Asia and Northern Africa (97 per cent), Central Asia and Southern Asia (96 per cent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (96 per cent) and significantly lower in Oceania (90 per cent) and Europe and Northern America (both 91 per cent).

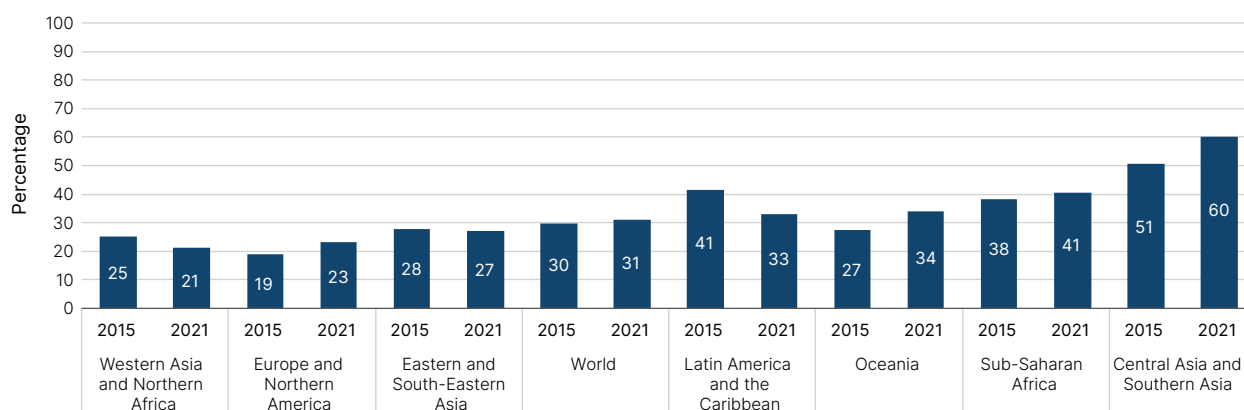
With many prisoners being denied a fair trial within a reasonably short period of time, there are enduring gaps in accessibility to justice. In 2021, nearly 3.5 million prisoners were in detention without being sentenced for a crime, or 31 per cent of all prisoners worldwide. Despite the increase in the number of prisoners over the past two decades, this share has remained stable, at around 30 per cent. Following the emergency release of prisoners in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global prison population

decreased by about 600,000 from 11.7 million detainees in 2019 to 11.1 million detainees in 2020. However, most of those released were sentenced detainees, triggering a slight increase in the share of unsentenced detainees among the global prison population. Moreover, the share of unsentenced female detainees increased from 31 per cent in 2019 to 35 per cent in 2021. By comparison, the share of unsentenced male detainees remained relatively stable, increasing marginally from 29 per cent in 2019 to 31 per cent in 2021.

At the regional level, the proportion of unsentenced detainees varies greatly, from 21 per cent in Western Asia and Northern Africa to 60 per cent in Central Asia and Southern Asia (figure 20). There were diverging trends over the period 2015–2021, however. For example, the proportion of detainees awaiting trial or sentencing in Oceania, increased from 27 per cent in 2015 to 34 per cent in 2021, while in Latin America and the Caribbean the proportion decreased from 41 per cent to 33 per cent over the same period.

Worldwide prison capacity increased by 19 per cent between 2015 and 2021. Nevertheless, overcrowding continues to pose a challenge in many parts of the world. Indeed, almost half the countries with relevant data (46 out of 96) reported operating at over 100 per cent of their intended capacity and 18 per cent at over 150 per cent (figure 21). The situation is particularly concerning in Latin America and the Caribbean, where 80 per cent of countries with relevant data are grappling with issues of overcrowding in their prison systems, with the prison population being more than 50 per cent larger than available capacity in about one quarter of them.

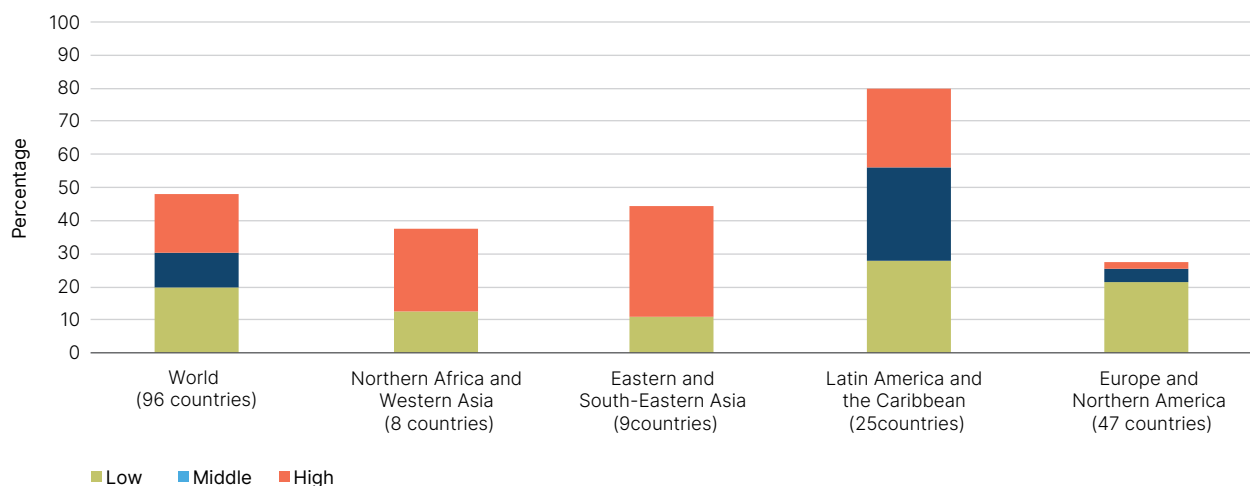
Figure 20: Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of the overall prison population, 2015 and 2021



Source: UNODC estimates based on national data collected via the United Nations Crime Trends Survey.

Note: Regions are ranked in the ascending order of unsentenced detainees as a proportion of the overall prison population in 2021.

³⁴ UNODC; "Data matters snapshot: global prison population and trends – Nelson Mandela International Day, 18 July 2023". Available at https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/briefs/DataMatters_NM_Day_2023.pdf

Figure 21: Proportion of countries where prisoners outnumber the prison capacity, 2021 or latest available year

Note: Overcrowding is defined as the number of prisoners in a country that exceeds the official prison capacity by 0–19 per cent (Low), 20–49 per cent (Middle) or 50 per cent or more (High).
Source: UNODC estimates based on national data collected via the United Nations Crime Trends Survey (UN-CTS).

The adverse effects of overcrowding on prisoner health and mortality in prison are well documented.³⁵ Although suicide and homicide collectively account for less than 2 per cent of all deaths among the general population, they are major contributors to mortality in prison, where they account for more than 10 per cent. The share of deaths by suicide in detention in the nine countries in Europe and Northern America with relevant data fluctuated between 9 and 22 per cent of all deaths in prisons from 2016 to 2020. In the four countries in Latin American and Caribbean with data, the share of deaths by homicide in detention remained stable at between 13 and 19 per cent of all deaths in prisons during the same period. Overall, data on unsentenced detainees, capacity and mortality suggest that space and resources in prisons are not adequate for promoting rehabilitation, reducing recidivism and ensuring the well-being of both prisoners and society at large.³⁶

Indicator 16.3.3: Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism³⁷

Understanding access to dispute resolution mechanisms is critical if the extent to which people-centered justice services are delivered to the population is also to be understood. There is an urgent need to accelerate data collection and reporting on the indicator as this can provide a comprehensive picture of the level of access to a range of formal and informal mechanisms for resolving disputes. In 2022, the number of countries was insufficient to measure the global progress. Sufficient data would enable the assessment of the extent to which people are able to access justice systems, for example, on issues related to land and property, family matters and environmental disputes, which are closely linked to other goals in the SDG framework.

35 García-Guerrero, J. and Marco, A., "Overcrowding in prisons and its impact on health". *Revista Española de Sanidad Penitenciaria*, vol. 14, No. 3 (2012), pp.106-113; MacDonald, M., "Overcrowding and its impact on prison conditions and health", *Int J Prison Health* (2018) pp. 65-68.

36 UNODC Handbook on Strategies to Reduce Overcrowding in Prisons (United Nations publication, 2013).

37 The indicator was included in the SDG Framework in 2020.

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

Organized crime is constantly adapting to global developments. Many of the benefits of globalization, such as easier and faster communication, financial movements and international travel, have created opportunities for transnational organized criminal groups to flourish, diversify and expand their activities. Territorial governance and illicit markets are at the core of organized crime activities, which generate negative impacts on social, economic and environmental development. Illicit profits remain the drivers of organized crime and understanding their patterns and magnitude helps measure its impact and define strategies to address it. Among the indicators that relate to illicit profits, illicit financial flows (which can be defined as illicit income generation and management through activities related to criminal offences, as well as tax and commercial practices) describe the magnitude of cross-border transfers, which can help authorities to detect illicit profits moving across countries.

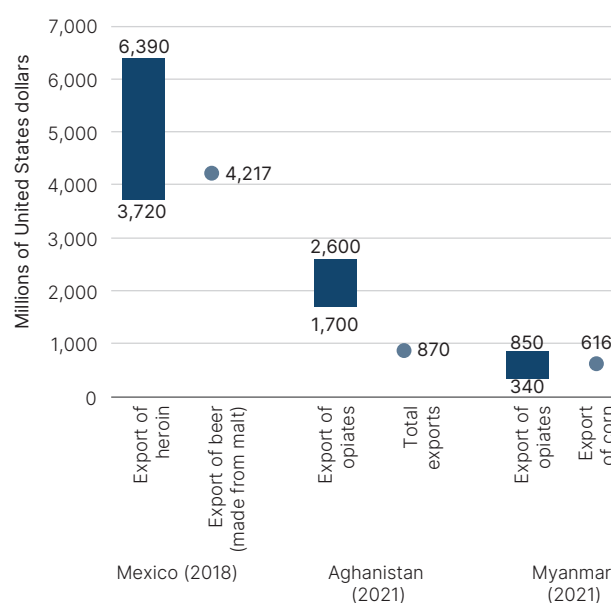
Indicator 16.4.1: Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars)

National data on illicit financial flows remain very limited, but anecdotal information suggests that they can be quite substantial when compared with legal trade. Drug trafficking, for example, is a major proceeds-generating crime. Mexican drug cartels generated inward illicit financial flows of an estimated \$12.1 billion³⁸ between 2015 and 2018, an amount comparable to the value of the country's exports of agricultural products.³⁹ Similarly, in Colombia, cocaine trafficking is estimated to have generated inward illicit financial flows of between \$1.2 and \$8.6 billion (3 to 23 per cent of legal commodity exports) between 2015 and 2019, and cocaine trafficking-related inward illicit financial flows of \$1.3–\$1.7 billion in Peru represented 3.5 to 4.5 per cent of total export value.

Significant illicit financial flows are also generated in the context of trafficking in opiates. According to the latest estimates, traffickers have generated total inward illicit financial flows worth between \$5.8 and \$9.8 billion in the three countries with the highest lev-

els of opiate production: Afghanistan, Mexico and Myanmar. In Afghanistan, opiates generate greater value than all legal commodity exports combined, the value of heroin exports in Mexico is comparable to that of beer and the value of opiate exports in Myanmar is comparable to that of legal corn (figure 22).

Figure 22: Estimated inward illicit financial flows from the export of opiates in Afghanistan, Mexico and Myanmar



Source: UNODC Opium surveys, UNODC IFFs pilot activities and UN Comtrade.

Like all other markets, the market for illicit wildlife products is driven by profit. Driven by high demand, wildlife crime has grown into a significant and specialized area of transnational organized crime in recent years.⁴⁰ Although little is known about the profits made by organized crime groups from illicit wildlife trafficking, some data are available on the illegal trade in ivory and rhino horn between Africa and Asia.⁴¹ From 2016 to 2018, the annual gross illicit income generated from the trade in ivory was estimated at \$400 (310–570) million and the income generated from the trade in rhino horn at \$230 (170–280) million.

38 From trafficking in heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine. The estimate does not include exports of other drugs such as cannabis.

39 Data on legal imports for comparison were obtained from UN Comtrade.

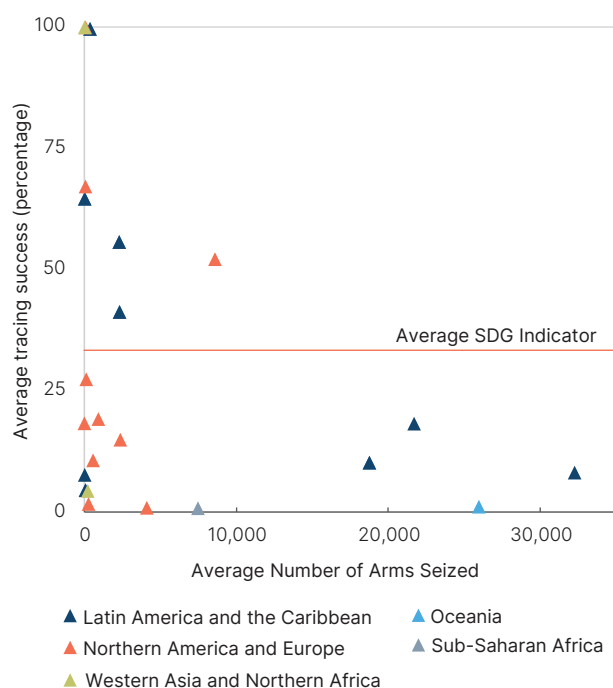
40 UNODC and Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, *Enhancing the Detection, Investigation and Disruption of Illicit Financial Flows from Wildlife Crime* (2017).

41 UNODC, *World Wildlife Crime Report 2020: Trafficking in Protected Species* (United Nations publication, 2020).

Indicator 16.4.2: Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments

Firearms trafficking is another illicit flow of major concern in the context of human security. With a large legal market for firearms, one of the first steps in addressing their trafficking is to understand their origin through “tracing” their source, as well as the point at which they are diverted to the illicit market. That said, tracing remains a challenge for many States due to a lack of resources and capacity, as well as of effective international cooperation. Levels of successful tracing vary widely between and within regions and are partly influenced by the volume of arms seized. On average, Member States with available data successfully traced one third of seized weapons that were potentially traceable between 2016 and 2021 (figure 23).

Figure 23: Relationship between tracing success and number of arms seized, 2016–2021



Source: Illicit Arms Flow Questionnaire (IAFQ). Simple averages calculated based on data submitted by 24 Member States between 2016 and 2021.

Latest trends in other forms of organized crime

In addition to the two global indicators on illicit financial flows and firearms trafficking identified for monitoring target 16.4, many other aspects related to organized crime could be looked at in order to ascertain whether there has been progress on “combating all forms of organized crime”, as aspired to in the target. Data that could shed light on trends in organized crime as a whole are very scarce, however. Some trend data exist on certain illicit markets, but they involve both organized and non-organized criminals. Illicit drug markets, which continue to be among the most profitable for organized crime groups, are expanding globally. The latest available data show, for example, that the cocaine market is booming globally, with record levels of production, and that both the methamphetamine and amphetamine markets are expanding.⁴²

Partial data on other illicit markets also suggest that activities are expanding, for example, in the trafficking of protected species such as pangolins, but also declining in others such as trafficking in ivory.⁴³ Data on other illicit markets, such as the smuggling of migrants, gold trafficking, fuel trafficking, trafficking in falsified medicines and trafficking in cultural property, show that these markets remain profitable for organized crime groups, geography permitting, but the assessment of trends is not possible.

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

Corruption is an impediment to equal accessibility to public services and to the proper functioning of the economy. It has a detrimental effect on the fair distribution of resources and development opportunities. Corruption also erodes public trust in the authorities and when administrative bribery becomes a recurrent experience among large sections of the population and businesses, its lasting impact undermines the rule of law, democratic processes and justice.

Indicator 16.5.1: 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

There are major regional differences in the proportion of people who had contact with a public official and who paid a bribe or were asked to pay a bribe in 2021

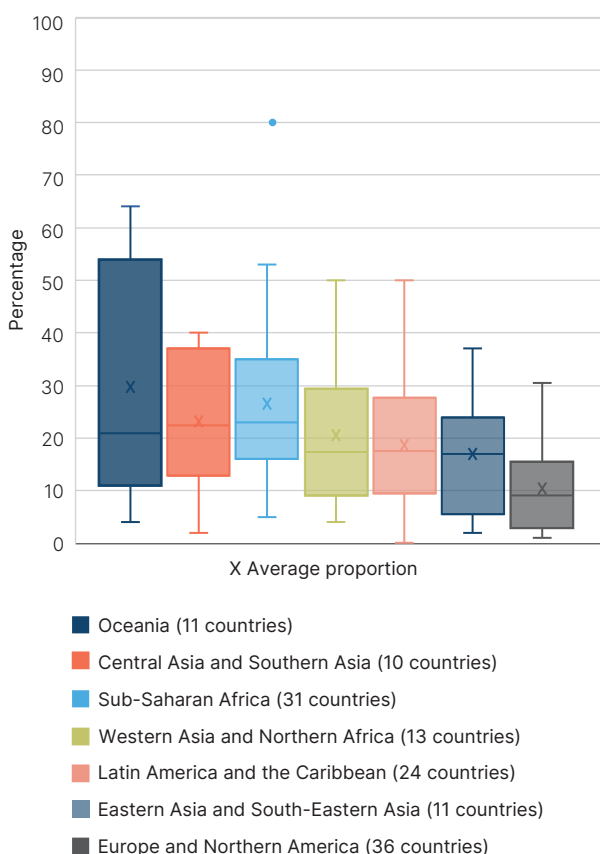
⁴² UNODC, World Drug Report 2023 (United Nations publication, 2023).

⁴³ UNODC, World Wildlife Crime Report 2020: Trafficking in Protected Species (United Nations publication, 2020).

or the latest year since 2015. In countries in Oceania and Sub-Saharan Africa, a respective annual average 29.7 and 26.6 per cent of the population accessing public services had to pay or was asked to pay a bribe in that period, while the figure was 10.4 per cent in Europe and Northern America. It is important to note, however, that in all regions there was great variability in the national prevalence of bribery experienced by individuals. This was most notable in Oceania, where the national prevalence of bribery ranged between 11 and 54 per cent (figure 24).

The differences between regions correspond with the income levels of countries. As shown in figure 25, there is a marked difference in the average prevalence of bribery between low-income countries (31.6 per cent), lower middle-income countries (27.2 per cent), upper middle-income countries (16 per cent) and high-income countries (8.9 per cent). However, there

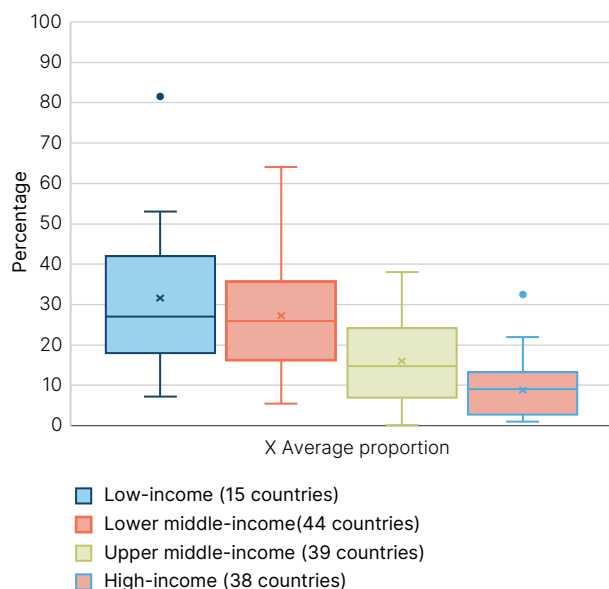
Figure 24: Proportion of individuals who experienced bribery, by region, 2021 or latest year since 2015



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS) and Global Corruption Barometer. Note: Boxes represent interquartile ranges. Whiskers represent the minimum and maximum value of the data set that falls within a distance of 1.5 times the interquartile range. Interquartile ranges contain national values between the first and third quartile. The first quartile marks the 25th percentile, which means that 25 per cent of the data falls below this value. The third quartile marks the 75th percentile, which means that 75 per cent of the data fall below this value. As a result, the middle 50 per cent of the data fall in the interquartile range. Points beyond the whiskers represent outliers.

is also variability in the prevalence of bribery between countries within the same income group, showing that income level alone is not the only factor to play a role in corruption.

Figure 25: Proportion of individuals who experienced bribery, by income level of countries, 2021 or latest year since 2015



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS) and Global Corruption Barometer. Note: Income groups based on the World Bank country classifications by income level 2022–2023 (based on the GNI per capita of 2021). Boxes represent interquartile ranges. Whiskers represent the minimum and maximum value of the data set that falls within a distance of 1.5 times the interquartile range. Points beyond the whiskers represent outliers.

Based on data collected in 18 countries between 2010 and 2021, there is evidence to suggest that men are more likely than women to engage in bribery during their interactions with public officials. Data from 10 countries suggest that this gender difference is primarily influenced by different levels of interaction by women and men with sectors that are typically male dominated, such as the police, customs or the land registry.⁴⁴

Indicator 16.5.2: Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months

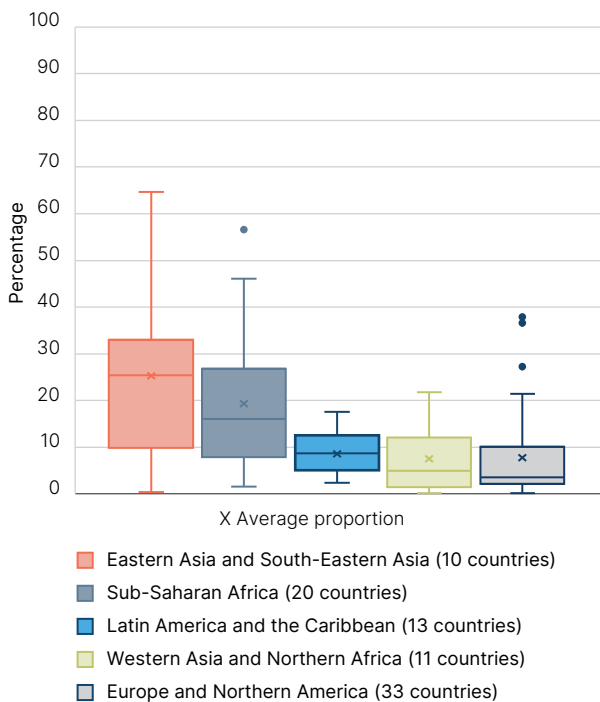
As in the case of bribery experienced by individuals, bribery experienced by businesses also varies by region. Based on data for 2021 or the latest year since 2015, from a different set of countries than for the experience of bribery experienced by individuals, the

44 UNODC, "Data matters 4: monitoring SDG 16 – a gender perspective" (2022). Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/DataMatters_4_2022.pdf.

regions with the highest average prevalence of corruption experienced by businesses were Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, where 25.3 per cent of business accessing public services paid or were asked to pay a bribe, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa, where the figure was 19.4 per cent. There were, however, major differences between the countries in those regions. The prevalence of bribery experienced by businesses was much lower in some of the other regions: ranging from 7.5 per cent in Western Asia and Northern Africa to 8.6 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean (figure 26).

When grouping countries by income level, there are practically no differences in the prevalence of bribery experienced by businesses between low-income and lower middle-income countries, with the average in both income groups being around 20 per cent in 2021, or the latest year since 2015. However, the figure was far lower in upper middle-income countries, at 9.9 per cent, and far lower still in high-income countries, at 3.1 per cent.

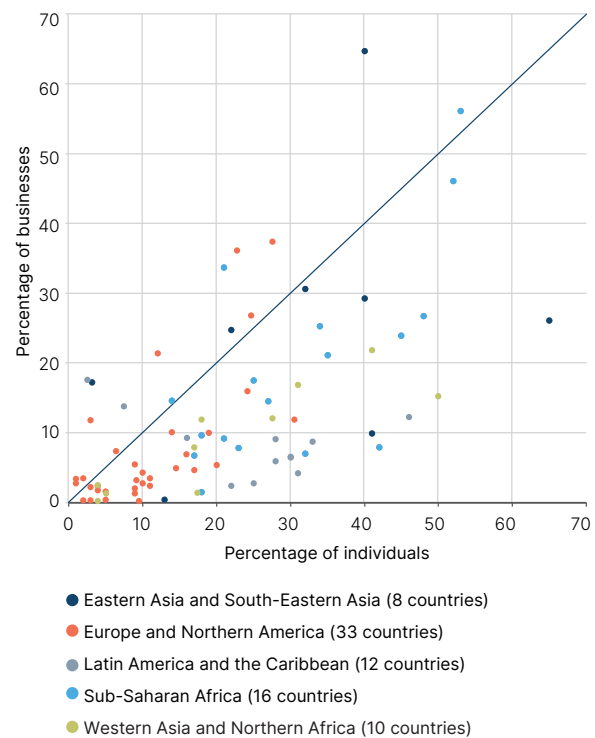
Figure 26: Proportion of businesses that experienced bribery, by region, 2021 or latest year since 2015



Source: World Bank Enterprise Surveys.
 Note: Boxes represent interquartile ranges. Whiskers represent the minimum and maximum value of the data set that falls within a distance of 1.5 times the interquartile range. Points beyond the whiskers represent outliers.

When analysing bribery experienced by individuals and bribery experienced by business together, a clear correlation can be established between the two (figure 27), suggesting that the two indicators, although mostly collected independently, effectively measure a common pattern of corruption. However, the percentage of individuals affected by bribery tends to be higher than the percentage of business, suggesting that there may be a more liberal approach to paying bribes to public servants in contact with individuals than those in contact with business. This does not mean that the overall amount paid in bribes by individuals is larger than that paid by business, as the size of single bribes paid by businesses is likely to be much larger.

Figure 27: Proportion of individuals and businesses that experienced bribery when interacting with public officials, 2021 or latest year since 2015



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS) and Global Corruption Barometer for data on indicator 16.5.1, and World Bank Enterprise Surveys for data on indicator 16.5.2.

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

Indicator 16.6.1: Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)

Ongoing crises undermine budget credibility across all regions. Average deviations from approved government budgets decreased from 5–10 per cent in 2015 to the target of less than 5 per cent in 2019. However, budget credibility deteriorated and reached a deviation of almost 10 per cent in some regions in 2020/2021.⁴⁵

Indicator 16.6.2: Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services

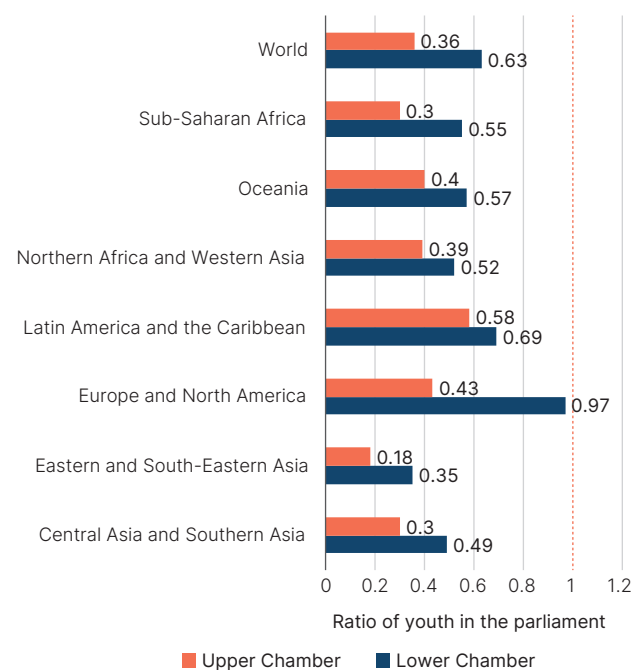
In 2022, several countries reported on the indicator but the data available are not sufficient to assess progress on satisfaction with public services. Ultimately, allowing countries to better understand people's experiences in using public services can help to improve the services where they are not meeting quality standards. The data examine satisfaction with health, education and other government services, including different attributes such as affordability, accessibility, quality and equality in treatment. Countries sought to disaggregate data by sex, age, population group and area (urban/rural) in order to provide a more granular picture of the public services being provided. Sufficient data on which population groups are at risk of being left behind in accessing public services that meet their needs constitute an important measurement on inclusive and responsive institutions, and are also linked to delivery of the goals and targets of other parts of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Indicator 16.7.1: Proportions of positions in national and local institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups

The meaningful participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities and specific population groups in decision-making processes is critical to sustainable development and sustaining peace. Inherently, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development advocates for the representation of the different segments of society in public service as a crucial step towards ensuring that decision-making processes are participatory and that public institutions are more inclusive. Indicator 16.7.1 tracks progress in ensuring participatory and representative decision-making by measuring

Figure 28: Ratio of young Members of Parliament aged 45 or under to the proportion of the national population (aged 45 or under) with the age of eligibility as a lower-bound boundary, by type of chamber and by region, 2023⁴⁶



Source: Inter Parliamentary Union.

Note: This indicator is based on the ratio between the share of a specific population group in parliament, public service and judiciary, and the share of the same group in the population. A value of 1 indicates parity, while a value under 1 indicates underrepresentation and over 1 indicates overrepresentation.

⁴⁶ The data for chambers are as of 1 January of the given year.

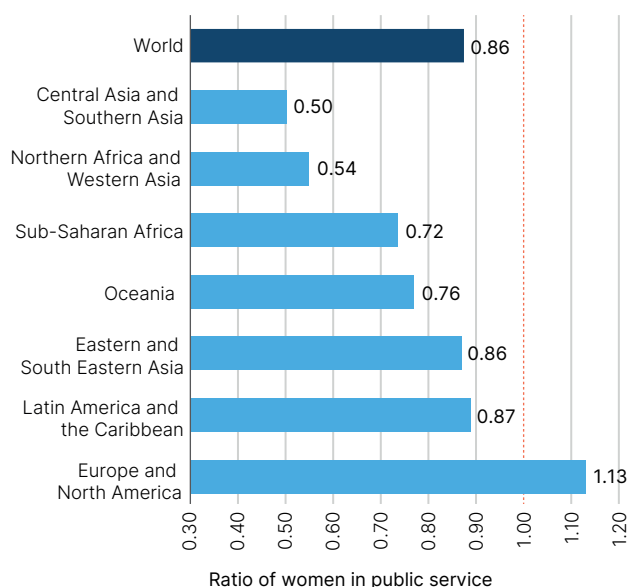
⁴⁵ Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet – Report of the Secretary-General (Special Edition), 2023.

the representation of population groups in the legislature, public service and the judiciary and comparing this measurement with the representation of these groups in the population.⁴⁷

In terms of indicator 16.7.1 (a) on representation in the parliament, in every region of the world other than Europe and North America, people under the age of 45 are significantly underrepresented in parliament relative to their share of the national population (figure 28).

Data from 101 countries show equitable gender representation in global public service is far from being achieved.^{48, 49} Women remain underrepresented in public service institutions, with a value of 0.86, meaning that, on average, for every 86 women employed in public service there are 100 in the working-age population. There are significant disparities between regions, however, with women being overrepresented in public service institutions in Europe and North America, where there are 113 women for every 100 women in the working-age population, while they are highly underrepresented in public service institutions in

Figure 29: Ratio of women in public service to the proportion of women in the working-age population, by region (2022)



Source: UNDP.

Note: This indicator is based on the ratio between the share of a specific population group in parliament, public service and judiciary, and the share of the same group in the population. A value of 1 indicates parity, while a value under 1 indicates underrepresentation and over 1 indicates overrepresentation.

⁴⁷ This indicator is based on the ratio between the share of a specific population group in parliament, public service and the judiciary, and the share of the same group in the population. A value of 1 indicates parity, while a value below 1 indicates underrepresentation, and above 1 indicates overrepresentation.

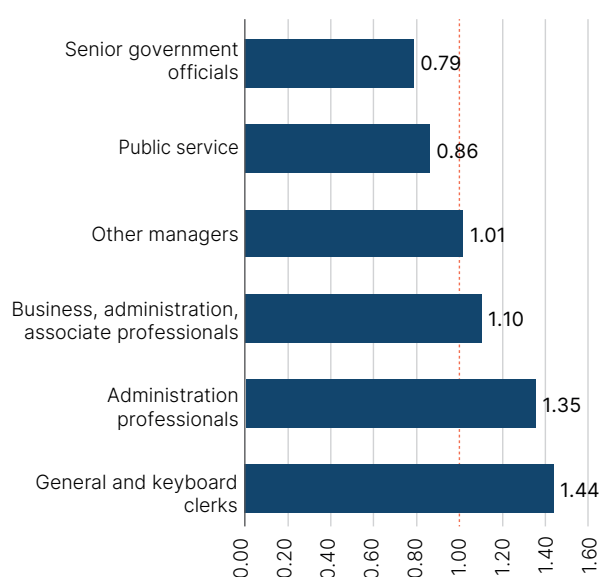
⁴⁸ Limited data availability in some regions and in decision-making positions.

⁴⁹ The statistics include data submitted by Member States and data mapped by UNDP from official reports, publications and databases.

Central and Southern Asia, where there are just 50 for every 100 in the working-age population (figure 29).

Globally, women are overrepresented at lower levels of decision-making and underrepresented at higher levels, an indication of the glass ceiling that limits their career aspirations in public service. In general and clerical positions, there are an average of 144 women for every 100 working-age women, while at the level of senior government officials, there are 79 women for every 100 working-age women (figure 30).

Figure 30: Ratio of women in public service to the proportion of women in the working-age population, by occupation (2022)



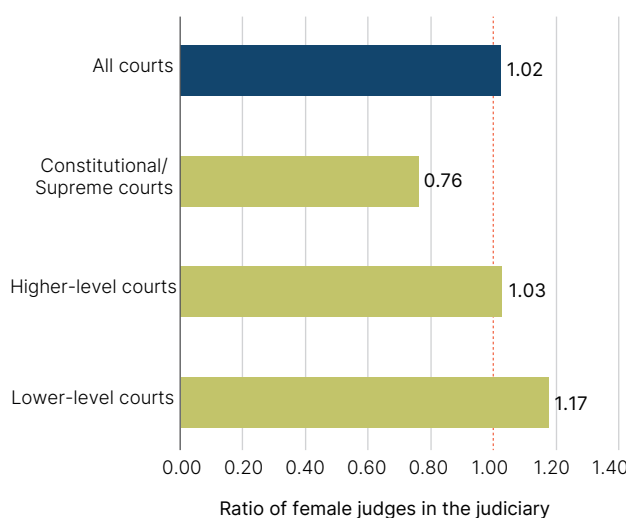
Source: UNDP.

Note: This indicator is based on the ratio between the share of a specific population group in parliament, public service and judiciary, and the share of the same group in the population. A value of 1 indicates parity, while a value under 1 indicates underrepresentation and over 1 indicates overrepresentation.

In the case of the judiciary, the data are more nuanced.⁵⁰ Overall, there is parity (1.02) in the number of female judges in the judiciary, with there being an average of 102 women judges for every 100 working-age women. Yet there is overrepresentation in lower-level courts (1.17), parity in higher-level courts (1.03) and underrepresentation (0.76) in constitutional and supreme courts (figure 31).

⁵⁰ Data available for 67 countries. The statistics include data submitted by member states and data mapped by UNDP from official reports, publications and databases.

Figure 31: Ratio of female judges in the judiciary to the proportion of working-age women, by level of court, 2022



Source: UNDP.

Note: This indicator is based on the ratio between the share of a specific population group in parliament, public service and the judiciary, and the share of the same group in the population. A value of 1 indicates parity, while a value under 1 indicates underrepresentation and over 1 indicates over representation.

Indicator 16.7.2: Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group

In 2022, countries reported on this indicator for the first time. The indicator measures the extent to which people feel that their views are being heard and responded to by governance systems in their country. It can help to illustrate whether some groups perceive that they are being excluded from the decision-making processes. Data are currently too limited to be able to show overall trends on this indicator but can help demonstrate meaningful participation in decision-making by different population groups.

Target 16.8: Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance

Indicator 16.8.1: Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations

At the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, developing countries continue to have less than 40 per cent of the voting rights, falling considerably short of the almost 75 per cent that these coun-

tries represent in the terms of the total membership of those organizations.⁵¹

Target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.

Indicator 16.9.1: Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

By providing all children with proof of legal identity from day one, their rights can be protected and universal access to justice and social services can be enabled. In 2022, the births of some 1 in 4 children under 5 years of age worldwide had never been officially recorded. Just half of the children under 5 years of age in Sub-Saharan Africa have had their births registered.⁵² It is critical to have certificates issued for all children and received by the caregiver in order to ensure that they can access public and private services.

Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

Indicator 16.10.1: Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months

In 2022, at least 448 human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists were killed in 36 countries worldwide and 33 cases of enforced disappearance were observed in 11 countries. This represents an increase of 40 per cent in the number of such killings and of almost 300 per cent in the number of enforced disappearances from 2021.

Compared with the period 2015–2021, when an average of 1 human rights defender, journalist or trade unionist was killed every day, the average increased to 1.2 every day in 2022. Over half of human rights defenders who were killed or disappeared worldwide

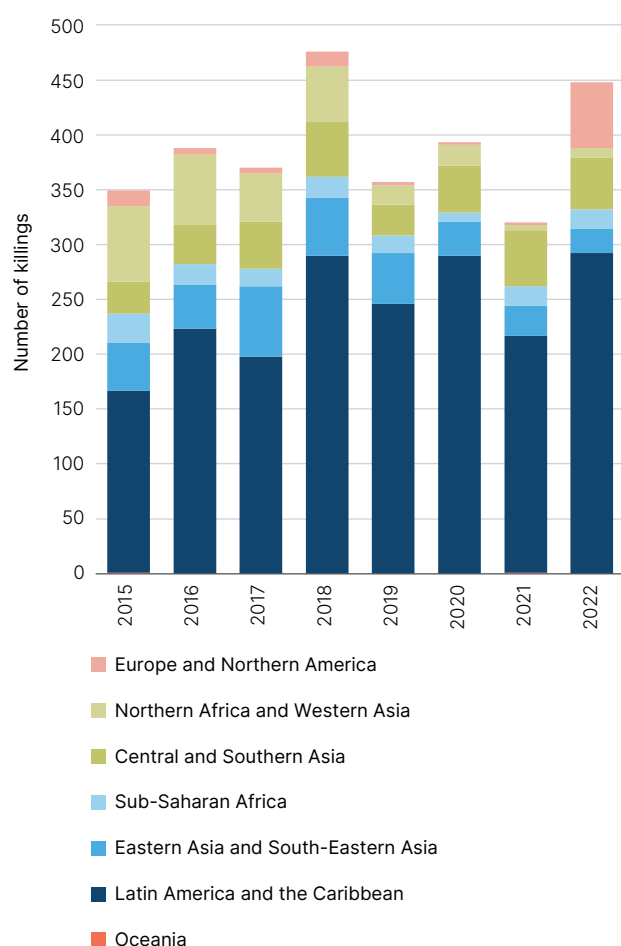
⁵¹ Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals – Report of the Secretary-General, Supplementary Information (E/2023/64, annex).

⁵² Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet – Report of the Secretary-General (Special Edition) 2023.

were leaders of peasant communities and land and environmental defenders. An increase in the proportion of women human rights defenders and journalists killed was also observed in 2022, from 16 per cent in 2021 to 17 per cent.

The proportion of killings of human rights defenders in Latin America and the Caribbean out of the global total decreased from 73 to 65 per cent in 2022, whereas it increased sharply in Europe, from less than 1 per cent to 13 per cent. Moreover, the proportion of such cases in Central and Southern Asia remained at an elevated level (10 per cent in 2022, compared with 12 per cent in 2021) due to armed conflict and the violent suppression of protests in some countries in the region (figure 32).

Figure 32: Killings of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists, by region, 2015–2020



Source: OHCHR estimates.

Note: At least 87 killings of journalists were recorded in 2022, representing a significant increase of roughly 60 per cent compared with the 55 deaths in 2021. The number of women journalists killed rose from 6 to 10 (+70 per cent). The increasing trend in the proportion of killings of journalists taking place outside conflict zones continued, with 62 killings, compared with 25 in countries experiencing conflict in 2022.

Indicator 16.10.2: Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information

Access to information laws provide legal guarantees of the right to information and were adopted by 136 countries in 2022, an increase from the 105 countries that adopted them in 2015.⁵³

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

Indicator 16.a.1: Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles⁵⁴

When in compliance with the Paris Principles, national human rights institutions can help States fast-track vital protection and other services to those left behind. However, the commitment of Member States to establish or strengthen independent national human rights institutions has failed to meet demand.

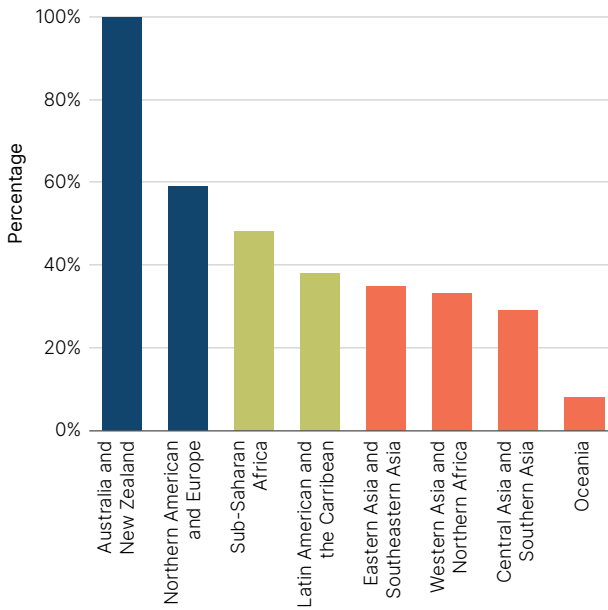
Global progress in establishing or strengthening such institutions continued steadily in 2022, thanks to incremental increases in Europe, Western Asia, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet major challenges remain unresolved, with more national human rights institutions being at risk of losing their independence (2 to 3 per year) since 2018 than the number of new applications being received from countries for the recognition of their national human rights institutions as complying with the Paris Principles (1 per year).

The pace of progress needs to be increased if the target is to be reached, specifically by boosting the current annual growth rate of 2.4 to 10 per cent from 2023, otherwise universal coverage will not be achieved by 2030. The global proportion of countries with independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles stood at 43 per cent in 2022. The global average has been exceeded

⁵³ Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet - Report of the Secretary-General (Special Edition), 2023.

⁵⁴ Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (General Assembly resolution 48/134).

Figure 33: Proportion of national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles, by region, 2023



Source: OHCHR estimates.

in Australia and New Zealand, Europe and Northern America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia since 2018, and steady growth has been observed in Western Asia and Northern Africa. On the other hand, progress has stagnated in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) and is even at risk of being reversed in Central and Southern Asia, Europe and Northern America, and Latin America and the Caribbean because of continuing threats to the independence of national human rights institutions.

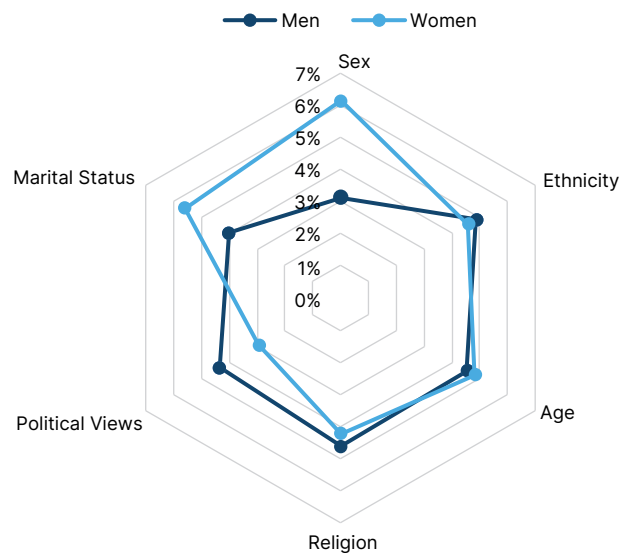
Some 30 years since the adoption of the Paris Principles, 60 per cent of United Nations Member States still lack independent national human rights institutions. If States do not act decisively and quickly and do not make a concerted effort in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts to leave no one behind will be impeded in those countries.

Target 16.b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Indicator 16.b.1: Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

The latest available data show that close to one in six people globally experience discrimination based on any grounds. Racial discrimination, rooted in factors such as ethnicity, colour or language, is among the most common grounds both among women and men. Although slightly less widespread, discrimination based on age and religion affects women and men almost equally. However, women are twice as likely as men to report instances of discrimination based on sex and almost twice as likely as men to report discrimination based on marital status. People with disabilities also encounter high levels of discrimination, with one in three reporting such experiences, twice the rate among individuals without disabilities.

Figure 34: Proportion of the overall population experiencing discrimination, by selected grounds and sex, 2015–2022



Source: OHCHR estimates.

5 Impact of setbacks in progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16 on economic development

Achieving goal 16 is not only an important aspiration in itself but is also highly relevant for the achievement of all the other SDGs, since peace, fair justice and good governance are conditions in which social, economic and environmental development can flourish. Although quantifying the effect that progress or setbacks in goal 16 can have on the achievement of the other SDGs is challenging, this chapter presents a study on the impact that violence, and homicidal violence in particular, has on economic development, as an illustrative example of how goal 16 can influence the other goals.

This study also hopes to demonstrate the potential of applying data from goal 16 indicators to explore insights across different aspects of the SDGs, which may be followed by additional studies on emerging issues to accelerate actions towards peaceful and prosperous societies for all people and the planet.

A study on the empirical relationship between homicide rates and economic development

Violence presents an ongoing development challenge. The global economic impact of violence was \$17.5 trillion in 2022, the equivalent of 12.9 per cent of global GDP, or \$2,200 per person.⁵⁵ Homicide was the fourth largest component in terms of total costs, accounting for 6.6 per cent of the global economic impact of violence, at \$1.1 trillion, an increase of 4 per cent, or \$44.3 billion, from the previous year.

Violent crime not only imposes direct costs on society through loss of life, but also leads to indirect economic repercussions, distorting decision-making processes. The impact of violence can be both direct, through a criminal act that causes death or injury, for example, and indirect. Indirect costs, often referred to as

second-order additional costs, have various adverse effects on the economy, such as reducing investment due to crime-related fear, decreasing productivity as a result of physical or psychological trauma, diminishing confidence in the rule of law, decreasing working hours and limiting economic activities due to restricted movement.

The long-term structural implications of these costs on the economy are significant. The perceived loss of security caused by weakened law enforcement and diminished protection of private property rights, for example, creates unfavourable conditions for entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, criminal activity negatively affects a State's capacity to attract skilled workers and both domestic and foreign investments. It also leads to a reduction in competitiveness between companies and an increase in uncertainty among businesses, which make conducting economic activities in high-crime areas a challenge.⁵⁶

The ultimate crime, intentional homicide has ripple effects that go far beyond the loss of human life and impacts people of all ages, genders, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. The study of intentional homicide is significant not only due to the seriousness of the crime but also because it serves as a highly measurable and comparable indicator for monitoring violent deaths. Homicide's lethal nature makes it well suited to temporal (longitudinal) and cross-national (geographic) comparisons, providing greater specificity in various historical and national contexts. Moreover, as homicide is universally condemned, homicide statistics are considered to have high data coverage for both national and cross-national comparisons. Being a readily measurable indicator, homicide serves as a practical proxy for violent crime and a robust indi-

⁵⁵ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Peace Index 2023: Measuring Peace in a Complex World* (Sydney, June 2023).

⁵⁶ Brand, S., and Price, R., *The Economic and Social Cost of Crime*, Home Office Research Study 217 (2000).

cator of violence levels within States, making it one of the goal 16 indicators with the highest data availability.

Although a great wealth of literature focuses on the economic determinants of crime, this analysis looks at the impact of crime on economic growth in an attempt to determine whether crime hinders the economic growth of countries. Theoretically, there are several channels through which crime can impact an economy's overall performance and its growth potential. One crucial aspect is that criminal activities increase risk, effectively acting as a tax on investment returns. This diversion of resources from productive use to protective activities negatively influences capital accumulation. As a result, both domestic and foreign private investment tend to decrease.⁵⁷

Additionally, crime has the effect of displacing public expenditure away from productive assets such as infrastructure and education, directing resources towards protective measures instead; this reallocation of resources can hinder economic development. Moreover, crime undermines trust in the rule of law and public institutions, causing damage to social relations and disrupting local interactions and knowledge spillovers between companies, which are vital components of a conducive business environment. In high-crime environments, criminal activities may even yield higher returns than legal productive activities, discouraging individuals from investing in human capital accumulation and skill development.

Overall, the detrimental impact of crime on an economy can affect both investment and human capital accumulation, hindering economic growth and development. Multiplier effects in the direct and indirect cost of crime magnify its economic consequences, leading to even greater repercussions on the overall economy. The income lost by homicide victims and the people who are in prison, for example, represents foregone earnings that could have contributed to national consumption and, consequently, national income. The subsequent reduction in national income can further result in diminished investment and hinder overall economic development. Despite the direct costs of homicide and violence potentially appearing small relative to a country's GDP, their multiplier effects can have a more substantial impact on economic growth.

When considering tangible costs alone, such as victim costs, crime career costs and justice system costs, the direct cost of homicide in the United States was

estimated at \$1,278,424 in 2008.⁵⁸ However, when accounting for both tangible and intangible costs, the total cost estimations were significantly higher, with homicide estimated at nearly \$9 million per case. These results emphasize the importance of considering intangible costs in determining the total economic burden of crime, which substantially increases the overall cost estimates for each type of offence. Apart from monetary costs, an increase in the homicide rate leads to an increase in the morbidity rate resulting from attempted homicide, mental health issues among those affected by the crime, such as survivors and relatives of the victim, and psychological distress, which results in an overall decrease in the quality of life.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, there is no consensus on the crime-growth nexus. Mixed evidence on the interrelationships between crime and economic growth depends primarily on the econometric method used and the country analysed. Economic activity and growth are influenced by a vast array of factors, with violent crime, represented by the homicide rate, being just one of many variables at play. Simply comparing growth rates over time with levels of violence or conducting cross-country comparisons is insufficient for fully understanding the relationship between crime and economic performance.

Major macroeconomic developments can overshadow or mask the potential effects of changes in the homicide rate on economic growth. Various factors such as fiscal and monetary policies, technological advancements, trade dynamics, political stability and business cycles can have substantial impacts on an economy's growth trajectory.

To analyse the relationship between crime and economic growth comprehensively, it is essential to adopt a more sophisticated and nuanced approach that considers the interplay of multiple factors and controls for other significant variables that may confound the analysis. Longitudinal studies and econometric models can isolate the specific effects of violent crime on economic outcomes while accounting for the influence of other macroeconomic drivers. This allows for a more accurate understanding of how crime impacts economic growth and informs policymakers in designing targeted strategies to address the issue effectively.⁶⁰

57 Sandler, T. and Enders, W., "Economic consequences of terrorism in developed and developing countries: an overview", *Terrorism, Economic Development and Political Openness* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 17–47.

58 McCollister, K. E., French, M. T. and Fang, H., "The cost of crime to society: new crime-specific estimates for policy and program evaluation", *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* (April 2010).

59 Redmond, L. M., *Surviving: When Someone You Know Was Murdered – A Professional's Guide to Group Grief Therapy for Families and Friends of Murder Victims* (Clearwater, Florida, Psychological Consultation and Education Services, 1989).

60 Further details about the methods used in the current analysis can be found in the online methodological appendix of the 16esent report.

The empirical analysis conducted in this study sought to understand the relationship between homicide rates and GDP levels (see [Methodological Appendix](#)). Figure 35 shows the correlation between the average values of these two variables over the period 2000/2021, across different regions. The data reveal that low homicide rates are primarily associated with higher GDP levels. The strength of this association varies across the regions, however, with this negative correlation being most pronounced in Asia and Europe. On the other hand, in the Americas, the negative correlation between the two factors is notably weaker. Interestingly, in Africa there is divergence from the observed pattern, indicating a positive correlation between increasing homicide rates and higher GDP levels. That said, it is imperative to highlight that the reliability of this observation is hindered by the limited availability of high-quality homicide data in countries in Africa, as previously noted, and possibly by the peculiar characteristics, such as the high level of violence, present in many countries in Africa.

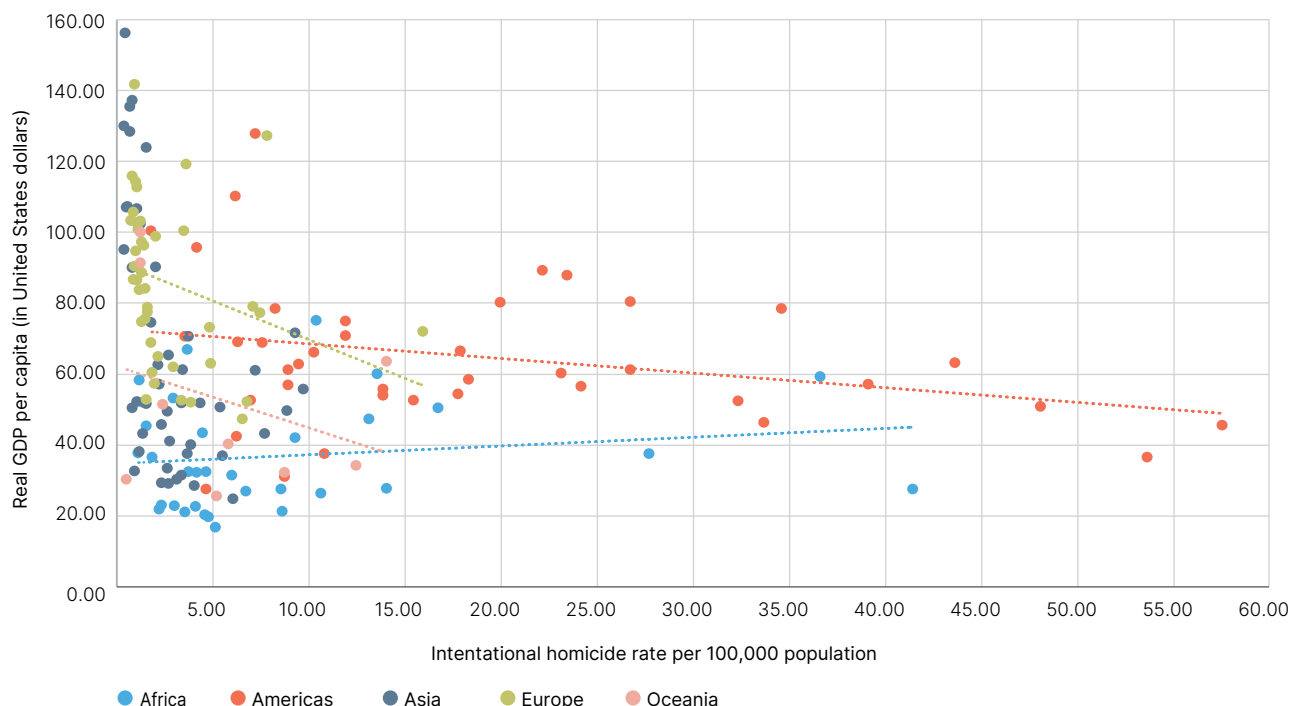
Using different statistical models, it is possible to estimate the impact of homicide on economic growth in terms of GDP. In all the models used, intentional homicide seems to exert a negative influence on GDP per capita. In the model in column 5, for example (figure 36), an increase of 1 per cent in the homicide rate could lead to a decline of 0.008 per cent in GDP, on average. Conversely, a decrease in the homicide rate from its average level (8.30 per 100,000) to its median

level (3.07 per 100,000) could increase annual GDP per capita by about 0.04 per cent.

The global estimated effects of homicide on GDP are mostly driven by homicide rates in the Americas, where an increase of 1 per cent in homicide rates is expected to reduce GDP per capita by 0.02 per cent. Given that average GDP per capita in the Americas at the end of 2021 stood at roughly \$74 in purchasing power parity (USD PPP) per capita, this would translate into a loss of 1.48 USD PPP per person. No matter how minor the adverse influence of the homicide rate on GDP per capita, this negative effect diminishes slightly as the homicide rate increases. Once a country reaches a median level of homicide rate (3.02 per 100,000), the effects of homicide become insignificant.

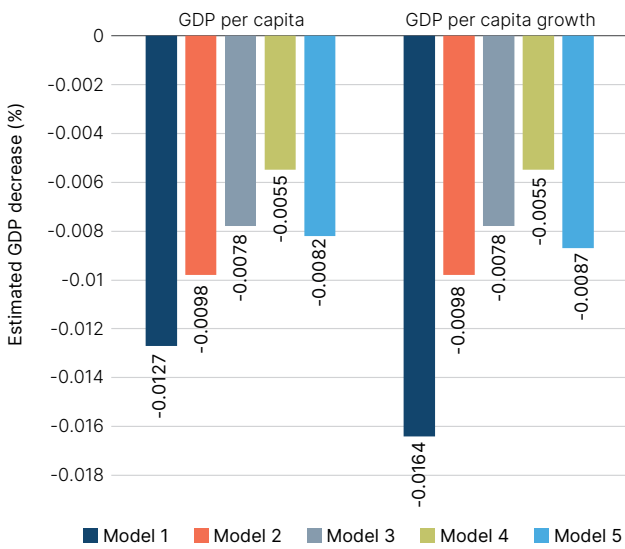
In conclusion, the negative impact of homicide on economic growth seems to be more pronounced in the Americas, where homicide rates are above average, than in other regions. An increase of 1 per cent in the homicide rate leads to a decrease of 0.008 per cent in global GDP per capita and growth rates. Crime, as indicated by the homicide rate, functions as a deterrent to economic activities, lessens the ease of conducting business and hampers investment — factors that collectively influence economic growth. The occurrence of homicide not only jeopardizes societal cohesion but also exerts adverse impacts on economic progress. An elevated homicide rate serves as a gauge of the prevalence of violent crimes within a society. This reality

Figure 35: Correlation between the intentional homicide rate and real GDP per capita levels, by region, 2000–2021



Source: Estimated based on comprehensive dataset statistics.

Figure 36: Impact of homicide on GDP level and growth according to econometric models applied



erodes citizens' faith in the rule of law, diminishes trust in law enforcement entities and, in extreme scenarios, may even trigger the emigration of individuals. The adverse repercussions of homicide can prove particularly dire for developing nations already grappling with subpar infrastructure and low income levels.

Enacting measures that heighten the cost of engaging in criminal activities is imperative. Instances of such measures encompass enhancing the access of law enforcement agencies to enhanced tools and facilities, augmenting the likelihood of identifying and apprehending perpetrators of crime, and bolstering the rate of successful convictions for homicide.

Meeting the targets of goal 16 is essential for achieving all the other SDGs that have a bearing on homicide levels, since many of the goals and their associated targets are interconnected and produce combined effects. Ideally, an effective criminal justice system is one that upholds the rule of law and human rights, ensuring objective investigations, timely prosecution and fair sentencing of those convicted of homicide. In addition, general improvements to goal 16 indicators can have multiple synergies with other SDG targets such as those related to poverty, access to basic services and the creation of a conducive and stable economic environment that can bolster investment, create employment and thus help people, especially those left behind, to move up the social ladder. If economic growth does indeed translate into social and redistribution policies, these factors will act as an incentive for individuals to engage less in criminal activities, and thus help countries to enhance socioeconomic progress.



The mission of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is to contribute to global peace and security, human rights and development by making the world safer from drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism. Learn more at www.unodc.org or follow @UNODC.



The mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is to work for the protection of all human rights for all people; to help empower people to realize their rights; and to assist those responsible for upholding such rights in ensuring that they are implemented. Learn more at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/pages/home.aspx> or follow @UNHumanRights.



The United Nations Development Programme is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet. Learn more at undp.org or follow at @UNDP.