The 2015 edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* provides a wealth of data relevant to security and the post-2015 sustainable development framework. It estimates that 508,000 people died violently—in both conflict and non-conflict settings—every year in 2007–12, down from 526,000 in 2004–09. This trend is visible in non-conflict settings, where the proportion of women and girls is also slightly reduced, from 17 to 16 per cent. Yet, the number of direct conflict deaths is on the rise: from 55,000 to 70,000 per year over the same periods. Firearms are used in close to half of all homicides committed and in almost one-third of direct conflict deaths.

This research reveals that nearly USD 2 trillion in global violence-related economic losses could have been saved, had the global homicide rate in 2000–10 been reduced to levels below 3 deaths per 100,000 population—significantly lower than the average rate of 7.4 per 100,000 exhibited in 2007–12. Such savings would have been equivalent to 2.64 per cent of the global GDP in 2010.

This volume examines how a comprehensive approach to violent deaths can serve to track progress towards a peace and security goal—whether as part of the post-2015 development framework or as a goal in and of itself.

Photos

Top left: A mourner holds a candle over the body of a separatist rebel killed in conflict with Ukrainian government forces, in Vuhlehirsk, in the Donetsk region of Eastern Ukraine, February 2015. © Vadim Braydov/AP Photo

Centre left: Medical workers recover the bodies of protestors killed during a military crackdown in Bangkok, Thailand, May 2010. © Jack Kurtz

Bottom right: Children look out through a hole in the wall of their home, which was damaged by shelling in 2014 in a 50-day war, in Gaza City, Palestinian Territories, January 2015. © Suhaib Salem/Reuters

Centre right: A man believed to be a member of the Mara 18 gang is detained by police in San Salvador, El Salvador, December 2013. © Jan Sochor

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GLOBAL BURDEN of ARMED VIOLENCE 2015

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Every Body Counts

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GENEVA
DECLARATION

Foreword

A safe life, without fear, is one of the most basic aspirations of the human being. It meets the immediate need of not having to fear for one's own life and physical integrity, which is also a fundamental human right. Unfortunately, the fear of being killed, general human insecurity, as well as high tolls of human life are the widespread realities of armed violence in countries affected by conflict, but also in non-conflict situations.

The *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015* report provides new evidence on the trends, patterns, and dynamics of lethal violence, in a wide array of contexts—within and outside conflict-affected settings. The availability of more comprehensive and detailed national-level data on lethal violence facilitates enhanced analysis which enables sustainable, lasting, and effective policy-making by various stakeholders at the national, regional, and global level.

This publication testifies that, in many countries around the world, violence is decreasing. This positive development is certainly encouraging. However, the report also finds that, in some locations, armed violence is on the rise. For instance, despite the efforts put in place by several governments and by civil society, the Latin American and Caribbean regions endure very high levels of violence. Further, new conflicts have fed the death toll dramatically. War in Syria and the crises in Libya and Ukraine have fuelled an increase of about one-third in direct conflict deaths. Over three million people have died altogether as a result of lethal violence in the period 2007–12. Statistics show that these casualties are concentrated in few countries, but it is our shared responsibility to tackle the root causes of violence and insecurity.

The publishing of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* represents the main research contribution to the measurement pillar of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development whose goal is to analyse and address the linkages between violence, security, and sustainable development. Since 2006 Switzerland has provided continuous political support to this goal, in different arenas, including the current negotiations on the new development agenda.

Shedding light on the human and economic costs of homicides, the 2015 edition underlines the need to continue working towards promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and reducing the burden and impact of armed violence. The presented findings confirm our understanding that the reduction of violence represents not only a means to achieving development goals, but also a development goal *in itself.* Our efforts cannot lead to situations of lasting peace if we do not promote socio-economic development. Likewise, any sustainable development is impossible in the absence of peace and human security.

The Swiss government is willing—and urges all governments—to learn from successful accounts of reducing and preventing armed violence, to apply

them to areas in which violence prevails, and to adopt a universal development framework containing goals and targets associated with violence reduction. By working together with all relevant stakeholders in order to significantly reduce armed violence, the goals of a more peaceful, prosperous, and safe world can be achieved.

Didier Burkhalter
Federal Councillor
Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

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About the Geneva Declaration

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, endorsed by more than 110 countries, commits signatories to supporting initiatives intended to measure the human, social, and economic costs of armed violence, to assess risks and vulnerabilities, to evaluate the effectiveness of armed violence reduction programmes, and to disseminate knowledge of best practices. The Declaration calls upon its members to achieve measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and tangible improvements in human security by 2015 and beyond.

The Secretariat of the Geneva Declaration is currently hosted at the Small Arms Survey, an independent Geneva-based research institution located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. The Survey is the main partner in the research activities conducted in the Geneva Declaration (GD) process. The Secretariat provides support to the signatory countries and develops the activities of the GD process in collaboration with a Core Group of 15 countries and partner organizations, including the Bureau of Policy and Programme Support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Global Alliance on Armed Violence (GAAV). GAAV is a coalition of non-governmental and other actors working to prevent and reduce armed violence worldwide through cooperation and collaboration, from the community level to global institutions and decision-makers.

The *Global Burden of Armed Violence* receives funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

Further information about the Geneva Declaration, its activities, and its publications is available at www.genevadeclaration.org.

This report is based on research, conducted by the Small Arms Survey for the Geneva Declaration Secretariat, and does not necessarily indicate endorsement by any state.

Acknowledgements

The *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015* (hereafter GBAV 2015) builds on prior editions of the report, unpacking armed violence to reveal its trends and patterns—as well as its impact on development—around the globe. The volume combines the efforts of several Small Arms Survey staff and dozens of experts and specialists worldwide who contributed input, reviews, and critical assessments of methodology. The Small Arms Survey was responsible for conceiving, researching, commissioning, and editing the report. The editors of the report, Anna Alvazzi del Frate, Keith Krause, and Matthias Nowak, are all with the Survey.

Alessandra Allen and Estelle Jobson at the Survey coordinated the production of the GBAV 2015. Fact-checking was undertaken by Olivia Denonville, Emma Hayward, and Elli Kytömäki.

Jillian Luff produced the maps; Rick Jones provided the design and the layout; Tania Inowlocki copy-edited Chapters One to Four, and Donald Strachan proofread the report. Olivia Denonville helped with photo research. Irene Pavesi and Matthias Nowak coordinated the production of the methodological annexe. John Haslam and Carrie Parkinson of Cambridge University Press provided support throughout the production of the report. Cédric Blattner, Elise Lebret Agneray, and Carole Touraine provided administrative support.

The GBAV 2014 database covers data on conflict and non-conflict deaths from a wide range of national and international sources, such as ministries, statistical offices, national police agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations. Irene Pavesi, Matthias Nowak, and Katherine Aguirre Tobón led the process of collecting data and collating it into the database, which includes information disaggregated by the victim's sex and the mechanism of death. Jovana Carapic and Hannah Dönges provided additional assistance with the collection of data. In response to requests, data, clarifications, and explanations were provided directly by national institutions and country representatives, including from Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

In June 2013, the Small Arms Survey held an expert meeting in Geneva to review the methodology of the database, data availability, and global estimates of armed violence. Critical information and feedback was provided by the participants: Andrea Arteaga of the Organization of American States, Enrico Bisogno of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Maria T. Cerqueira of the World Health Organization (WHO), Joshua Dougherty of Iraq Body Count, Caitriona Dowd of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Nicolas Fasel of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Taha Kass-Hout of

Syria Tracker, Berit Kieselbach of WHO, Julia Knittel of Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), Richard Matzopoulos of the University of Cape Town, Elizabeth Minor of the Oxford Research Group (ORG), Serena Olgiati of AOAV, Jorge Restrepo of the Conflict Analysis Resource Center (CERAC), and Yann-Cédric Quéro of the the École Nationale Supérieure de la Police.

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015: Every Body Counts

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The principal chapter authors were assisted by in-house and external contributors who are acknowledged in the following chapter summaries. Our apologies to anyone we may have inadvertently omitted.

Chapter One
Violence, Security, and the New Global Development Agenda

The debate about the post-2015 development framework presents a unique opportunity to consider the potential benefits of including a peace and security goal in the new global agenda and of developing corresponding targets and indicators regarding security, safety, and armed violence. In this chapter, Matthias Nowak and Keith Krause highlight how development and security interact, discuss the significance of this interaction in the context of the post-2015 negotiations, and provide an overview of efforts to integrate a goal on peaceful societies in the new development agenda. Luigi De Martino (Geneva Declaration Secretariat), Steven Malby (UNODC), Andres Rengifo (Rutgers University), and Thomas Wheeler (Saferworld) offered useful comments and reviews of the chapter.

Chapter Two
Lethal Violence Update

Global levels of lethal violence appear to be in decline, but a closer look reveals that while most national homicide rates have been stable or decreasing over the long term, a few states have been experiencing volatile or increasing levels of violence. In this chapter, Matthias Nowak analyses changes in the distribution and intensity of lethal

violence by comparing newly gathered data for 2007–12 with data for 2004–09, which formed the basis of research presented in the GBAV 2011. By taking the 'unified approach' to lethal violence that was introduced in the 2011 edition, the chapter covers conflict, criminal, and interpersonal violence and includes data from a large variety of sources on homicide, conflict, and other forms of violence. Hana Salama (ORG) and Clionadh Raleigh (ACLED) provided contributions and discussions of data related to the Syrian conflict and the Arab Spring, and Diego Fleitas (Asociación para Políticas Públicas) and Achim Wennmann (Geneva Peacebuilding Platform) offered critical reviews of the chapter. At the Survey, Anna Alvazzi del Frate, Jovana Carapic, Hannah Dönges, and Irene Pavesi offered their assistance.

Chapter Three
Lethal Violence against Women and Girls

Although gender-disaggregated data on armed violence is gradually becoming more available, a deeper understanding of the extent of lethal violence perpetrated against women remains elusive, complicating the design of effective programming to reduce gender-based violence. Moreover, the lack of standardized guidelines, categories, and definitions for data collection render cross-country comparisons difficult. In this chapter, Mihaela Racovita analyses gender-disaggregated data on violence and discusses the figures and patterns of lethal violence against women globally and in selected cases, focusing in particular on female homicide, including intimate partner femicides. Anna Alvazzi del Frate provided substantive support and supervision. Hannah Hilligoss and Massimo Garsone provided research support. The external reviewers—David Anyanwu (Women's Institute for Alternative Development), Rahel Kunz (University of Lausanne), and Margaret Shaw (Crime and Social Problems Consulting)—provided valuable comments and suggestions.

Chapter Four
Unpacking Lethal Violence

The debate on the post-2015 agenda has underscored the need to enhance the availability, coverage, and quality of disaggregated data on lethal violence to monitor progress towards the sustainable development goals and targets. Although the past few years have witnessed a significant increase in the availability of such data, middle- and low-income countries still lag behind their wealthier counterparts in terms of establishing and maintaining efficient recording systems on violent deaths. Meanwhile, mis- and underreporting continue to weaken the reliability of data on lethal violence. In this chapter, Irene Pavesi argues that when it is collected systematically and disaggregated by factors such as socio-economic characteristics of victims and offenders, locations, motives, and methods used, data on lethal violence can help in the design of effective violence prevention and reduction measures. Jovana Carapic and Hannah Dönges at the Survey carried out extensive data collection on disaggregated lethal violence data and other valuable background research. MapAction and the Assessment Capacities Project provided map-related data. Anna Alvazzi del Frate, Jennifer Peirce (Inter-American Development Bank), Emile LeBrun (Small Arms Survey), and Yann-Cédric Quéro (École Nationale Supérieure de la Police) provided other valuable input.

Chapter Five
The Economic Cost of Homicide

The Survey's partner institution CERAC has provided original research on the valuation of homicidal violence. Specifically, this chapter estimates the global economic cost of homicide on the basis of two key concepts: 'excess homicide' and 'life expectancy'. Under the direction of Jorge Restrepo, the director of CERAC, Gabriela Gutiérrez and Margarita Marín, researchers at CERAC, contributed substantive background documents on the estimates of economic valuation of homicide; they also built the database, developed the estimates, and formulated the discussion of results. The chapter was written by CERAC researcher Evan Pheiffer and Jorge Restrepo; it received detailed comments by Gabriela Gutiérrez, Matthias Nowak, and Nicolás Ronderos. Valuable comments and revisions were provided by Erik Alda (World Bank), Andres Rengifo (Rutgers University), and Ernesto Savona (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore). CERAC's Óscar Calero and Leonardo Goi provided helpful research assistance.

Finally, special thanks are extended to the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Human Security Department, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, whose long-term commitment and funding made this report possible. The report is an independent contribution of the Small Arms Survey to the Secretariat of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development; as such, it does not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Switzerland or any other signatory state of the Geneva Declaration. While the report is a collective effort, the editors are responsible for any errors and omissions of fact or judgement.

Executive Summary

In the years since the *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011* was published, different forms of violence, instability, and conflict have erupted in places such as the Central African Republic, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Ukraine. Waves of criminal violence have continued to sweep across Honduras, Venezuela, and other parts of Latin America. Armed violence continues to claim lives, undermine the stability of states and communities, and threaten the achievement of sustainable human development.

This edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* charts and analyses some of these developments while maintaining the 'unified approach' to armed violence introduced in the previous edition.[1] By relying on data from a large variety of sources—including public health, law enforcement, and criminal justice authorities as well as independent observatories, human rights organizations, and international agencies—this approach allows for the monitoring of changes and trends in the levels of armed violence at the local, national, regional, and global levels. Its focus is broad enough to capture interpersonal, political, criminal, economic, and conflict violence—some of which regularly overlap and fuel each other.

This volume presents analysis of comprehensive data for the period 2007–12 as well as assessments of more recent trends and dynamics in lethal violence in both conflict and non-conflict settings. Thanks to marked improvements in the collection and reporting of disaggregated lethal violence data in many countries, its chapters are able to offer more robust and simultaneously more nuanced assessments of changes in various aspects of lethal violence over time, including the use of firearms and gender-based victimization. In proposing a new calculation method for estimating the global economic cost of homicide, this edition also takes a significant step towards quantifying the costs of armed violence.

In view of the post-2015 development framework negotiations, the report keeps in focus the negative impact of violence and insecurity on development and weighs the potential benefits of integrating a peace and security goal in the new development agenda. In this context, it emphasizes that violence and insecurity affect societies in ways that extend well beyond the immediate costs of deaths and injuries: people migrate or are displaced, businesses close, investments dwindle, tourism rates plummet, and institutions lose their legitimacy.

'Lethal violence'—in all its forms—could serve as a viable indicator with which to measure and monitor progress towards a goal on peaceful societies and related targets, should they be adopted as part of the post-2015 development agenda. To capture the manifold manifestations of violence that are recorded and observed around the world, however, such measuring and monitoring efforts would need to draw on as many sources as possible, while also engaging with researchers, specialists, and practitioners in a variety of disciplines and sectors, including

economics, criminology, development, conflict studies, and public health. Put another way, the process of tracking progress against development goals must be able to offer policy-makers, donors, and activists a comprehensive picture of how patterns of violence are evolving—and of how and why that matters for the achievement of sustainable development—if it is to inform effective policies to reduce levels of lethal violence.

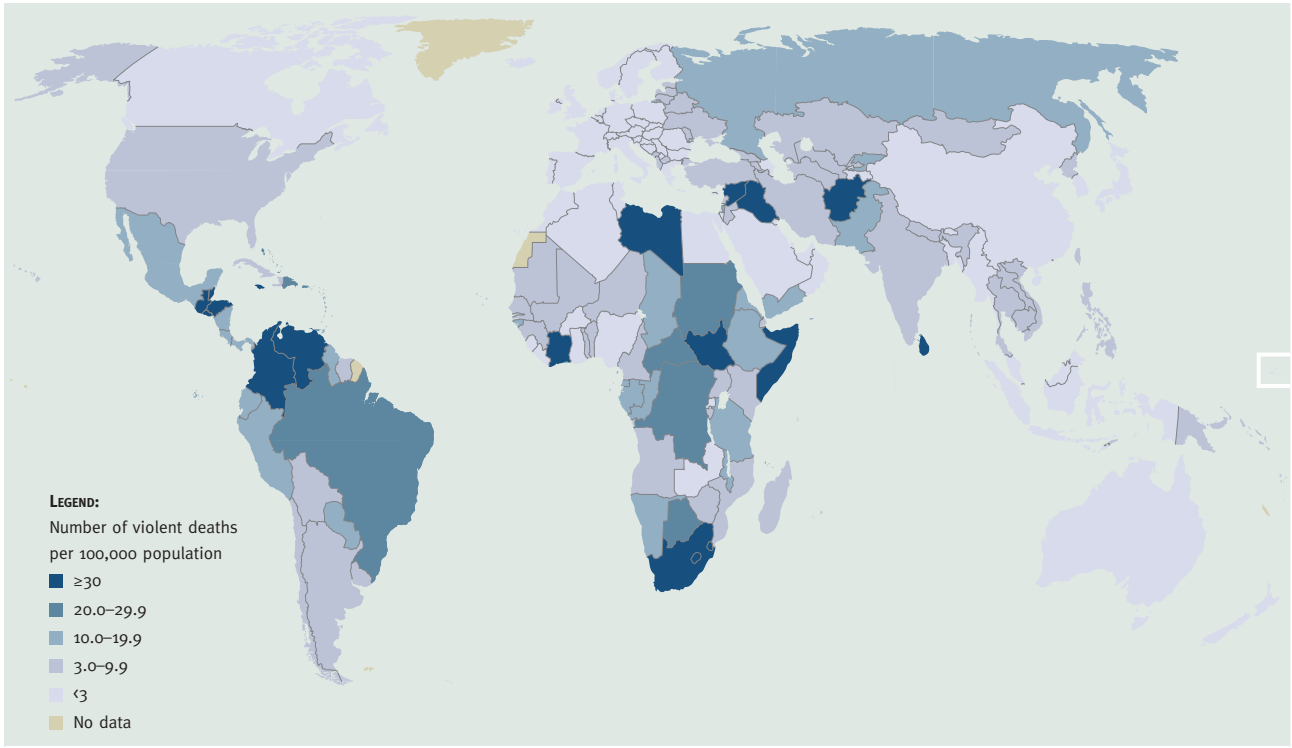
Key findings of this volume include the following:

- Estimates reported in successive editions of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* show a continuous drop in the average annual number of violent deaths worldwide: from 540,000 violent deaths for the period 2004–07 and 526,000 for 2004–09, to 508,000 for 2007–12.
- Although the total number of violent deaths per year decreased over the above-mentioned periods, the annual number of direct conflict deaths increased significantly: from an average of 52,000 deaths, to 55,000, to 70,000—with a large proportion of the latter deaths due to armed conflict in Libya and Syria.
- In addition to the 70,000 direct conflict deaths per year, the period 2007–12 also saw an annual average of 377,000 intentional homicides, 42,000 unintentional homicides, and 19,000 deaths due to legal interventions.
- For the period 2007–12, the average global rate of violent deaths stood at 7.4 persons killed per 100,000 population.
- The 18 countries with the highest violent death rates are home to only 4 per cent of the world's population but account for nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of all violent deaths in the world.
- Globally, firearms are used in 46.3 per cent of all homicides and in an estimated 32.3 per cent of direct conflict deaths. That means that firearms are used in 44.1 per cent of all violent deaths, or an annual average of nearly 197,000 deaths for the period 2007–12.
- On average, an estimated 60,000 women worldwide became victims of homicide every year from 2007 to 2012, accounting for 16 per cent of intentional homicides.
- If the homicide rate between 2000 and 2010 had been reduced to the lowest practically attainable levels—between 2 and 3 deaths per 100,000 population—nearly USD 2 trillion of global homicide-related economic losses could have been saved. That amount is equivalent to 2.64 per cent of the global GDP in 2010.

The data for 2007–12 reveals that the majority of countries and territories—137 of the 189 under review—exhibit very low or low rates of lethal violence (below 10 deaths per 100,000 population) (see Map 2.1). Among these countries, the average rate of lethal violence is decreasing, confirming that when levels of violence are already very low, they tend to remain low or continue to decline. A comparison of data available for the periods 2004–09 and 2007–12 indicates that, globally, deaths due to intentional homicide declined by almost 5 per cent, with the Americas being the only region to witness a significant increase in homicide (nearly 10 per cent).

The comparison also shows that direct conflict deaths surged by 34 per cent between the two periods—while violent deaths in all other categories declined. A large portion of these direct conflict deaths resulted from armed conflict in Libya and Syria. Meanwhile, lethal violence rates in some countries that are not experiencing armed conflict—such as Honduras and Venezuela—have been rising, reaching levels characteristic of countries at war.

Map 2.1 Average annual violent death rates per 100,000 population, 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

The post-2015 debate

Although the Millennium Declaration of 2000 refers to 'peace' and 'security', such language was not included in any of the Millennium Development goals, targets, or indicators (UNGA, 2000; Millennium Project, n.d.). The inclusion of a goal on 'peaceful and inclusive societies' in the post-2015 development framework—as proposed by the UN's Open Working Group in its August 2014 report on the Sustainable Development Goals (UNGA, 2014)—would thus represent a leap forward. It would explicitly encourage states—all of which deal with some form of insecurity—to aim for and to track their progress towards that goal and its associated targets.

In fact, a great deal of progress has already been made since the adoption of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development in 2006 and the subsequent report to the UN Secretary-General, *Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence* (Geneva Declaration, 2006; UNGA, 2009). Language around 'armed violence' and 'violent deaths' has been integrated in many international forums, policy papers, and in the above-mentioned proposal for the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the most important shifts since the Millennium Declaration and the 2004 report of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (UNGA, 2004) has been the move away

from a narrow focus on conflict-related violence and insecurity, towards a more holistic understanding of armed violence in all its forms.

In line with this shift, several analyses have drawn attention to the advantages of a unified approach to armed violence and endorsed a 'violent deaths' indicator as a plausible way to track progress in the reduction of violence. The violent deaths approach can capture a range of acts that may otherwise be missed in more narrowly focused data, maximize comparability across countries, avoid undercounting, and remain feasible. Indeed, the approach stands to become more reliable and comprehensive if countries continue to enhance their capacities to collect, disaggregate, and report data on lethal violence—especially in regions where such practices are still absent or nascent.

In a field cluttered by a range of concepts and definitions (such as fragility, state collapse, conflict-affected and fragile settings, and criminal violence), a holistic focus on the violent act is a comparative strength. Such an approach has also been deemed 'collectable' by a variety of authoritative actors. As the Task Team on the post-2015 Development Agenda concluded:

> much progress has been made in measuring violence and insecurity, particularly regarding the indicator [on] the number of violent deaths, comprising the number of conflict-related deaths and the number of homicides (UNTT, 2013, p. 35).

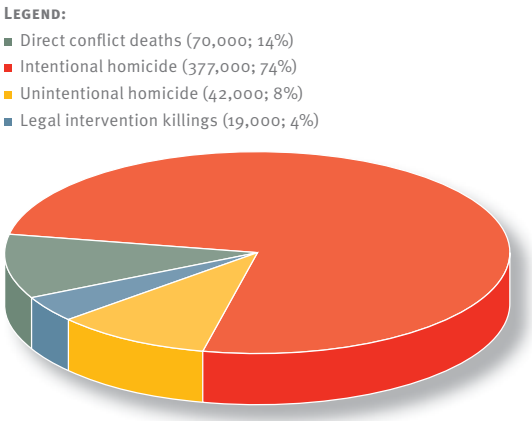
Yet while the growing agreement and support of states and organizations for the inclusion of a goal on peaceful and stable societies within the post-2015 development framework is promising, it should be noted that the reduction of violence and insecurity is not only a means of achieving development goals, but also an invaluable development objective *in itself*.

Chapter highlights

Chapter One (Violence, Security, and the New Global Development Agenda) provides an overview of the evolution of the debates around the inclusion of a goal for achieving 'peaceful and inclusive societies' in the post-2015 global development framework. The chapter summarizes the state of play (up to late 2014) regarding the integration of such a goal into the post-2015 development agenda and provides an overview of the various efforts to develop specific goals, targets, and indicators dealing with security, safety, and armed violence. Particular attention is devoted to the measuring and monitoring of lethal violence, which would serve as a more comprehensive indicator than 'homicide only' or 'conflict deaths only' for tracking progress towards any peace and security goals and targets.

Chapter Two (Lethal Violence Update) analyses changes in the distribution and intensity of lethal violence by comparing newly gathered data for the period 2007–12 with data for 2004–09, which formed the basis of research presented in the 2011

Figure 1 The distribution of the global burden of lethal violence



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

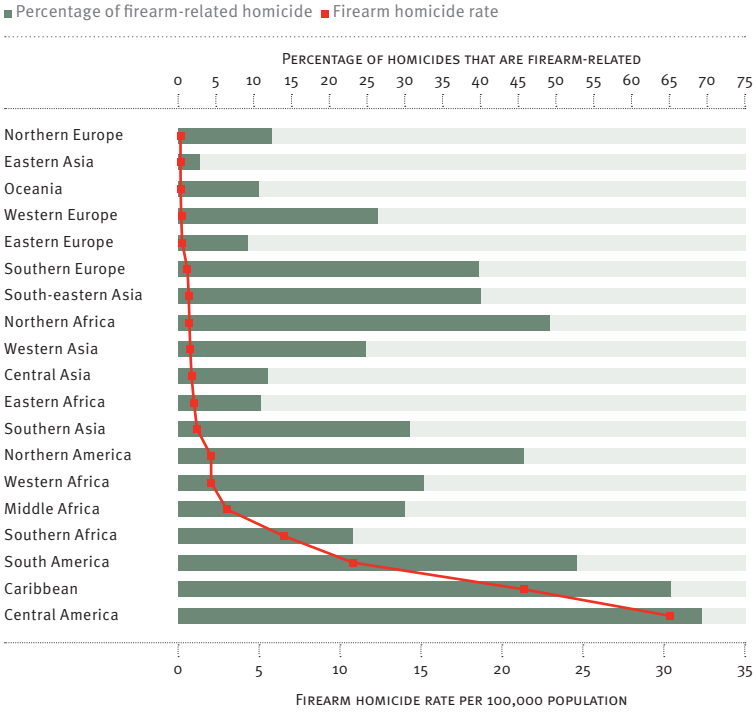
Photo ▲ A girl kneels near the graves of victims of a suicide bomb attack by Boko Haram at a church on the outskirts of Abuja, Nigeria, December 2012. © Afolabi Sotunde/ Reuters

edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence*. Globally, an estimated 508,000 people died violently each year in 2007–12—that translates into more than 3 million violent deaths during the six-year period. As shown in Figure 1, almost three-quarters (74 per cent) of these deaths were recorded as intentional homicides, while only 14 per cent of the total occurred in conflict settings. This chapter takes advantage of the enhanced availability of refined data—especially with respect to national-level details on firearm homicides—to provide more accurate estimates and analysis.

The vast majority of countries exhibit low and decreasing levels of lethal violence. While most of the sub-regions in the world have witnessed corresponding drops in the number of violent deaths, Northern Africa, Central America, and Southern Africa experienced significant increases in violent death rates per 100,000 population from 2004–09 to 2007–12. Indeed, this volume finds that despite promising reductions of violence around the world, a few countries that are not at war suffer from extremely high levels of violence.

Analysis of the most recent data also provides a refined global estimate: nearly half of all homicides—46.3 per cent—are caused by firearms. While coverage remains patchy, disaggregated data on the use of firearms in homicide provides useful insight. It reveals, for example, that the sub-

FIGURE 2.17 Average firearm homicide rate and percentage of firearm-related homicides, per sub-region, 2007–12



SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

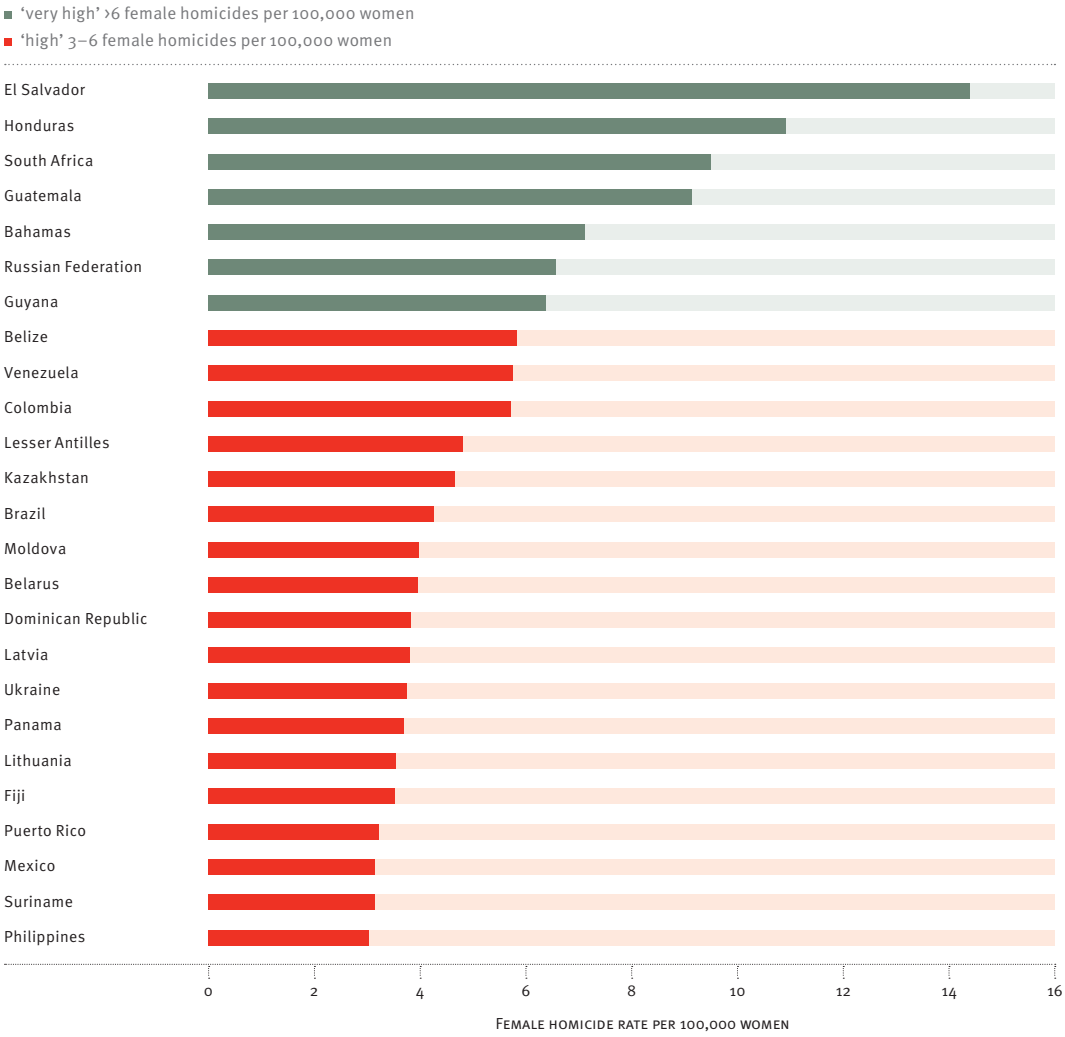
regions with the highest prevalence of firearms use in homicides—in descending order, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America—are also the ones with the highest homicide rates (see Figure 2.17).

Chapter Three (Lethal Violence against Women and Girls) provides an update on figures and patterns of lethal violence against women. In line with the overall decline in the global number of homicides, the average annual number of female homicide victims also decreased slightly, from 66,000 women in 2004–07 to 60,000 women in 2007–12, which corresponds to a small drop from 17 per cent of all intentional homicides to 16 per cent. Of the 360,000 women killed between 2007 and 2012, more than half lost their lives in one of the 25 countries with the highest rates of female homicide, with El Salvador, Honduras, and South Africa topping the list (see Figure 3.4). Countries that witness the highest rates of female homicide tend to have the lowest share of intimate partner violence-related homicide. In these countries, the proportion of women who are killed outside of the private sphere—as opposed to the 'intimate circle'—is greater than elsewhere. Analysis of the data also shows that the proportion of women who are killed by a firearm—as opposed to other mechanisms—is greater in areas that exhibit high rates of firearm homicide.

In addition, the chapter highlights the constancy of intimate partner femicide rates over time and across regions, suggesting that more precisely targeted policies are needed to reduce this type of violence. The global picture of lethal violence against women remains incomplete, however. While some countries have made progress in data collection methods and increased the availability of sex-disaggregated information on homicides, others—particularly in Asia and Africa—still lack the capacity and funding they require to take similar steps.

Chapter Four (Unpacking Lethal Violence) underscores that timely, reliable, and disaggregated data is crucial to informed decision-making processes for developing and implementing practical measures and programmes aimed at preventing and reducing lethal violence. Disaggregated data that provides details on locations, socio-demographic characteristics of victims and perpetrators, instruments used to inflict harm, and circumstances surrounding lethal events can guide effective policy-making and programming, as it can provide insight into the drivers and enablers of lethal violence.

Figure 3.4 Average high and very high female homicide rates per 100,000 women, 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Disaggregated data can also help to reveal sub-national developments that may remain hidden in national-level data. In Brazil, for example, high rates of lethal violence travelled from state capitals such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo to the north of the country and smaller municipalities, yet the national rate remained the same. Data on such sub-national shifts can help to define priorities for interventions and to identify targets for programmes and assistance where they are likely to be most effective.

Chapter Five (The Economic Cost of Homicide) proposes a method for assessing the global economic burden of homicidal violence. Despite the

Photo ◀ A coroner examines a body found in an unmarked grave in a clandestine graveyard in Colón, El Salvador, December 2013. © Jose Cabezas/ AFP Photo

reduction in levels of homicide in many countries reviewed in this report, the related economic toll is increasing. The longer, safer, and more productive people's lives become, the higher the aggregate economic cost of homicide. In 2010 alone, the global cost of homicide reached USD 171 billion, roughly the equivalent of Finland's GDP that year. The chapter also highlights that life expectancy in countries such as Colombia, El Salvador, and Venezuela would increase by about 10, 14, and 16 months, respectively, in the absence of firearm-related homicide.

Conclusion

The provision of detailed information on the patterns and dynamics of lethal violence is crucial to a more comprehensive understanding of its causes and consequences, and to the design of effective violence prevention and reduction strategies. The *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015* benefits from a noticeably enhanced availability of disaggregated data on lethal violence. The multi-source database that provides the backdrop for all analysis and research in this volume includes sex-disaggregated data on victims and information on the use and prevalence of firearms in lethal violence in a large sample of countries. Such details will prove to be of key significance in tracking progress towards peaceful societies—be it within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda, or simply in order to achieve reductions in the human cost of lethal violence per se.

Endnotes

1 For a full presentation of the 'unified approach', see Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2011, pp. 44–51).

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CHAPTER ONE

Violence, Security, and the New Global Development Agenda

THE MANY AND complex manifestations of contemporary armed violence have a wide array of negative—and occasionally positive—impacts on the development of states and societies, as well as on the well-being of communities.[1] In recent years numerous studies have provided evidence of the linkages between security, violence, and development.[2] In addition, various analyses have examined the regional, national, sub-national, and local effects of violence on development.[3]

Although the evidence is often only partial, it highlights two important conclusions:

- that the effects of armed violence go well beyond the loss of life and physical injuries; and
- that the global costs and effects of armed violence are much greater in non-conflict than in conflict settings.

The effects—and costs—of armed violence on development include, but are not limited to, spending on public order and internal security (such as police personnel), expenditure on private security by businesses and individuals, and the burden associated with forcibly displaced persons. In 2013 alone, there were an estimated 51.2 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide—the highest figure since comprehensive record-keeping began in 1989 (UNHCR, 2014). In economic terms, the welfare cost of collective and interpersonal violence is estimated to represent about 1.63 per cent of global GDP (Hoeffler and Fearon, 2014, p. iii)—or up to USD 1.4 trillion. This report estimates that the cost of homicide in 2010 alone reached USD 171 billion—roughly the equivalent of Finland's GDP that year (see Chapter Five). Even these estimates do not capture the impact of violence and insecurity in terms of pain and suffering, or the negative impact on people's behaviour and economic activities. In conflict situations, the destruction of physical capital and infrastructure—roads, buildings, clinics, schools—and loss of human capital—through displacement and migration—represent serious development costs. Even in non-conflict settings, where criminal or interpersonal violence does not cause widespread physical destruction:

> it is important not to understate the threat to state capacity, the business environment, and social development that can be posed by chronically high levels of violence, organized crime, and the corruption that sometimes follows it (Soares, 2014, p. 3).

Weakened institutions, poor governance, economic stagnation, and social and economic inequalities are often identified as the drivers—as well as results—of persistent violence (Beswick and Jackson, 2011; Thomas, 2008).

The 'business case' for reducing the cost of armed violence is strong. In Latin America, one-third of businesses identify crime as their major challenge;

in Mexico, the cost of insecurity and violence to enterprises and businesses is estimated to have reached around USD 7.7 billion in 2011 (World Bank, 2011, p. 5; INEGI, 2012, p. 17). Piracy around the Horn of Africa cost an estimated USD 5.7–6.1 billion in 2012 alone, with costs of military operations and security equipment accounting for almost half of that amount (USD 2.7– 3.2 billion) (OBP, 2013). Meanwhile, the negative impact of violence and insecurity on tourism and travel has been estimated at USD 2.7 billion in losses over the first six months of 2014 in Thailand and USD 2.5 billion from 2011 to 2013 in Egypt (Johanson, 2014; Singh, 2013).

Yet despite the losses associated with unrest, only a tiny fraction of development assistance is devoted to reducing societal violence and crime (Hoeffler and Fearon, 2014); similarly, relatively small sums are spent on conflict prevention, mitigation, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Given the evidence, however, the reduction of violence does not only represent a *means* of achieving development goals—such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—but also a development goal *in itself*.

This edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* (GBAV) deepens and strengthens the 'unified approach' to armed violence presented in the 2011 edition, drawing on recent advances in our understanding of the interactions between development and violence, as well as on a variety of approaches to the security–development nexus that has emerged from economics, criminology, development studies, conflict studies, and anthropology. The availability of more comprehensive and detailed national-level data on lethal violence allows for enhanced analysis in terms of quality and scope (see Chapter Two). In the same way, sub-national data—with a focus on cities—permits an unpacking of armed violence patterns and trends within states and across borders, in conflict and non-conflict situations (see Chapter Four). New evidence on trends, patterns, and dynamics of lethal violence against women in and beyond conflict zones is highlighted in Chapter Three. In addition, this edition explores some of the latest advances regarding conceptualizations and calculations of the economic costs of violence, providing a solid modelling of costs and development impacts of armed violence (see Chapter Five).

The main finding of this volume is that estimated overall levels of lethal violence have declined slightly (by 3.4 per cent), but with significant variations within different categories and across different regions of the world. A comparison of global lethal violence rates for the periods 2004–09 and 2007–12 shows that deaths due to intentional homicide declined by almost 5 per cent, with the Americas being the only region to witness an increase in homicide rates (about 10 per cent). In stark contrast, conflict-related deaths shot up by 27 per cent (see Chapter Two). Much of this change is accounted for by two factors: an actual decrease in the estimated rate of intentional homicide in Africa, and the mounting conflict death toll in the wake of the Arab uprisings in Syria and Libya. With the exception of the Americas and Asia (especially due to conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria), all regions exhibited significant declines in lethal violence in the period 2007–12. The civil war in Syria stands out as particularly deadly and destructive: more than 80,000 people were killed between March 2011 and December 2013, pushing the figures for conflict deaths up to levels not seen in more than a decade (see Chapter Two).[4]

In light of these findings, this introductory chapter provides an overview of how and why development and security interact, highlighting why this interaction matters in the context of debates about

whether to include a goal for achieving peaceful and inclusive societies in the post-2015 global development framework. The chapter summarizes the state of play (up to late 2014) regarding the integration of such a goal into the post-2015 development agenda and provides an overview of efforts to develop specific goals, targets, and indicators dealing with security, safety, and armed violence. Regardless of the outcome of the post-2015 negotiations, such efforts will be relevant to whatever new development framework emerges.

The chapter's main conclusions are:

- Despite continued debates on the importance and directionality of the links between violence, insecurity, and development processes, there is consensus that the links do exist—and that they are negative and mutually reinforcing.
- While still limited, agreement is emerging with respect to achieving peaceful and inclusive societies as part of the post-2015 development framework, via a specific goal or goals. While this view is supported by the majority of states and several groups, it is also opposed by some important actors.
- In most versions of a goal on peaceful and inclusive societies, the measuring and monitoring of 'lethal violence' appears as an important and viable indicator for monitoring progress towards peace and security goals and targets.

Armed violence and development: shifting frames

The idea that violence, insecurity, and socio-economic development are linked is not new: from economic theorists such as Adam Smith to the crisis of the interwar period of the 20th century and the post-World War II implementation of the Marshall Plan and the Bretton Woods institutions, economic thinkers have considered that violence, security, and economic development interact negatively. The dominant understanding of the link, however, held that economic development was a *precondition* for security, and that increased economic development—and, potentially, economic integration—would reduce the incidence of conflict and violence within, and possibly even among, states. The process of development and socio-economic change was also regarded as largely distinct from the dynamics of conflict and insecurity within and between states; for some, preparations for and the fighting of wars could even be seen to spur economic growth and technological innovation (Krause, 2014, p. 382).

Economic growth, political transformations, and the increased fiscal capacity of the state arguably helped to lower levels of crime and violence, and to increase public safety and internal order, largely through the expansion of state security institutions and government services (Emsley, 1999). Western societies grew safer through the elimination of domestic threats to governments and the provision of public order through the growth and increased effectiveness of state institutions, including the police, gendarmes, and criminal justice systems (Krause, 2014, p. 381). Between states, greater economic exchange and integration—the so-called 'commercial peace'—also arguably reduced the risk of war, at least in the long run: 'Commerce promotes peace because violence has substantial costs, whether these are paid prospectively or contemporaneously' (Hegre, Oneal, and Russett, 2010, p. 763; Polachek, 1980).

These slow transformations reinforced the one-way vision that economic development would—in the long run—lead to greater security and safety and lower levels of violence. Paradoxically, the

apparent inevitability of this process helped ensure that the two policy 'worlds'—that of security provision and that of economic development—remained separate. When they did connect during the cold war, aid—mostly in the form of military assistance—was subsumed within national security agendas, with 'client states' receiving (often military) aid to maintain these patronage systems. As the newly independent states of Africa and Asia emerged on the global stage in the 1960s and 1970s, this relationship was maintained, with national security policy remaining a sovereign prerogative over which external donors and international financial institutions exercised no oversight, except in the context of military alliances and strategic partnerships. As a result, the international development framework and policies did not focus on violence at all until the mid-1990s (Brück, 2013, p. 1).

The end of the cold war, however, and the subsequent crises in Rwanda and Somalia, eroded the compartmentalization of security and development thinking. Geopolitical concerns and the competition between 'Eastern' and 'Western' models of national economic development faded as the neoliberal and 'small-state' model triumphed. More importantly, the Rwandan genocide—Rwanda having been a 'donor darling' in the early 1990s—made it clear that development policy-makers had to take into consideration not only how conflict affected development policies, but also how aid and development cooperation could adversely affect conflict dynamics (Uvin, 1998). In addition, the shifting nature of contemporary forms of violence—towards internal and communal conflicts—as well as blurred lines between collective, individual, political, and criminal forms of violence, challenged conventional development thinking to integrate these forms of insecurity and fragility into a unified framework for achieving progress in human well-being.[5] The rise of transnational terrorism since 2001, together with growing concerns over fragile, ungoverned, and conflict-affected settings, have led international aid policy to place more weight on security and state-building agendas in the context of coordinated '3D' (development, diplomacy, and defence) strategies.

As a result, the focus of research and policy regarding how and why violence, insecurity, and development interact has evolved, both in the development and the security policy communities (see Table 1.1 and Box 1.1). In the world of development policy, attention has shifted from (national) economic growth and development towards 'human' or 'sustainable' development. These changes occurred in parallel to debates about the 'deepening' and 'widening' of the concept of security, moving away from an exclusive focus on the state towards more 'people-centred' perspectives on security.

TABLE 1.1 Security and development: shifting attention away from the state

State-centred approach	People-centred approach
■ The focus is on national security and on maintaining public order. ■ Building strong institutions generates development. ■ Strong and stable states make good neighbours (promoting international and regional order). ■ Economic growth is the primary goal.	■ Human security is the protection of fundamental rights, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. ■ Citizen security entails democratic civic order, the elimination of threats of violence, and police and criminal justice system reform (UNDP, 2013d). ■ Human development and well-being are the primary goals.

Box 1.1 Defining 'development'

'Development' is commonly understood as positive and desirable change. If applied to societies and the economy, it 'usually means improvement, either in the general situation of the system, or in some of its constituent elements' (Bellù, 2011, p. 2). At the opposite end of development, there is 'underdevelopment'—referring to an entity, state, or region that has not reached its full capacity. Promoting development hence means promoting positive change through deliberate actions within institutions, organizations, and individuals. In practice, this often takes the form of investments or transfers of public funds towards states and other organizations to implement programmes and policies that are said to favour these positive changes within one or several areas (such as economic growth, job creation, building capable state institutions, and promoting agricultural reforms) (Charnoz and Severino, 2007, p. 3).

The idea of 'development'—as international development cooperation to favour positive social (and economic) change—appears only in the mid-20th century, with 'Point Four' in US president Harry S. Truman's inaugural speech of 1949 commonly recognized as the beginning of the development age (Escobar, 2012; Rist, 2002, p. 71).[6] The 1950s and 1960s understood development mainly as a process of structural change and economic transformation from rural, agricultural, and traditional to urban, industrial, and modern societies. Criticism of this view led to the 1970s vision of development, which focused on redistribution and human needs. The 1990s and early 2000s focused more on technical cooperation, neoliberal policies designed to reduce the role and weight of the state, and results-based programmes (such as the MDGs); more recently, the focus has shifted to institution building, sustainability, and 'good governance', including in the security arena (Escobar, 2012, pp. 4–5; Fritz and Menocal, 2007; Summer and Tribe, 2008, pp. 12–14).

This volume uses 'development' to refer to the well-being and security of individuals, and to the social, political, and economic well-being of societies.

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A state-centred approach focuses on the capacity of the state to provide public goods, including security and justice. From this perspective, states with weak institutions often remain caught in the 'conflict trap' or the 'fragility trap', in which political instability and violence, weak guarantees for property rights and contracts, and widespread corruption perpetuate weak institutions that cannot deliver development, good governance, or security to populations (Andrimihaja, Cinyabuguma, and Devarajan, 2011; Collier, 2007; World Bank, 2011). In this context, a focus on the state is primordial, not least to ensure the development of strong and stable institutions that exercise a full monopoly over the legitimate use of violence and that can create the conditions for economic development and public order (Beswick and Jackson, 2011, pp. 9–11). On the one hand, states whose institutions are strong states can create good neighbourhoods, whereas weak states often find themselves trapped in 'bad neighbourhoods' (Collier, 2007; Buhaug and Gleditsch, 2008). On the other hand, these same state institutions—including the security divisions—can be and in some cases are being used against the people they are meant to protect and whose well-being should be enhanced (Fritz and Menocal, 2007).

An alternative, more people-centred approach emerged in the 1990s, around the concept of human security, an idea first championed by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in its 1994 *Human Development Report* (UNDP, 1994). The report's notion of human security was both *deepened* (from state to individual) and *widened*, as more threats were included (Beswick and Jackson, 2011; Rothschild, 1995). Underlying all similar approaches is the assumption that security and stability 'cannot solely rest on the sovereignty and viability of states' and that 'the safety of the individual is key to global security' (Hampson, 2008, p. 232). The state is regarded as a source

of protection as well as a potential source of insecurity for communities and individuals (along with war, communal conflict, and criminal violence) (UNDP, 2009, p. 13). This more bottom-up perspective places the emphasis on the need to ensure the security of individuals and communities as a *precondition* for achieving human and social development. Despite vast debates around the concepts, the language of people-centred security remains strong in contemporary discussions on violence and development, whether presented as 'citizen security', 'human security', 'community security', or a 'people-centred approach to security' (IADB, n.d.; UNDP, 2009; 2013d). Where the state-centred and more people-centred approaches to security often meet is in a focus on reform of the security sector, with the aim of making its institutions more accountable and responsive, or less predatory and inefficient.

Armed violence and development: approaching the evidence

The different ways in which development, security, and violence interact may be gauged using three general approaches:

- by accounting for immediate and medium-term direct and indirect costs 'from the bottom up';[7]
- by assessing the dynamic effects and macro-level development impact of conflict and armed violence; and
- by examining the potential causal links between violence and insecurity, and other social or economic 'harms', such as poverty, inequality, barriers to education and health services, and unequal access or opportunities.

Photo ▶ Algerian soldiers stand guard at the Tiguentourine Gas Plant in Amenas, Algeria, shortly after many of its employees were killed and property was damaged in a militant attack, January 2013.

The first, the 'accounting method', is generally used to assess the tangible and calculable economic costs of violence, be it criminal or political in nature. Such studies address the direct physical and human costs, such as lost productivity and future income losses, medical costs for injury treatment and rehabilitation, and productive lives lost or shortened, as well as indirect but countable costs, such as household and collective security expenditures and the costs of punishing and deterring violence within the criminal justice system. They may also include calculations of the less tangible and indirect costs of violence—such as psycho-social impacts, opportunity costs, and 'willingness to pay' for security—in particular settings or countries. [8]

In high-violence areas such as Latin America, such costs can be extremely elevated. Recent analyses estimate that the costs of violence range from 7.7 per cent of annual GDP in Guatemala to 9.6, 10.0, and 10.8 per cent in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, respectively (Acevedo, 2008); these include health system and other institutional expenditures (such as on public safety and justice) and private security spending by households and business.[9] In South Africa, another high-violence context, the costs—including disability-adjusted life years and medical, security, and institutional costs—amount to 7.8 per cent of annual GDP (Alda and Cuesta, 2011).

In high-income countries the costs of violence and crime can also be elevated (see Chapter Five). One study finds that in the United States, hospital costs related to firearm assaults attained USD 630 million in 2010 alone (Howell and Abraham, 2013, p. 4). Another study estimates that between 2003 and 2010, firearm injury-related costs due to hospitalizations reached USD 18.9 billion (Lee et al., 2013). In Chicago alone, the social and economic costs of gunshot wounds are estimated at

Photo ▶ A member of the forensic police measures footprints while collecting evidence, following the murder of two tourists on the island of Koh Tao, Thailand, September 2014. © Chaiwat Subprasom/ Reuters

USD 2.5 billion per year (Ander et al., 2009). Even in England and Wales , where the levels of armed violence are relatively low, the overall social and economic costs of crime (including major crimes beyond just violent crimes) have been calculated at more than 6 per cent of GDP—representing an estimated GBP 36.2 billion (USD 70.3 billion) in the period 2003–04 (Dubourg and Hamed, 2005, p. 13).

The second approach concentrates on the interactions between violence and 'development achievement'. This type of work looks specifically into effects that violence can have on short- and long-term growth rates, investment, and other macro-economic indicators; it is generally based on a counter-factual question: 'How much would a country have grown if it had not experienced armed conflict?' Some research in this area has considered the roles that violence and especially war have played as development *enablers,* which may lead to positive long-run effects in terms of infrastructure investment, redistribution, or stability (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2009; Tilly, 1992). However, the broad body of research finds that violence and conflict work as development disablers, at least in the medium term. The loss in GDP per capita in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide and civil war, for example, has been estimated at 25–30 per cent, with consumption levels six years after the violence remaining 30 per cent below pre-conflict levels (Serneels and Verpoorten, 2012; Wodon and López, 2005). The costs of a 'typical' civil war—of seven years' average duration—is estimated at around 60 per cent of annual GDP (Hoeffler and Reynal-Querol, 2003, p. 7).

Even in non-conflict but high-violence settings, such as in the Caribbean, research finds that if the impact of homicides in Jamaica and Haiti were reduced to the levels of Costa Rica, these countries' growth rates would increase by 5.4 per cent annually (World Bank and UNODC, 2007, p. 59).

This analysis suggests that high levels of violence and criminal activities increase the costs of providing security, diverting investment from other, more productive, sectors. Other studies look at the impact of violence on specific economic sectors, such as the tourism industry.

The relationship between development achievements and conflict and violence is, however, a complex one. In contrast to the negative impacts listed above, UNDP reports that significant development has taken place in Latin America and the Caribbean, despite the fact that violence has simultaneously increased (UNDP, 2013a). This finding poses important questions about how exactly violence and development interact. It suggests that analysts and policy-makers need a more fine-grained and context-specific analysis of the particular impacts of insecurity and violence on communities, a topic taken up in more detail below.

The third approach focuses on the potential relationship between violence, insecurity, and development, and in particular on the role of social harms such as inequality, poverty, and barriers to health and education services. It examines, for example, how conflict and armed violence affect the health of populations, educational achievement, population undernourishment, life expectancy, and the attainment of the MDGs. As the term 'relationship' indicates, these elements can interact in the opposite direction as well: limited access to education, employment, or resources such as food and water, as well as poverty, falling incomes, and inequality, can act as triggers and drivers of violence and armed conflict (Beswick and Jackson, 2011; Thomas, 2008). Indeed, evidence shows that 'higher homicide levels tend to occur in countries that register low primary education enrolment ratios'; that relationship is almost certainly reciprocal (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 156).

These issues represent a particularly complex field of research, for three reasons. First, it is difficult to distinguish a causal link from a simple correlation. Second, violence, insecurity, and other social harms are part of larger social systems; they can be caused by underlying factors (such as weak institutions or poor governance) and reinforce each other in negative ways. As mentioned above, a causal 'arrow' can point in both directions—with inequality and poverty acting as a driver of violence, and violence depressing economic production and investments at the same time. Finally, there is a great degree of variation in high-violence settings, both in the nature of the violence and in its consequences (see Chapter Two), making generalizations difficult.

Nevertheless, the aggregate studies all point in the same direction. The 2011 edition of the GBAV reports that higher rates of armed violence for the period 2004–09 were associated with lower achievement levels for specific MDGs (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011). In its *Fragile States Report 2014*, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) finds that *some* progress has been made in recent years, and that of the 35 fragile states under review, most will be able to 'meet at least one [MDG] by the 2015 deadline'; however:

> [o]f the seven countries that are unlikely to be able to meet any MDG by 2015, six are fragile. As a consequence, in five years extreme poverty is expected to be concentrated mainly in fragile states (OECD, 2014, p. 15).

Research on the effect of war on school enrollment and completion shows that the outbreak of a conflict reduces the chances of finishing nine years of schooling by 7.3 per cent for women and girls in affected regions, and that a rise in military

expenditure of 1.0 per cent due to conflict increases the number of children not attending school by 0.8 per cent (Poirier, 2012; Shemyakina, 2011). Violent conflict also increases undernourishment by about 3 per cent, and infant mortality rates by an average of 10 per cent (Gates et al., 2012, pp. 1717–18). Meanwhile, research shows that inequalities across groups of people (so-called horizontal inequalities) within a society or a country are strongly correlated with the risks of conflict (Stewart and Samman, 2014). Criminologists focusing on violent crime (especially homicides) also note that it is strongly correlated with inequality *within* and *across* countries (Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza, 2002). In the Russian Federation, for example, inequality is strongly associated with crimes such as murders, robberies, and theft (Hauner, Kutan, and Spivey, 2012).

The relationship between armed violence, insecurity, and development outcomes does not only generate debates in research circles. International organizations, development agencies, and foreign policy-makers face numerous challenges in understanding how these elements interact, and how best to incorporate them in entry-points and programmatic approaches. There is thus a need first to acknowledge that security, violence, and development *do* interact, and that these interactions are complex, circular, and mostly negative. Only then can analysts turn to the important question

Photo ▼ A school holds holds its classes outside, after its buildings were destroyed during a wave of violence in Maiduguri, Nigeria, August 2009. © Sunday Alamba/ AP Photo

of identifying cost-effective interventions that will prevent and reduce violence *and* reap the maximum gains for human, social, and economic development. This includes generating knowledge on how typical 'development' activities such as employment generation and education are part of a wider web of interventions that can reduce violence and insecurity within and across societies. Although the return on investment or the benefit–cost ratios cannot be easily calculated (both because effective violence prevention and reduction measures have seldom been scaled up, and because the data is limited, hindering analysis), 'it appears likely that some interventions would constitute a very effective use of development aid' (Hoeffler and Fearon, 2014, p. v). The international debates around the post-2015 development framework outlined below illustrate how the discussion has advanced, and suggest that the time is ripe to include security-building and violence prevention and reduction efforts into development policy in a coherent way.

Violence, security, and development: moving the agenda forward

The previous section discussed how development, security, and violence may interact, and considered some of the main strands of research and findings. Most studies focus on one particular form of violence, be it armed conflict, political unrest, criminal violence, or terrorism. While contemporary armed violence takes many forms, the challenge lies in recognizing how multiple and shifting forms of violence affect development and societies' well-being, beyond the immediate effects of injuries and loss of life. The international debate around a new set of post-2015 goals to follow on from the MDGs, along with efforts to redefine a global development framework, has presented an opportunity to reflect on the inclusion of violence and insecurity within the global development agenda, from a holistic and universal point of view.

Violence and insecurity: a 'missing' Millennium Development Goal

The idea of including peace and security in the global international development framework is not new. At the global level, the Millennium Declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2000, included wording on peace and security and highlighted the need to promote security in order to achieve development. In its statement of 'fundamental values [. . .] essential to international relations in the twenty-first century', the Declaration stresses that '[m]en and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice' (UNGA, 2000, p. 1). The Declaration also responds to the recognition that peace and security for humanity is intertwined with broader development needs. The wide-ranging document includes chapters on peace, security, and disarmament; development and poverty eradication; protection of the environment; human rights; democracy; and good governance. The chapter on peace, security, and disarmament covers issues such as controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, stemming the trafficking in illicit substances, and controlling small arms and light weapons, as well as reducing the impact of conflict and insecurity on people around the world. Yet as the Declaration is primarily focused on traditional understandings of armed conflict, it does not adequately capture new forms of fragility or violence that affect development prospects in non-conflict or post-conflict settings.

The Millennium Declaration spawned a set of specific goals, agreed upon by all UN member states, to address the root causes of global poverty and underdevelopment. These were accompanied by a battery of targets and indicators designed to track progress towards a 'comprehensive approach to human development' (Picciotto, 2006). However, the MDGs introduced a far narrower interpretation of the international development framework than the Millennium Declaration itself. Although the Declaration recognizes that freedom from fear of violence, oppression, and injustice are fundamental values for development, no concrete goal regarding these aspects was included in the MDGs. The eight MDGs were traditional development-oriented goals, designed to address mainly the social symptoms of poverty, but conflict and human security were restricted to the statement of values and principles in the Millennium Declaration.

The reasons for this were both political and technical. The strength of the MDGs was their 'focus on a limited set of concrete, common human development' objectives, which were brought together with 'a set of concrete and time-bound goals and targets that could be monitored by statistically robust indicators' (UNTT, 2012b, p. 6). Yet this strength was also a weakness: the focus on a few goals 'caused certain development dimensions to be undervalued' (p. 6), and the inevitable pull of policy and programming was towards reaching specific targets by treating the 'symptoms' rather than addressing the underlying conditions that gave rise to them. As one critical report puts it, the MDGs 'focus on measuring things that people lack to the detriment of understanding why they lack them' (UNRISD, 2010, p. 2). And the MDG process remained blind to the ways in which persistent and large-scale conflict, violence, and insecurity represented a key reason why human development did not advance in particular regions. Without sustainable security as a background condition, achieving the goals framed in the Millennium Declaration—and the eight specific MDGs—remains a difficult challenge for countries that are affected by conflict and high rates of violence. Evidence clearly shows that high levels of lethal violence are correlated with high poverty levels, lower educational attainment, high mortality of children under five, and reduced access to water and sanitation (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011).

Efforts to bring violence and insecurity into the MDG process

Since the adoption of the MDGs, several processes, conferences, and declarations have pushed to raise the profile of peace and security issues, either as a specific goal for development policy and programming, or within a revised development framework. One effort was associated with the OECD, whose Development Assistance Committee as early as 2004 started to include a series of security-related measures and programmes in its list of official development assistance-eligible elements of international cooperation. These included programmes focused on security sector reform and the control of small arms and light weapons (Trachsler, 2008, p. 2). In 2009 and 2011 the OECD produced a series of reports on preventing armed violence and enabling development, as well as on how to invest efficiently in security and on reducing the involvement of youths in armed violence (OECD, 2009; 2011a; 2011b).

Several MDG and other UN summits represented important steps—and sometimes missed opportunities—to include a more formal consideration of peace and security within the international


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development framework. The 2004 UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change also provided an opportunity to 'bridge the divide between security and development concerns', notably with a series of recommendations that could be understood as 'millennium security goals' (Picciotto, 2006, p. 119; UNGA, 2004). The September 2005 UN Summit profiled commitments relating to peacekeeping and the protection of civilians, but no major agreement on reframing the international development architecture was achieved. And in 2006, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development set out a global framework around the concept of 'armed violence' with the commitment by participating states to 'achieve, by 2015, measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and tangible improvements in human security worldwide' (Geneva Declaration, 2006).[10]

Taking up the common language around 'armed violence', the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2008, requesting 'the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the interrelation between armed violence and development' (UNGA, 2008). The resulting Secretary-General's report, *Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence*, stresses the need for 'a more coherent and evidence-guided approach to armed violence and its prevention' (UNGA, 2009, p. 5).[11] The Secretary-General also notes that 'developing measurable goals on armed violence towards 2015 will offer the opportunity to integrate security-related themes into the possible follow-up of the Millennium Development Goals' (p. 19). Building on these and other efforts, the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence, promoted by the Government of Norway and accepted by 62 states in 2010, call for armed violence reduction

Photo ◀ General Assembly President John Ashe speaks at an event to mark 500 Days of Action for the Millennium Development Goals, held at the UN in New York, also attended by Nobel Prize laureate, Malala Yousafzai, 18 August 2014.

and prevention to be included in 'MDG achievement strategies through to 2015' (Government of Norway, 2010).

While some efforts engaged both developed and less-developed states and were global in nature, others (such as within the OECD) were donor-led and thus enjoyed less support in the Global South. A more partnership-oriented approach and tighter focus were advocated as part of the 2011 'New Deal' for engaging in fragile and conflict-affected countries, a framework that combines political, security, justice, and development goals. The New Deal partnership—which included the G7+ group of 19 fragile and conflict-affected countries, development partners, and international organizations—established a series of peacebuilding and statebuilding goals that set the foundations for discussion of a peace and security goal within the post-2015 development agenda (IDPS, 2011).[12] The UN Security Council also addressed the links between security, violence, and development when, in 2011—under the presidency of Brazil—it held an open debate on the 'interdependence between security and development' (Small Arms Survey, 2013). In June 2013, during an Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security, the Brazilian permanent representative to the UN stressed that 'the inter-linkage between security, development and sustainable peace must not be overlooked' (UN, 2013c).

Several reports also highlight that establishing peaceful societies requires a breadth of engagement from a range of stakeholders. In 2008, for example, the World Health Organization published a report on how development agencies can help prevent violence and reduce its impact, emphasizing that violence and insecurity affects all eight MDGs (WHO, 2008, p. 11). The 2011 edition of the World Bank's *World Development Report*, which is focused on conflict, security, and development, finds that 'poverty reduction in countries affected by major violence is on average nearly a percentage point lower per year than in countries not affected by violence' (World Bank, 2011, p. 60). Similarly, the *Global Study on Homicide* of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) underscores that '[r]educing violent crime should also be a priority for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in those countries where crime is disproportionally high' (UNODC, 2011, p. 5). In a report to the UN Secretary-General, the UN Global Compact mentions peace and stability as providing an enabling environment for business to contribute to society, and proposes a goal on peaceful and stable societies (UN Global Compact, 2013, pp. 12–15). The Sustainable Development Solutions Network, launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, also highlights the need to address development through the sustainable development path, including via good governance and peace and security (SDSN, 2014).

Peace and security in the MDG review process

All of these interventions formed a promising background to the MDG review process, and they provided an opening to incorporate issues around violence and insecurity into the broader international development framework. The formal intergovernmental negotiations around the post-2015 development framework opened with the 69th session of the General Assembly in September 2014 (Elgin-Cossart and Slotin, 2014b); by early 2015, they were fully under way. But the informal MDG review process that paved the way for the formal negotiations started much earlier, and can be described as a complex multi-track and multi-stakeholder process. A wide range of UN

organizations, international institutions, civil society organizations, research institutes, and think tanks, as well as donor and affected states, were involved, mainly in two parallel and simultaneous processes: the official MDG review process towards the post-2015 development framework, and the Sustainable Development Goals process, initiated after the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012. Within the frame of these two major processes, several sub-processes have unfolded.

The UN System **Task Team**, established in January 2012, included around 60 UN organizations[13] and was mandated to provide support to the UN system-wide preparations for the post-2015 development agenda. In June 2012, the Task Team published its report, *Realizing the Future We Want for All*, which provides a first set of recommendations to serve as a point of reference for further consultations (UNTT, 2012b). Its early vision for the post-2015 development framework reflects a more holistic approach that addresses four key dimensions, among which is 'peace and security'. The report also recognizes that the MDG framework did not adequately address issues related to peace and security, and that this agenda 'should also respond to a number of challenges [. . .] that have become more pressing since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and [that] were not adequately reflected in the MDG framework' (UNTT, 2012b, p. 9). The Task Team's thematic background paper on peace and security recognizes that drivers of conflict and violence are complex and require a multidimensional approach; most importantly, it argues that development, human rights, and peace and security 'are indivisible and interrelated' (UNTT, 2012a, p. 7).

The UN Secretary-General's **High-level Panel** of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda—whose 27 members included President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom—was designated by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with the mandate to advise the Secretary-General on the global development framework beyond 2015. The Task Team's report fed into the conclusions of the High-level Panel, which suggested a specific goal on ensuring 'stable and peaceful societies' and a set of 'targets that cover violent deaths, access to justice, stemming the external causes of conflict, such as organised crime, and enhancing the legitimacy and accountability of security forces, police and the judiciary' (HLP, 2013, p. 16).

Accompanying the UN system review was the **global thematic consultations** process (11 thematic consultations on themes such as inequality, health, education, and conflict, violence, and disasters),[14] which incorporated views from national governments, think tanks, civil society, and academia. The fact that 11 thematic consultations were undertaken highlights the potentially broad scope of the post-2015 development agenda and hints at intense competition to enhance the status or position of particular issues. The consultation concerning 'Conflict, Violence and Disaster and the Post-2015 Development Agenda' was convened by UNDP, UNICEF, the UN Peacebuilding Support Office, and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat and was sponsored by the Government of Finland. A series of regional consultations in Indonesia, Liberia, and Panama culminated in a global thematic consultation in Helsinki in March 2013.[15] In addition, expert meetings were held in Vienna and New York during mid-2013 as part of this global thematic consultation.[16]

The Liberia regional consultation on 'conflict and fragility' concluded that the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on peace and security—'entailing specific targets on many different dimensions,

going beyond the absence of violence'—was key to addressing both drivers of conflict and of peace (UN, 2012a). The Panama regional thematic consultation highlighted the need to 'include in the post-2015 development framework a standalone goal to reduce violence, and promote freedom from fear and sustainable peace' (UNDP, 2013e). Furthermore, the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, and the protection of children and youths from violence, were also included as important goals (UN, 2013b, p. 12).

Parallel and potentially conflicting processes: the Open Working Group

Alongside these efforts, the main focus of attention throughout 2013–14 was on the **Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals** (OWG). Established in January 2013, the OWG had seats for 30 member states (shared by 70 member states) from the General Assembly and held 13 working sessions before reporting to the UN General Assembly in September 2014.[17] The OWG's orientation was towards a broad understanding of sustainable development, based on the Rio+20 outcome document—*The Future We Want*—and the 'three dimensions' of sustainable development (economic growth and diversification, social development, and environmental protection) (UN, 2012b). The Rio+20 process echoed traditional development thinking, making a gesture towards 'peace and security' but otherwise excluding such issues from sustained discussion. The Rio+20 process also lacked the MDGs' emphasis on poverty eradication and basic needs.[18]

It was thus no surprise that the OWG discussions on the thematic area of 'peaceful and non-violent societies, rule of law and capable institutions'—one of 17 focus areas—were contested. Issues debated under this thematic area included combating organized crime and illicit arms trafficking, promoting a culture of non-violence, reducing crime and violence, as well as strengthening the rule of law at all levels (OWG, 2014b, p. 165). Deliberations within the OWG reflected four broad positions towards the inclusion of such issues within the post-2015 development framework, with member states ranged across (and moving between) these positions:

- reject any reference to peace in goals and targets;
- oppose a standalone goal on peace, yet support peace-related targets within particular goals;
- support a standalone goal on peaceful societies;
- support two standalone goals—one on peace, and one on rule of law and governance (Saferworld, 2014).

Given the multi-stakeholder and multi-track nature of the post-2015 discussion, it is hardly surprising that several distinct proposals coexist, with the main axis of disagreement being whether to include references to peace in a post-2015 framework. But does this represent emerging consensus, or growing cacophony?

To some extent, the different proposals reflected a learning process among the actors involved in the post-2015 agenda. Understanding of the linkages between peace and security and development is greater than a decade ago, as much research, policy-making, and programming have focused on this nexus, and as development agencies have recognized the need to include security-related issues—broadly defined—within development work and agendas. The diverse propositions for goals also reflected the disciplinary stovepipes and fragmentation that continue to affect discussions around development and security. The peace-

TABLE 1.2 Peace and security-oriented goals and targets in the post-2015 development discussions

Instrument/ institution	High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda	Open Working Group	UN Global Compact	UN Technical Support Team
Goals	■ Goal 11 is to 'ensure stable and peaceful societies'	■ Goal 16 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'	■ Goal 8 is to 'build peaceful and stable societies'	■ Goal on 'peaceful societies'
Targets	■ **Reduce violent deaths per 100,000 by x and eliminate all forms of violence against children;** ■ ensure justice institutions are accessible, independent, well-resourced and respect due-process rights; ■ stem the external stressors that lead to conflict, including those related to organised crime; and ■ enhance the capacity, professionalism and accountability of security forces, police and judiciary (HLP, 2013, p. 31).	■ **Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere;** ■ end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children; ■ promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all; ■ by 2030 significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime; ■ substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms; ■ develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels; ■ ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels; ■ broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance; ■ by 2030 provide legal identity for all including birth registration; ■ ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements; ■ strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacities at all levels, in particular in developing countries, for preventing violence and combating terrorism and crime; ■ promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development (OWG, 2014a, pp. 18–19).	■ Improve access for diverse ethnic, religious and social groups to justice, services and economic opportunity; ■ improve mediation, dispute resolution and dialogue mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflict and to build peace; ■ **reduce incidence of violent deaths per 100,000 by at least 20 per cent;** ■ prevent, combat and reduce the illicit trade in small arms, light weapons and ammunition; and ■ reduce the reach and extent of organized crime, especially through the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UN Global Compact, 2013, p. 15).	■ **Prevent and reduce by X% violent deaths and injuries per 100,000 by year Y;** ■ eliminate all forms of violence against children, women and other vulnerable groups by year Y; ■ enhance social cohesion and ensure adequate formal and informal mechanisms are in place to peacefully address tensions and grievances by year Y; ■ reduce by X% inequalities across social groups, amongst regions within countries and between women and men by year Y; and ■ reduce external drivers of violence and conflict, including illicit flows of arms, drugs, finance, natural resources and human trafficking by X% by year Y (UNTST, 2014, p. 11).

NOTE: Emphasis added to targets that specifically mention reducing violent deaths.

building, state-building, criminal justice, violence prevention, and development communities use different—and often incompatible—language emerging from their specific area of knowledge and intervention.

Finally, the range of proposals and options regarding peace, security, and development within the post-2015 development agenda reflect the intensely political nature of the discussion (see Table 1.2). The language of the OWG proposal under Goal 16 ('[p]romote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels') reflects these tensions (OWG, 2014a, p. 5). It used very broad language, avoided the words 'security' and 'safety', and linked peace promotion to sustainable development. The resulting proposal has the advantage of being politically more acceptable, while still capturing the particular and significant impacts of armed violence and physical insecurity in specific targets and indicators (such as violent deaths or violence against women and children). Table 1.2 lists the various targets under Goal 16. Given the difficulty in achieving this outcome (negotiations over this goal on the last day of discussions lasted until 4 a.m. on 19 July), it remains highly uncertain whether these different policy worlds (and vocabularies) can be reconciled around a consolidated and consensual proposal (FES, 2014, p. 4).

Politics and practicalities of peace and security goals

In early 2014 the post-2015 debate re-entered the UN General Assembly with the publication of the UN Secretary-General's synthesis report on the post-2015 agenda, *The Road to Dignity*, and the modalities for the negotiations (UNSG, 2014). Negotiations will be based upon the Open Working Group's proposal and will follow the rules and procedures of the General Assembly; the International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015, as well as the Special Summit on Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015, will provide the opportunity to 'chart a new era of sustainable development' (Kamau and Donoghue, 2014; UNSG; 2014). Although the OWG proposal—which included 17 goals and 169 targets, compared to 8 goals and 21 targets for the MDGs—was the basis of work, the discussion entered a different phase. Prime Minister David Cameron of the UK, for example, proposed ten or 12 goals, while others focused on trimming the list of targets (*Guardian*, 2014). Although there are political obstacles and practical considerations regarding a peace and security goal, this section concentrates on the practical considerations around targets and indicators for such a goal, after briefly highlighting the political dynamics.

To begin, many states in the G-77 argued that an explicit security-oriented goal could be interpreted as a foundation for greater international oversight and even potentially intervention on matters essentially within their domestic jurisdiction, thereby possibly undermining state sovereignty (Elgin-Cossart and Slotin, 2014a; FES, 2014). Other states feared that the securitization of development assistance would result in a more 'geopolitical' focus for aid delivery in the future, for example if security interests were to exploit development cooperation for political gain, or if development assistance were to find itself in direct competition with security expenditures (Trachsler, 2008). The absence of any reference to disarmament or military spending reductions—principally Northern responsibilities—also raised concerns in some quarters. Similarly, at the domestic level, security, conflict, and violence

are highly political topics that link directly to the state's relationship to its population, state capacity, and legitimacy. Such politics of security can already be observed in several cases, as Box 1.2 shows. Any language that uses 'security' is sensitive among member states, whereas issues such as sustainability, peace, and safety seem to trigger less resistance among the parties involved in the discussions (FES, 2014).

Countries such as Brazil, China, India, and South Africa play an increasing role in shaping the post-2015 development framework, yet none of these countries has, for example, endorsed the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (Saferworld, 2012). These countries also oppose outright the inclusion of a goal on peace and security in the post-2015 framework. There is a strong call upon states from this group of countries to focus on the core of the post-2015 framework, which should be poverty alleviation. States with such concerns also tend to highlight that the Rio+20 outcome document does not have a peace, security, and governance pillar; they fear that a debate around these elements will 'deviate our focus from dealing with the essential social, economic and environmental challenges of sustainable development' (Saferworld, 2014, p. 8). There also seems to be a strong belief among some states that peace and security are a result of development, with statements during the OWG sessions reflecting the idea that 'conflicts start from poverty and inequalities' (Saferworld, 2014, p. 10). Such statements fail to recognize the circular and mutually reinforcing relationship between peace, security, and development—and the role that safety and security promotion can play in achieving sustainable development.

Despite these complexities, many states—probably a majority—agree on the need to include a goal on peaceful and stable societies within the new development framework. As noted by Uganda, 'addressing conflict prevention, post conflict peacebuilding, and promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance is critical for the achievement of sustainable development' (Saferworld, 2014, p. 11).

Box 1.2 The politics of security and violence data

It may come as no surprise that data on peace and security is politically sensitive, even in countries that are not experiencing armed conflict (see Box 2.1), as recent cases show. In Venezuela, for example, the government stopped publishing crime statistics, including homicide data, in 2005 (Ramsey, 2011). Moreover, shortly before legislative elections in 2010, the Venezuelan press was forbidden to publish violent or gory photographs for one month, as the government claimed that such visuals could affect the psychological well-being of youths and adolescents (CPJ, 2010; *Economist*, 2014; Reuters, 2010).

In Honduras, a difficult relationship between the violence observatory at the National Autonomous University of Honduras and the Security Ministry persists. Data checked by the observatory's technical working group does not appear to correspond with the data published by the National Police—and the discrepancies seem to be growing (*El Heraldo*, 2014b). In 2013, the official homicide figure for the first half of the year was 2,629, whereas the observatory's figure stood at 3,547 (Southwick, 2013). As a consequence, the police no longer shares data with the observatory, jeopardizing the latter's capacity to publish up-to-date and verified data on homicides (Cáceres, 2014; *El Heraldo*, 2014a; Southwick, 2013).

In El Salvador, the gang truce initiated in March 2012 triggered debates not only concerning the acceptability of government negotiations with criminal organizations, but also regarding the impact of the truce. The Forensic Institute published information on homicide and disappearances that differed starkly from the figures released by the Ministry of Security, and that called into question the impact of the truce. Differences between authorities and the Forensic Institute resulted in the firing of the statistical director and other members of the team at the Forensic Institute, which had been ordered not to publish data on homicides and disappearances (Valencia and Arauz, 2012). By no means is the debate resolved. The years 2013 and 2014 saw the discovery of mass graves and the current government is very critical of the truce (see Box 2.4).

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The practicalities of peace and security targets in the post-2015 framework

The MDGs remain the most widely accepted example of a development initiative that links goals with concrete targets, agreed benchmarks, and indicators. Over the past 15 years, they have spurred governments around the world to move from 'opinion-based' towards 'evidence-based' policy-making and programming around national and global development objectives. Whatever the outcome of the post-2015 process, it is crucial to assess the utility of the various potential targets and indicators that have been proposed.

If a peace and security goal is accepted in some form close to the Open Working Group goal of 'promot[ing] peaceful and inclusive societies', how could a security, safety, and violence reduction-related target be formulated, and what kinds of indicator would be feasible and measurable? While targets and indicators have not given rise to political debates such as those around goals, there has been extensive discussion—based in large part on the experience with the MDGs—around the requirements for their effectiveness. Among the proposed targets listed in Table 1.2, reducing violent deaths (and all forms of violence) is a recurrent element—and it is the focus of this section. The measurement of and indicators for all proposed and agreed targets is important, yet these issues are beyond the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, the focus on measuring violent deaths will highlight some of the challenges in developing appropriate indicators for the general goal of peaceful and inclusive societies.

At the outset, there is some ambiguity in the OWG proposal to reduce all forms of violence and associated deaths significantly. This would logically include deaths from conflict, terrorism, homicide, and so on, which this report addresses in

Photo ▶ Subsequent to sectarian violence, Rohingyan refugees live in camps for the internally displaced on the outskirts of Sittwe, Myanmar, November 2012. © Paula Bronstein/ Getty Images

Chapter Two. However, 'associated deaths' could also refer to 'indirect deaths', such as deaths that occur in conflict- and high-violence-affected settings because of a lack of access to basic medical care, clean water, or adequate food and shelter (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, pp. 33–39).[19] It could also include forms of violence against women and children that are not lethal but nonetheless have a serious impact on societies (see Box 5.2.) or non-lethal injuries from violence (see Box 2.6), neither of which is covered in the discussion below. This expansive vision of reducing 'all forms of violence' clearly has a wider coverage than intentional or direct deaths due to violence.

One of the most important shifts in the period from the Millennium Declaration (2000) and the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (2004) was the move away from a narrow focus on violence and insecurity related to armed conflict, towards a more holistic focus on armed violence. In both of these early statements, goals focused on reducing conflict between and within states, promoting disarmament, or developing strategies to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime (Picciotto, 2006, p. 119). As Table 1.2 shows, however, today's language clearly focuses on the broader phenomenon of armed violence and recognizes that only a small proportion of victims of violence die in conflict zones.[20]

The *Global Burden of Armed Violence* reports have been elaborating such an approach since 2008, drawing together *all forms of violent deaths*, without distinguishing between criminal and conflict-related violence, and including categories usually overlooked, such as manslaughter and legal interventions. Table 1.3 presents the different indicators and sources as they are used in subsequent chapters to explore data, trends, and patterns of contemporary armed violence.

A consensus has thus emerged that the 'concept of violence is clear, it is concise and it is measurable' (UNTT, 2012a, p. 9). The 'violent deaths' approach to measuring progress towards one aspect of a peace and security goal—the measurable reduction of violent deaths expressed as a rate per 100,000 people—thus reflects some important strengths, but also faces some challenges. In general, indicators for measuring progress towards peace and security should:

- be applicable to, and comparable across, all countries;
- be clearly linked to the goal and target(s);
- be collectable, within the capacity of states and other relevant organizations;
- be timely (states should report at the minimum annually on changes and progress);
- be based on a well-established methodology; and
- 'go beyond advocacy to policy, providing support for the debate, implementation and assessment of policy' (UNDP, 2013c; UN, 2014)

Putting violence and insecurity at the centre of monitoring and measurement means the indicator is generally applicable to, and comparable across, all countries, whatever forms of violence they endure. Within a field cluttered by a range of concepts and definitions (fragility, state collapse, conflict-affected and fragile settings, and criminal violence, among others), a holistic focus on the violent act without regard to its motives is a comparative strength. Such an approach has also been deemed 'collectable' by a variety of authoritative actors. As the Task Team on the post-2015 Development Agenda concluded:

> much progress has been made in measuring violence and insecurity, particularly regarding the

TABLE 1.3 Available indicators for violent deaths explained

Indicator	International organizations that provide definitions	Possible international sources	Possible national sources
Intentional homicide/ assault leading to death	UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Health Organization (WHO)	UNODC, WHO, international crime and violence observatory data	Police and crime statistics, public health statistics, national crime and violence observatories
Non-intentional homicide	UNODC, WHO	Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), UNODC, WHO, observatory data	Police and crime statistics, public health statistics
Legal intervention deaths	UNODC, WHO	PAHO, UNODC, WHO, observatory data	Police and crime statistics, public health statistics, national crime and violence observatories
Battle-related deaths	Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)	UCDP	Not applicable
One-sided violence	UCDP	UCDP	Not applicable
Non-state violence	UCDP	UCDP	Not applicable
Casualties of conflict	Every Casualty	Iraq Body Count, Syria Tracker, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan	Casualty recorders such as Conflict Analysis Resource Center, Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
Direct conflict deaths	GBAV	Multiple sources approach, best estimate	Multiple sources approach, best estimate
Terrorism victims	GBAV 2011	Global Terrorism Database, International Institute for Strategic Studies, National Counterterrorism Center (US)	Various national reporting systems

NOTES:

This table presents indicators currently available to measure violent deaths occurring in different settings and representing different definitions of such deaths. They are not mutually exclusive and sometimes overlap; for example, 'direct conflict deaths' include 'battle-related deaths', 'one-sided violence', and 'non-state violence'. The table is meant to illustrate a range of different sources that can be used (and that are used in this report) to measure the human impact of violence.

In the criminal justice system, *intentional homicide* is defined as the 'unlawful death purposefully inflicted on a person by another person' (UNODC, 2014, p. 9). *Deaths due to assault* (or homicides in the public health system) are defined as 'injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill, by any means. Excludes injuries due to legal intervention and operations of war' (CDC, n.d.).

Non-intentional homicide can be divided into two categories: 'killing through recklessness or negligence (as for example for dangerous driving or professional negligence) and a de facto intentional killing that is not considered as such due to certain specific mitigating circumstances such as provocation (non-negligent manslaughter)' (UNODC, 2011, pp. 87–88).

Legal intervention deaths include 'killings by the police or other law enforcement agents in the course of arresting or attempting to arrest lawbreakers, while maintaining order, or during other legal actions where they are caused by use of force by law enforcement acting in accordance with the United Nations [. . .] *Basic principles on the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials*' (UNODC, 2014, p. 102). In the public health system, deaths due to legal intervention are defined as any injury sustained as a result of an encounter with any law enforcement official, serving in any capacity at the time of the encounter, whether on duty or off duty. This includes injury to law enforcement officials, suspects, and bystanders (Dalgleish, 2013, p. 268).

The Uppsala Conflict Data Program provides a series of categories of deaths that occur in so-called conflict settings. These include: *battle-related deaths*, which involve 'the use of armed force between warring parties in a conflict dyad, be it state-based or non-state, resulting in deaths'; *one-sided violence*, defined as the 'use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organised group against civilians which results in at least 25 deaths in a year'; and *non-state violence*, defined as the 'use of armed force between two organised armed groups, neither of which is the government of a state, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year' (UCDP, n.d.).

A somewhat more comprehensive definition of measuring and recording *deaths due to armed conflict* is a definition of casualty recording used by Every Casualty: 'recording of deaths from armed conflict only, though the term casualty can also include people who are injured'. This approach focuses on documenting either 'the deaths of individual people from conflict violence (e.g. listing individual victims and the circumstances of their deaths)' or 'separate events or incidents in which deaths from conflict violence occurred (e.g. listing dates and places of separate incidents of violence and the numbers killed in each)' (Minor, 2012, p. 4).

In counting *direct conflict deaths*, the GBAV approach is to record victims of lethal violence in different settings affected by collective or organized forms of violence or armed conflict. Various incident-based reporting sources are integrated in this process; the applied methodology is to choose the best available estimate for each country identified as suffering from armed conflict. For more information, see the online methodological annexe of the 2011 edition of the GBAV (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2012).

Victims of terrorism are not necessarily accounted for in the data recorded through the above definitions, although most are generally recorded in the databases that cover conflict countries. Defining terrorism is a difficult matter and there is no internationally agreed-upon definition; a point to note is that most victims of terrorism are recorded in conflict deaths data (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 46).

indicator on the number of violent deaths, comprising the number of conflict-related deaths and the number of homicides' (UNTT, 2013, p. 34).

Several other analyses have also underlined the advantages of a unified approach to armed violence and endorsed a 'violent deaths' indicator as a plausible pathway towards measuring progress in the reduction of violence (Denney, 2012; HSRP, 2014).[21] The violent deaths approach can—at least in principle—capture a range of acts that are not otherwise captured in more narrowly focused data, maximize comparability, avoid undercounting, and remain feasible, even though it focuses on one element of the overall target.

In practice, however, there are some limitations to the methodologies currently being used or under consideration, although these are surmountable with careful analysis and improved data collection. At the global or aggregate level, the focus on 'homicides' plus 'conflict-related deaths' as an indicator that covers all countries and captures all forms of lethal violence, entails some significant gaps and omissions, as highlighted in Boxes 1.3 and 1.4. In addition, large regions of the world lack national data collection efforts and capacities to record and report on violent deaths, including homicide statistics. Conflict-affected or fragile settings often suffer a deterioration of state institutions and priorities shift away from data collection towards more urgent needs. Coverage can also be patchy in countries that lack a strong state presence (such as where police presence is weak). All of these factors can weaken the quality or even availability of data needed to count violent deaths. Finally, data on security and crime is highly political. Data collection can be hampered due to diverse political interests, and some institutions or states may simply stop reporting on certain crimes and

Box 1.3 Monitoring lethal violence

Measuring and monitoring progress towards the reduction of violent deaths is a challenging but feasible task. Various reports that fed the debate around the post-2015 framework and associated targets have presented different proposals regarding how to measure violent deaths. For example, the UN Task Team proposal suggests measuring violent deaths via battle-related deaths and homicides (UNTT, 2012a, p. 3); it adopts a unified approach to armed violence, yet does not fully incorporate the wide array of sources that record violent deaths from public health statistics, criminal justice sources, and data produced on deaths in crises and conflict settings.

Other proposals go beyond that of the Task Team: the UN Technical Support Team and the UN Statistical Division provided proposals that referred to the Institute for the Economics of Peace Global Peace Index and the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicator basket, among other potential sources. Yet many of the different approaches proposed risk undercounting violent deaths in crisis situations that do not meet certain criteria for full-scale conflict, but that are not captured by a country's homicide statistics, criminal justice system, or conflict and political violence databases. In Egypt, for example, homicide figures are generally low, but recent events have proven particularly lethal, with a high number of deaths concentrated in the 2011 post-revolution instability affecting the country. Homicide records for 2011 capture approximately 990 deaths, whereas in January and February 2011 at least 841 people were killed in unrest (ANHRI, 2012; Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014). The battle-related deaths recorded for this time period only amount to 31 (UCDP, 2014); if the 'homicide plus battle deaths' focus were applied, around 800 deaths in Egypt alone would thus go unaccounted for.

The use of lethal force by state agents is not counted as homicide either. In some jurisdictions, police and extra-judicial killings account

Table 1.4 Estimating annual lethal violence figures using GBAV data for 2007–12

Homicide only	Battle-related deaths only	UN Task Team proposal (homicide and battle-related deaths)	GBAV database
377,000	37,941	ca. 415,000	508,000

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

for a significant proportion of lethal violence, contributing to general insecurity among a population. In Nigeria in 2008, for instance, close to 2,000 homicides were recorded, yet another 857 deaths are registered as killings during legal interventions and are not included in homicide data (CLEEN Foundation, n.d.). If these killings were included in the homicide count, the number of violent deaths would increase by nearly 50 per cent for Nigeria alone. Similarly, in Venezuela, about 19,330 homicides were reported for 2012, whereas another 3,400 deaths were recorded as fatalities due to legal intervention (OVV, 2011; PROVEA, 2013, p. 405). If killings during legal interventions were to be excluded from lethal violence statistics, more than 4,000 deaths would go unreported for Nigeria and Venezuela alone.

In addition, 'homicide' is a legal category that is often linked to specific decisions within a criminal justice system (such as the likelihood of a successful prosecution). Whether a killing qualifies as a homicide in the criminal justice system (such as in police statistics) can depend on the motivations and involvement of perpetrators, as well as on the degree of responsibility of the persons involved (Smit, de Jong, and Bijleveld, 2012, p. 5). A mapping study of definitions and typologies of homicide shows that within 35 countries in Europe, there is considerable variation as to what is included and excluded under homicide and that 'in fact, almost no pair of countries uses the same homicide definitions' (p. 15). Efforts to standardize criminal justice definitions and statistics will certainly constitute an important part of global target setting.

In contrast, public health data records violent deaths and places a focus on the number of victims, rather than on single events (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011). This approach avoids the limitations associated with judicial definitions and classifications of homicide in counting violent deaths. Challenges remain, however, as health workers do not necessarily recognize or code violent deaths correctly. Often, public health statistics of violent deaths are higher than homicide statistics published by the police.

An analysis of GBAV data suggests that if the monitoring of violence relied only on homicide and battle-related deaths data, the overall estimate would exclude approximately 93,000 violent deaths per year worldwide (or about 18 per cent of the total) (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014). At the country level, the number of deaths omitted would vary between a few dozen to hundreds or even thousands in the most extreme cases.

Table 1.4 shows the potential gaps in coverage if violent deaths comprised only 'homicide', only 'battle-related' deaths, or both. In contrast, the more comprehensive GBAV approach captures not only homicides, but also killings during legal interventions, manslaughter (due to violence), deaths in political or social crises, and conflict deaths *beyond* battle-related deaths (see Box 2.1).

Monitoring lethal violence is not a simple task, yet it is clearly a feasible undertaking. As goals and associated targets 'get more ambitious, the quality, frequency, disaggregation and availability of relevant statistics must be improved' (UNTST, 2014). Although common statistical standards on measuring 'peaceful societies' do not yet exist, the acceptance of a goal on peaceful and stable societies would catalyse conceptual development; it would also represent a significant step forward in compiling and reporting data on 'key conditions and governance structures associated with most development indicators in the MDG framework' (UN Statistics Division, 2014, p. 181).

Violence observatories across the world record a wide array of data on violence—mostly focusing on violent deaths rather than deaths that fit the legal definition of homicide; in Venezuela, for example, the human rights organization PROVEA tallies killings that result from assaults, legal interventions, and other lethal violence to generate one final figure for all forms of violent deaths (PROVEA, 2013). The Geneva Declaration Secretariat—through its GBAV database—has recorded lethal violence data since 2003. Such unified approaches are valuable in the assessment of global, regional, and national progress towards the reduction of violent deaths.

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Box 1.4 Casualty recording: documentation that enables responses to armed violence

Casualty recording strives to achieve a comprehensive, systematic, and continuous documentation of individual deaths and injuries from armed violence. It involves documenting as much information as possible about incidents and individuals, including: dates and locations of incidents; numbers of and demographic or other identifying details about casualties; descriptions of the means of harm to individuals, such as weapons used; and a record of the sources used to document these details. Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society can and do undertake this work in various challenging contexts.[i]

Casualty recording's core premises are that every violent death must be acknowledged and that all the victims of armed violence (including survivors and the families of those killed) should be acknowledged in a way that upholds their rights and dignity.[ii] Signatories of the Geneva Declaration have committed to recognizing and ensuring the rights of victims of armed violence. Without a comprehensive understanding of who these victims are, effective action cannot be taken. In this context, casualty recording is an essential first step. Detailed, systematic casualty recording also contributes to the measuring and monitoring of armed violence, which informs policy designed to address and reduce it.

The UK-based NGOs Oxford Research Group and Action on Armed Violence have researched the casualty recording practices of states, the UN, and civil society, demonstrating the benefits of this work to these different actors, to policy-makers, and to violence-affected populations (Minor, 2012; Miceli and Olgiati, 2014; Beswick and Minor, 2014). Documented uses of casualty recording include: supporting victims' rights, providing information useful for the provision of assistance as well as acknowledgement through memorialization; contributing information to accountability procedures and transitional justice; informing the assessment of conflict environments for action by humanitarian responders; contributing to the research and analysis of violence; and informing effective advocacy with conflict parties, in order to change policies and better protect civilians.

An analysis of methods used by 40 different casualty recorders—predominantly NGOs focusing on conflict—found that useful casualty recording can be undertaken even in difficult conditions (Minor, 2012). Casualty recording can be approached in a variety of ways, depending on its purpose and on external circumstances, including the sources and investigative techniques available; the intensity of violence or degree of accessibility; and the political space available for casualty recording. Different approaches are associated with varying levels of certainty, confirmation, and detail. Nevertheless, all approaches to casualty recording have their uses or benefits; they can be conceptualized as summarized in Figure 1.1. Two brief case studies of casualty recording by different types of actors follow.

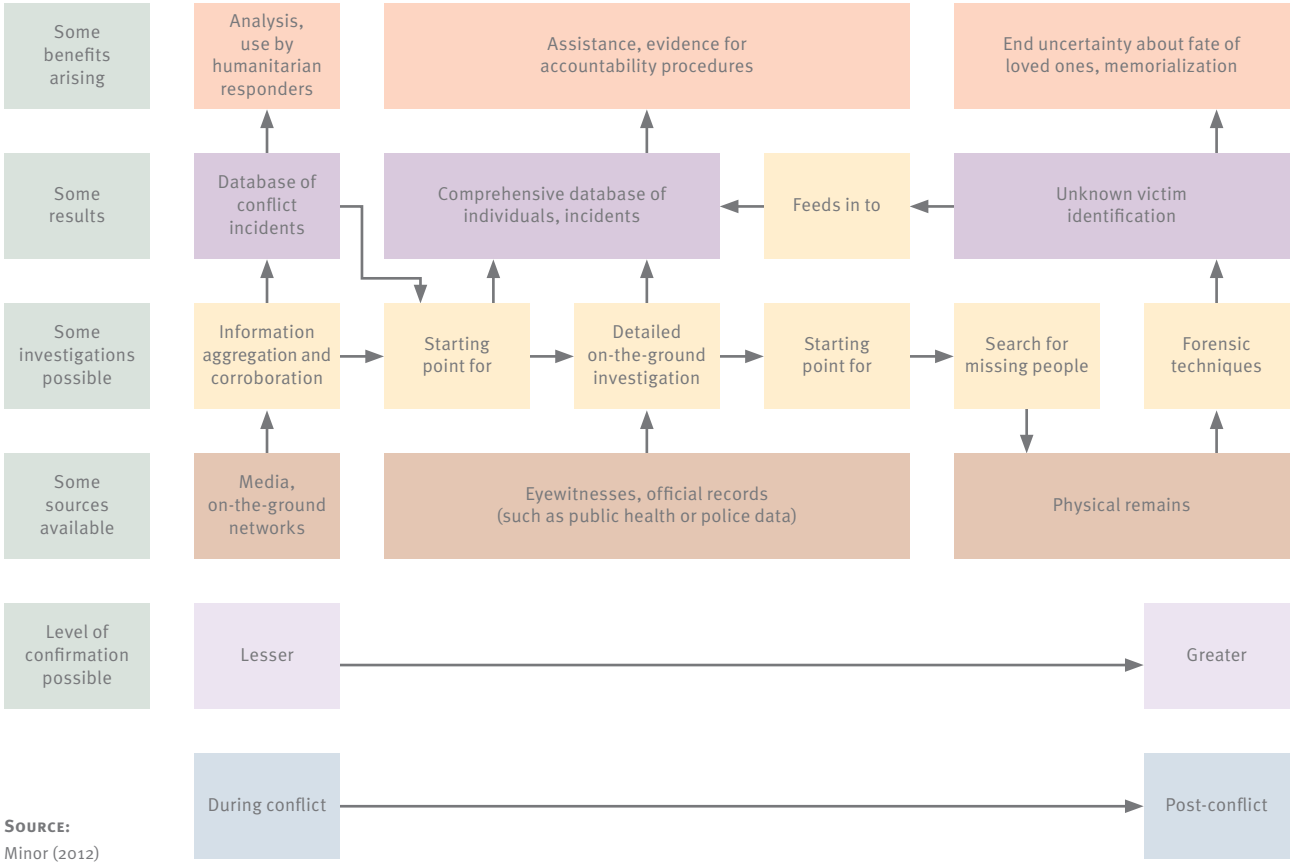
An example of UN casualty recording on the ground is the work of the Human Rights Unit of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which has systematically recorded the civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) of the armed conflict in Afghanistan since 2007 as part of its protection of civilians work.[iii] Under UN Security Council Resolution 2096, the Mission is 'to monitor the situation of civilians, to coordinate efforts to ensure their protection, to promote accountability' (UNSC, 2013, para. 7(c)). The Human Rights Unit meets these responsibilities through advocacy with parties to the conflict on actions and policies that harm civilians, relying on the evidence base of detailed, systematic, and credible casualty data. Its efforts have borne the most fruit with respect to the International Security Assistance Force, which revised tactical directives in response to Unit data that revealed which policies or tactics were causing the most civilian harm.

The Human Rights Unit's methodology for casualty recording involves the active investigation of incidents by field staff, according to centrally standardized procedures. Source material, including eyewitness accounts, is assessed for credibility and reliability, incidents are verified through three independent sources, and information is checked at the regional and central levels. The procedure places emphasis on consistency and accuracy, despite challenges of underreporting due to access and safety issues.

While the Human Rights Unit's casualty recording is relatively well resourced, civil society groups with limited resources are also able to record casualties, including where state or other entities' capacities or will to collect information about violence is lacking. These civil society groups are sometimes among the few data sources available that can provide insight into patterns of violence over time. Frequently, such groups' existence is precarious due to their lack of resources.

The Mali Casualty Count is an example of an effort to record casualties using a civil society network.[iv] The goal was to contribute

FIGURE 1.1 The range of practice in casualty recording



SOURCE:
Minor (2012)

facts that could serve as a starting point for a comprehensive public record of the human cost of violence in Mali, particularly since—but also prior to—1990. Growing out of a long-standing engagement between a UK-based development practitioner and a Malian contact, the project was coordinated by British and Mali-based volunteers. The focus was on Tuareg areas, mainly covering Tuareg civilians who had allegedly been killed by state forces. Although the project sought to be inclusive, the researchers acknowledged that their data was partial.

The Malian coordinators collated reports of civilian casualties from networks of individuals and organizations, whose coverage dictated the extent of the data. The data was cross-checked as much as possible and drawn from sources with which the coordinators had long-standing relationships. Analysis of the data published in March 2014 showed a trend of increased civilian harm following the arrival of international peacekeeping forces in areas previously under the control of non-state armed groups. The authors suggest that the presence of international forces facilitated the movement of Malian troops into areas long held by their adversaries, resulting in retaliation and increased civilian casualties.

Notes:

i. For a discussion and examples, see Casualty Recorders Network (n.d.a).

ii. For further information, see Casualty Recorders Network (n.d.b).

iii. This case study is based on Beswick and Minor (2014).

iv. This case study is based on conversations between the NGOs Mali Casualty Count and Oxford Research Group, 15 October 2013 and 16 December 2013.


ADOLFO
GURJARDO
TAWANA
Orlando
(19)
SERGIO
(18)
DUKES
JOSE
(16)
Nequiel Flower

Photo ◀ Paving stones bearing the names of victims are prepared for a memorial for children killed by violence, in Chicago, United States, August 2011.
© Jim Young/Reuters

events for political motives (see Box 1.2). The inclusion of a goal on peaceful and stable societies and associated targets would undoubtedly have a positive impact on data collection capacities in settings where such information is not available, catalysing more efforts in this area, as occurred with the MDG process.

Despite the utility of 'violence reduction' as a target, associated pitfalls should be borne in mind. For instance, while investments in better data-gathering and public awareness can allow for enhanced reporting and recording of victimization, these improvements can inadvertently create the impression that rates have increased (Baumer and Lauritsen, 2010). Conversely, rates can appear to decrease in response to reductions in funding for data collection or changes in classification procedures. Some of the reported drops in El Salvador's homicide rate after the 2012 gang truce, for example, may have been the result of altered classifications of suspicious deaths. A spike in disappearances may also have masked the actual number of homicides (Valencia and Arauz, 2012; see Box 2.4).

Conclusion

Despite ongoing debates, there is growing evidence and recognition of the negative—and reciprocal—interactions between development, insecurity, and violence. Violence and insecurity affect societies beyond human loss and injuries, as people are forcibly displaced, businesses close, investments fall, and people migrate or are displaced. Development achievements are undermined or rolled back by insecurity, as evidenced by the fact that the majority of countries failing to realize at least one MDG are fragile or conflict-affected. On the flip side, failing to achieve development and greater equality is recognized

as a significant driver of conflict and insecurity. This growing body of evidence points towards the need to acknowledge the centrality of a goal on peaceful and stable societies within the post-2015 development framework to ensure sustainable development. It also highlights that achieving reductions in the human cost of armed violence and insecurity constitutes a development goal *in itself*. The growing agreement and support of states and organizations for the inclusion of a goal on peaceful and stable societies within the post-2015 development framework is a promising step forward.

Measuring and monitoring progress with respect to such a goal is not without challenges for states and the international community. Harmonization, standardization, and capacity- and institution-building will be necessary to provide the grounds on which progress can be monitored towards building peaceful societies. However, the catalysing force the definition of a peace goal would entail, along with the generation of new and more fine-grained data, would not only help states and the international community to report on progress towards specific targets, but would also contribute to establishing security promotion and violence reduction policies on a stronger, more 'evidence-based' footing. The foundations for standardized indicators and harmonized practices do exist, at least for a 'lethal violence' indicator.

This chapter focuses in particular on one potential target—the measurement and monitoring of progress towards reducing violent deaths (or *lethal violence*, as defined in Chapter Two). The measuring and monitoring of lethal violence—if approached carefully and holistically—appears as a strong candidate for an indicator (as opposed to 'homicide only' or 'conflict deaths only') for measuring how a country or a territory advances towards peace and security goals and targets. The chapter also shows that such an indicator already exists and that its feasibility has already been tested in the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* reports.

Violence and insecurity are not issues whose impact is confined to least developed countries, although they may suffer from the most severe consequences. All societies deal with forms of insecurity that could be addressed with programmes and policies to achieve measurable reductions in violence, and improvements in security and public order. Many of these programmes and policies could benefit from being scaled up and cross-fertilized to other regions and countries. International targets enshrined in the post-2015 process would facilitate this process and would help the donor community to focus its efforts on evidence-based policies and programmes that have a proven record of reducing violence and fostering peace and stability, coupled with an increased capacity to monitor the effectiveness of national and international policies.

Regardless of whether the post-2015 development agenda incorporates, in the final analysis, a goal on peace and security (with specific targets and indicators), the challenge of overcoming violence and insecurity to improve human well-being and social, political, and economic development will remain an important one for the international community to tackle.

List of abbreviations

GBAV	*Global Burden of Armed Violence*
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OWG	Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

Endnotes

1 Following usage introduced in the first edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* (GBAV), this volume defines armed violence generally as 'the intentional use of illegitimate force (actual or threatened) with arms or explosives, against a person, group, community, or state, that undermines people-centred security and/or sustainable development' (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 2). The definition focuses on the physical use of force and violence; it excludes concepts such as structural, cultural, and psychological violence, however important they may be in other contexts. This volume also follows the 'unified approach' to armed violence, its causes, and its consequences, as initiated in the 2011 edition of the GBAV. Its estimates of violent deaths (lethal violence) are presented in an aggregated fashion and reflect data from different sources, covering 'non-conflict deaths' (intentional homicide, unintentional homicide, deaths resulting from legal interventions) as well as 'direct conflict deaths' (battle deaths, civilian deaths, and deaths resulting from terrorism) (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 11). For a full description of the data compiled, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

2 See, for example, UNDP (2013a); UNGA (2009); UNODC (2011); and World Bank (2011).

3 Among others, see Aboal, Campanella, and Lanzilotta (2013); Ajzenman, Galiani, and Seira (2014); CICS (2005); Dupas and Robinson (2012); Justino (2013); Ksoll, Macchiavello, and Morjaria (2011); Livingston et al. (2014); Pino (2011); and World Bank (2012).

4 One recent report suggests that the Syrian conflict claimed more lives during that period, estimating that 92,000 people were killed between March 2011 and March 2013 (Price et al., 2013).

5 According to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, states are fragile when 'state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations' (OECD–DAC, 2007, p. 2).

6 The term 'development' had of course already been used to refer to economic change and societal transformation, such as in the writings of Karl Marx and Joseph Schumpeter, or in the Covenant of the League of Nations (Rist, 2002, p. 73).

7 Note that the literature on the costs of violence and the relationship between violence and development is a complex field and that this review is an over-simplification. For good reviews of some of the literature, see Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008; 2011), Gutiérrez-Sanín (2009), Skaperdas (2009), and World Bank (2009).

8 See, for example, Soares (2006) on welfare costs of crime and violence (the value of reducing violent deaths to zero expressed in GDP); for a summary of the accounting method approach, see UNDP (2013a, p. 102) as well as Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008). Hoeffler and Fearon (2014) and Soares (2014) explore a comprehensive exercise of the accounting method and apply it to different forms of violence—conflict and non-conflict as well as lethal and non-lethal.

9 Note that El Salvador is the country with the highest spending for public security and justice in relation to GDP in the Central American region, with the rate at 2.4 per cent in 2010. Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama spent 2.3 per cent that same year, and Honduras and Guatemala spent 2.0 and 1.7 per cent of their GDP, respectively (World Bank, 2012, p. 39).

10 See Geneva Declaration Secretariat (n.d.) for the background and contents of the Geneva Declaration.

11 This focus on the interlinkages between armed violence and development is also a hallmark of the Geneva Declaration and associated processes.

12 For a full list of participant states and organizations, see IDPS (n.d.).

13 For a full list of the Task Team members, see UNTT (n.d.).

14 See Beyond 2015 (2014) for the full list and specific links to each of these thematic consultations. A series of regional and national consultations were also held.

15 For all the background papers and outcome documents for each of these regional and global consultations, see The World We Want 2015 (n.d.).

16 These meetings were: the Expert Meeting on the Accountability Framework for Conflict, Violence and Disaster in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, organized by the UN Development Programme, the UN Peacebuilding Support Office, and UNICEF, in collaboration with the Institute for Economics and Peace and the World Bank, Glen Cove, New York, 18–19 June 2013, and the UNODC Expert Meeting on Accounting for Security and Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda held in Vienna, 24–25 June 2013.

17 'The Member States have decided to use an innovative, constituency-based system of representation that is new to limited membership bodies of the General Assembly. This means that each seat in the Group is shared by 1–4 Member States.' See UNDESA (n.d.).

18 The Outcome Document from the 68th UN General Assembly (2013) is where states agreed to bring the post-2015 and Rio+20 processes together. See UN (2013a) on the role of Rio+20 and the initiation of the intergovernmental negotiations on post-2015 during the 69th UN General Assembly.

19 Indirect deaths could represent upwards of 4–10 times more deaths in conflicts (depending on the context) than violent deaths alone, according to previous estimates (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008).

20 See also Hoeffler and Fearon (2014); OECD (2009); World Bank (2011).

21 See Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008; 2010; 2011) for an overview of how the approach has been piloted and refined.

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CHAPTER TWO

Lethal Violence Update

IN RECENT YEARS, lethal violence has remained firmly in the headlines. In the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, for instance, violence erupted in Libya and Syria, with the latter experiencing particularly high levels of lethality ever since. Honduras, Mexico, and Venezuela have been exhibiting a high incidence of violent deaths in the face of ongoing gang and drug wars. In fact, some of the world's highest homicide rates are found in these countries. Volatility in the levels of violence in the Central African Republic, Egypt, and Ukraine serve as reminders that episodes of great lethality can be short-lived and concentrated. Meanwhile, in many other countries around the world, enduring trends hold the promise that levels of violence may continue to drop.

This chapter analyses changes in the distribution and intensity of lethal violence by comparing newly gathered data for the period 2007–12 with data for the period 2004–09, which formed the basis of research presented in the 2011 edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* (GBAV) (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011). Overall, global levels of lethal violence appear to be in decline; yet a closer look reveals that while most national homicide rates have been stable or decreasing over the long term, a few states have been experiencing volatile or increasing levels of violence.

Based on a detailed analysis of information in the GBAV 2014 database, this chapter presents lethal violence averages for the period 2007–12 and reviews changes in rates for the entire period for which data is available (2004–12). The chapter continues to use the 'unified approach' to lethal violence that was introduced in the previous edition of this report.[1] The approach covers conflict, criminal, and interpersonal forms of violence and includes data from a large variety of sources on homicide, conflict, and other forms of violence.

In highlighting medium- and long-term changes in lethal violence as well as the most recent available figures on violent deaths, the chapter also draws attention to improvements in the collection of data. Indeed, the availability of more refined data allows for more accurate estimates and for the unpacking of patterns in lethal violence (see Box 2.2). To some extent, improvements in the collection and monitoring of national data on lethal violence for the period 2004–12 may be linked to efforts under way in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, its proposed goal on peaceful and inclusive societies, and associated targets and indicators (see Chapter One).

Like the previous edition, this report considers 'violent deaths' that can be directly attributed to violence in both conflict and non-conflict settings, including direct conflict deaths, intentional and unintentional homicide, and killings that occur in the context of legal interventions (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011). This chapter records data on victims of lethal injuries sustained in violent events among people, communities, groups, and states.

Photo ◀ Protestors man the barricades during clashes with the police in Independence Square, Kiev, Ukraine, February 2014. © David Rose/ Panos Pictures

While this chapter focuses on the years 2007–12, it also considers significant violent death counts that were reported after the period under review, such as those related to the ongoing conflict in Syria and the recent crisis in the Central African Republic. This edition of the GBAV does not cover the issue of indirect deaths, such as those resulting from the consequences of violence, including a lack of access to medical care, clean water, or proper sanitation.[2]

The chapter finds that:

- At least 508,000 people died annually as a result of lethal violence in the period 2007–12, corresponding to an average rate of 7.4 persons killed per 100,000 population. This figure comprises approximately 70,000 direct conflict deaths, 377,000 intentional homicides, 42,000 unintentional homicides, and 19,000 deaths due to legal interventions.
- More than one in ten violent deaths around the world occurs in conflict settings. Intentional homicides account for nearly three out of four violent deaths in the world.
- The 18 countries with the highest violent death rates are home to a mere 4 per cent of the world's population but account for nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of all violent deaths in the world.
- A comparison of GBAV data for the periods 2004–09 and 2007–12 reveals reductions in the numbers of intentional homicides (from 396,000 to 377,000), unintentional homicides (from 54,000 to 42,000), and killings during legal interventions (from 21,000 to 19,000), but a significant increase in direct conflict deaths (from 55,000 to 70,000).
- In 2012, the latest year for which data is available, 37 countries exhibited lethal violence rates higher than 10 per 100,000. Only 13 of

these countries were experiencing a conflict or had recently emerged from one.

- In 2012, the countries with the highest rates of lethal violence per 100,000 were Syria (180.2), Honduras (90.4), and Venezuela (72.2).
- The sub-regions most affected by lethal violence are—in decreasing order—Central America (with a rate of violent 33.6 deaths per 100,000 population), Southern Africa (31.2), the Caribbean (20.5), and South America (17.0).
- The sub-regions with the greatest increase in the violent death rates per 100,000 population from 2004–09 to 2007–12 are Northern Africa (94.8 per cent increase), Central America (15.7 per cent), and Southern Africa (13.8 per cent).
- Globally, firearms are used in 46.3 per cent of all homicides and in an estimated 32.3 per cent of direct conflict deaths. That means that firearms are used in 44.1 per cent of all violent deaths, or an annual average of nearly 197,000 deaths for the period 2007–12.
- Central America, the Caribbean, and South America suffer from the highest firearm homicide shares (above 50 per cent) and exhibit the highest firearm homicide rates.

A global snapshot of lethal violence

As noted above, this edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* continues to take a 'unified approach' to armed violence. This framework of analysis allows for the generation of an overall estimate of violent deaths at the global level and for a comprehensive update on lethal violence in both conflict and non-conflict settings.

Yet the use of GBAV data also entails a series of challenges. First, the quality of data varies across countries, especially with respect to lethal violence. These variations undoubtedly have an impact on GBAV estimates. In particular, the absence of national recording and reporting of violent deaths in many countries in Africa continues to preclude the generation of accurate estimates of lethal violence in that part of the world (see Figures 2.3 and 2.4).[3] Second, underreporting skews data on violent deaths, especially in conflict settings, as these tend to be inaccessible. Underreporting can also be an issue in non-conflict settings, especially if public health systems do not record violent deaths as homicides. Third, variations in definitions and methods can prevent comparisons. Sources do not necessarily share one definition of 'armed conflict', nor do they always take the same approach to recording conflict-related casualties (see Box 2.1).

In view of the shortcomings in the data, GBAV estimates are conservative. One such estimate, based on selected sources covering the Syrian conflict, indicates that the number of lives lost in Syria between March 2011 and December 2013 was 80,000. That figure is markedly lower than the estimate of 92,000 killed by March 2013, published in a report commissioned by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (Price et al., 2013, p. 3; see Box 2.3).

Approximately 508,000 people died violently each year in the period from 2007 to 2012. This figure includes 377,000 intentional homicides (74 per cent of all the deaths), 70,000 direct conflict deaths (14 per cent), 42,000 unintentional homicides (8 per cent), and 19,000 deaths due to legal interventions (4 per cent) (see Figure 2.1).

These estimates are 3.4 per cent lower than those presented in the 2011 edition of the GBAV, which reported an average of 526,000 violent deaths annually for the period 2004–09 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011). The overall reduction in

Box 2.1 The politics of words: defining conflict

One difficulty in estimating the full scope of lethal violence stems from the varying definitions of armed conflict. In this context, the political significance of definitions should not be underestimated. Conflict is defined differently within and across disciplines; some definitions are based on legal instruments, while others rely on numerical values, conflict resolution perspectives, or levels of intensity of fighting.

Most definitions of conflict are based on the identities of the belligerents—state or non-state—and on the intensity of the conflict, generally measured by the number of casualties (De Martino and Dönges, 2012). Conflict typologies are reviewed regularly, classifications often differ between different sources, and different types of conflicts may overlap or coincide in time (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, 2011, pp. 10–11; Casey-Maslen, 2013, p. 6).

International humanitarian law (IHL) is also often used to categorize armed conflicts. IHL distinguishes between international armed conflicts, in which two or more states resort to the use of armed force, and non-international armed conflicts (NIACs), in which two or more conflict parties reach a 'minimum level of intensity' and a 'minimum of organization'[4] (ICRC, 2008, p. 5). While the existence of an armed conflict is a precondition for the application of IHL, the 'treaties [of IHL] do not set out in detail the elements necessary to determine that a situation has reached the threshold of a NIAC' (Karimova, Giacca, and Casey-Maslen, 2013, p. 11).

Legal determinations of what constitutes a conflict govern the applicability of legal standards as well as access to international assistance and resources, but can often be politically sensitive (Alvazzi del Frate and De Martino, 2013, p. 12). Low-intensity conflicts in fragile states do not necessarily meet the requirements for classification as an NIAC to which IHL may apply, and the determination may be rejected by one (or more) conflicting parties. Instead of sustained combat or large-scale military operations, such hostilities may be intermittent, with fluctuating levels of violence (Geiß, 2009, p. 135). Apart from the IHL definitions of armed conflict, the more general notion of 'conflict' remains open to interpretation and encompasses a wide spectrum of situations (Karimova, Giacca, and Casey-Maslen, 2013, p. 11).

Large-n data sets often base their classifications and definitions on the overall number of casualties or 'battle deaths'. The threshold of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) data set lies at 25 battle deaths per calendar year; the UCDP classification of 'armed conflict' requires at least one of the conflicting parties to be the government of a state (UCDP, n.d.c). Under certain circumstances, UCDP does not count violent deaths as battle or combat deaths despite their great number or the involvement of the state. Civilian deaths brought about by massacres, state violence against demonstrators, or combat between non-state actors fall into this category. As a result, the more than 1,000 fatalities that resulted from post-election violence in Kenya in 2007 and hundreds of lives lost during the quelling of initial Arab Spring protests in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia have not been counted as conflict deaths (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 21; see Box 2.5).

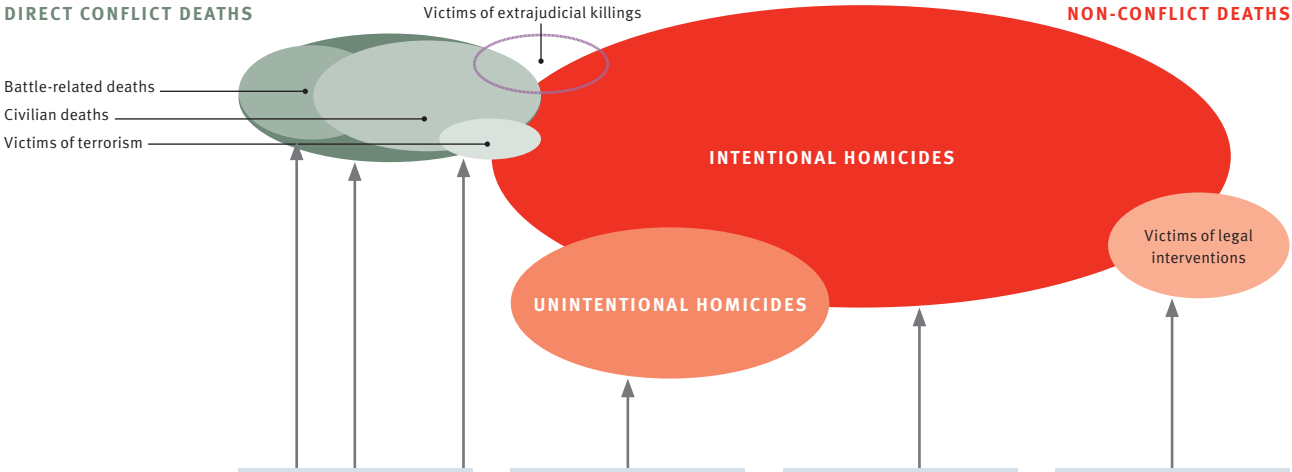
Quantitative assessments of armed conflict seek to measure various aspects of actions and communication between the conflict parties. The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, for instance, assesses the intensity of violent conflicts by analysing the use of weapons, employment of personnel, the number of casualties, the degree of destruction, and the overall numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (HIIK, 2014, pp. 8–10).

A broader 'conflict diagnosis' may be undertaken as part of the conflict resolution approach, which aims to identify and map out the conflict parties' main concerns, attitudes, and strategic considerations, as well as the stages of escalation and the internal dynamics between stakeholders and conflict parties. Instead of classifying conflicts based on cut-off numbers, this approach analyses them on a continuum that reflects the risk of escalation, the difficulty of keeping a conflict under control, and the likelihood of the occurrence of violence (Glasl, 2008, p. 3; Lucade, 2012, pp. 12–13).

A sub-national focus is also reflected in some data sets and academic literature, for example in the study of the micro-dynamics of civil wars or conflicts, or in the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project (see Kalyvas, 2008; ACLED, 2014). This work often captures broader forms of armed violence beyond the legal definition of NIACs. In contrast to 'minimum of organization' requirements, terms such as 'political violence' or 'civil conflict' encompass 'diverse but recurrent forms of violence between individuals and groups' in urban settings, including 'organized violent crime, gang warfare, terrorism, religious and sectarian rebellions, and spontaneous riots or violent protest over state failures such as poor or absent service delivery' (Beall, Goodfellow, and Rodgers, 2013, p. 5).

Authors: Hannah Dönges and Keith Krause

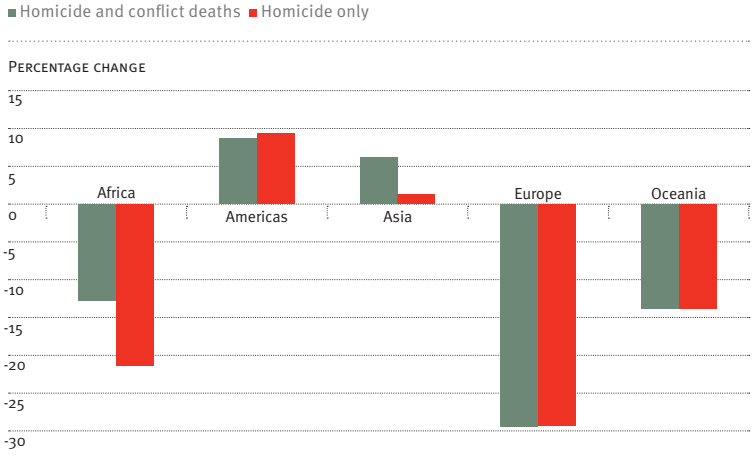
FIGURE 2.1 Distribution of the victims of lethal violence per year, 2007–12



NOTE: The figure is not intended to reflect proportions.

SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

FIGURE 2.2 Changes in lethal violence by region, 2004–09 vs. 2007–12



SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

violent deaths has also been observed in other relevant studies. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime notes in its *Global Study on Homicide 2013* that the homicide rate declined substantially in Europe and Oceania between 2010 and 2012 (UNODC, 2014, p. 21). Similarly, the literature shows that there was a general trend of reductions in direct conflict deaths, until the high number of casualties in Syria in 2012 drove numbers upwards again (Themnér and Wallensteen, 2013, p. 510).

Although homicide rates are decreasing in many parts of the world, as discussed below, a comparison of the number of violent deaths for the periods 2004–09 and 2007–12 reveals significant regional variations (see Figure 2.2). It highlights how changes in the number of homicides can be

Box 2.2 The availability of data on violent deaths

Given that the analysis of violent deaths is highly data-dependent, the Geneva Declaration Secretariat has made ongoing efforts to broaden the scope and enhance the quality of GBAV data.

The 2008 edition of the GBAV presents sub-regional data on homicide and conflict deaths. At the time the volume was published, the database did not contain enough information to allow for disaggregation based on sex, firearms, or circumstances. Nor were national data series complete enough to be integrated into the analysis.

By the second edition of the GBAV, in 2011, the analysis had expanded to cover national data on lethal violence (intentional homicide) for 186 countries and territories as well as data on direct conflict deaths for 29 countries. Furthermore, case studies were used to assess violence not recorded in classical 'intentional homicide' data, such as manslaughter and killings during legal interventions. The 2011 edition also presents a first attempt at disaggregation of homicide data by sex, based on data for 111 countries.[5]

Data availability has improved significantly—in terms of both coverage and comprehensiveness—in the past decade. In addition to building on previous editions of the GBAV, this volume widens and deepens the scope of analysis, notably by featuring data disaggregated by sex, by mode of killing, and by sub-national unit of analysis, such as the urban level (see Chapters Three and Four).

This edition of the GBAV, which benefits from an increase in data and information on lethal violence around the globe, covers 189 countries and territories.[6] A key improvement is that data is now systematically gathered at the national level in most regions of the world, with the exception of Africa (see Figures 2.3 and 2.4). A further improvement is the establishment of lethal violence data series at the national level for the period 2004–12; in addition, homicide data is available for the period 2000–12.[7]

The GBAV database is unique in that it combines violent deaths resulting from a wide range of causes, in both conflict and non-conflict settings. It is the only integrated database that maps changes in contemporary levels of lethal violence; it thus represents a core contribution to measuring and monitoring progress in human security around the world.

Authors: Irene Pavesi and Matthias Nowak

Figure 2.3 Criminal justice sources included in the GBAV database, per region

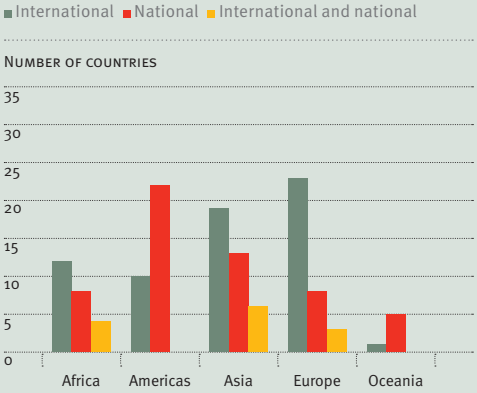
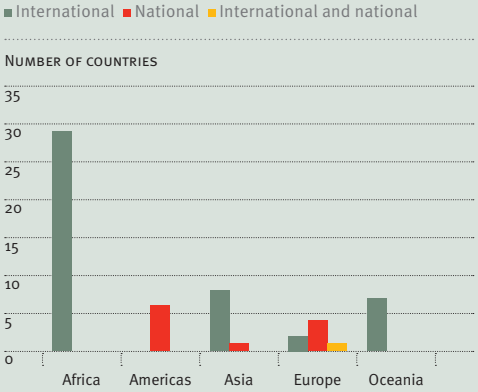


Figure 2.4 Public health sources included in the GBAV database, per region



Notes: Figures 2.3 and 2.4 present data collected from national sources (such as the police, ministries of health, and observatories) as well as international agencies (such as the World Health Organization and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime).

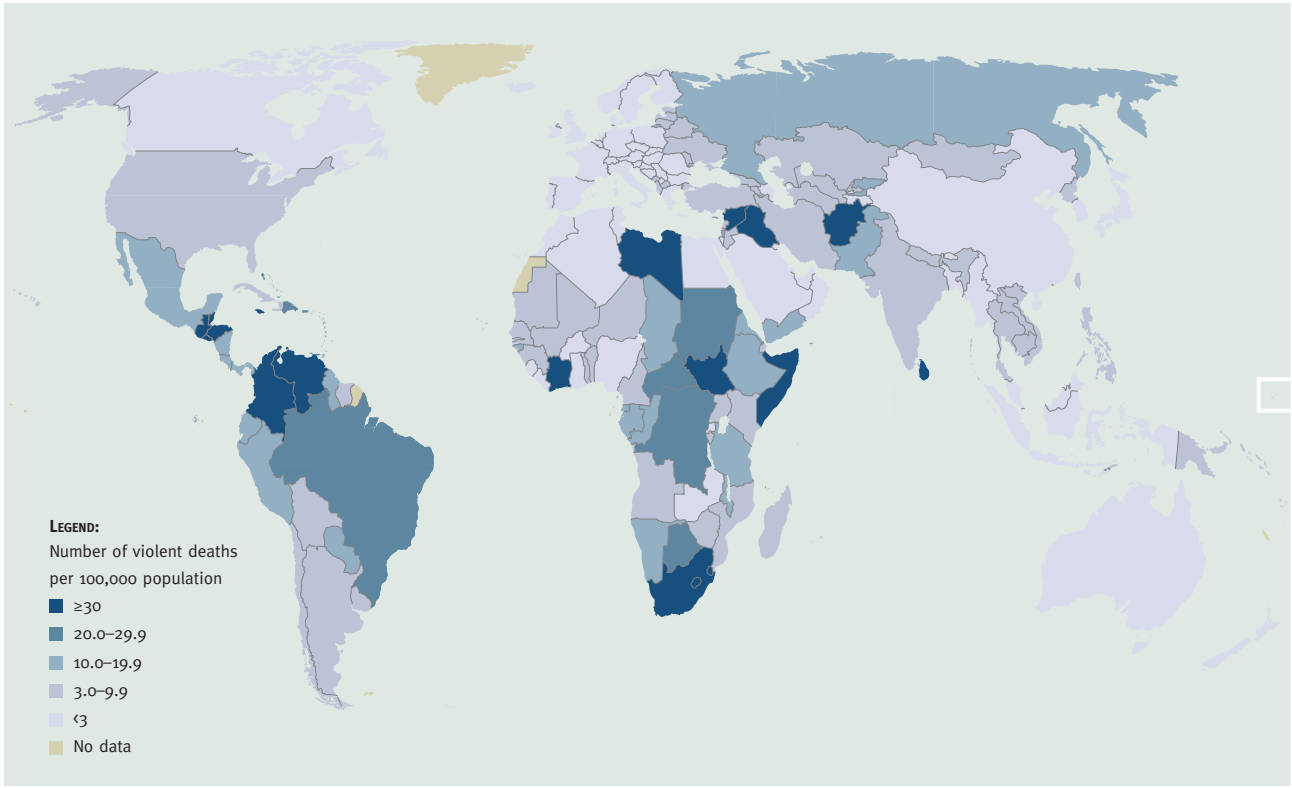
Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

attenuated by, for example, an increase in direct conflict deaths, demonstrating the utility of a comprehensive approach to armed violence. In Africa, for instance, the number of homicides dropped by more than 20 per cent between the two periods; if conflict deaths are included, however, the overall reduction in lethal violence stands at only 13 per cent.

In Asia, the number of homicides increased by less than 1 per cent from one period to the next; yet when conflict deaths are included, the change in lethal violence swells to 6 per cent, largely reflecting the high number of deaths in Syria. The comparison also makes clear that the Americas experienced the greatest upsurge in lethal violence—in homicides as well as direct conflict deaths which combined increased by nearly 10 per cent.

Map 2.1 presents the global distribution of violent death rates per 100,000 population for the period 2007–12. The average global annual violent death rate is estimated at 7.4 per 100,000 population for the period under review. Reflecting a reduction in lethal violence at the global level, this average annual rate is slightly lower than the previous estimate of 7.9 deaths per 100,000 population for the period 2004–09 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011).

Map 2.1 Average annual violent death rates per 100,000 population, 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Map 2.1 colour-codes countries and territories according to their average rates of lethal violence. The rates are grouped into five categories: 'very high' (≥30.0 violent deaths per 100,000 population), 'high' (20.0–29.9), 'medium' (10.0–19.9), 'low' (3.0–9.9), and 'very low' (<3.0). Since this map employs national averages, however, it unavoidably hides significant variations within states, such as between rural and urban areas, or between central and border regions (see Chapter Four).

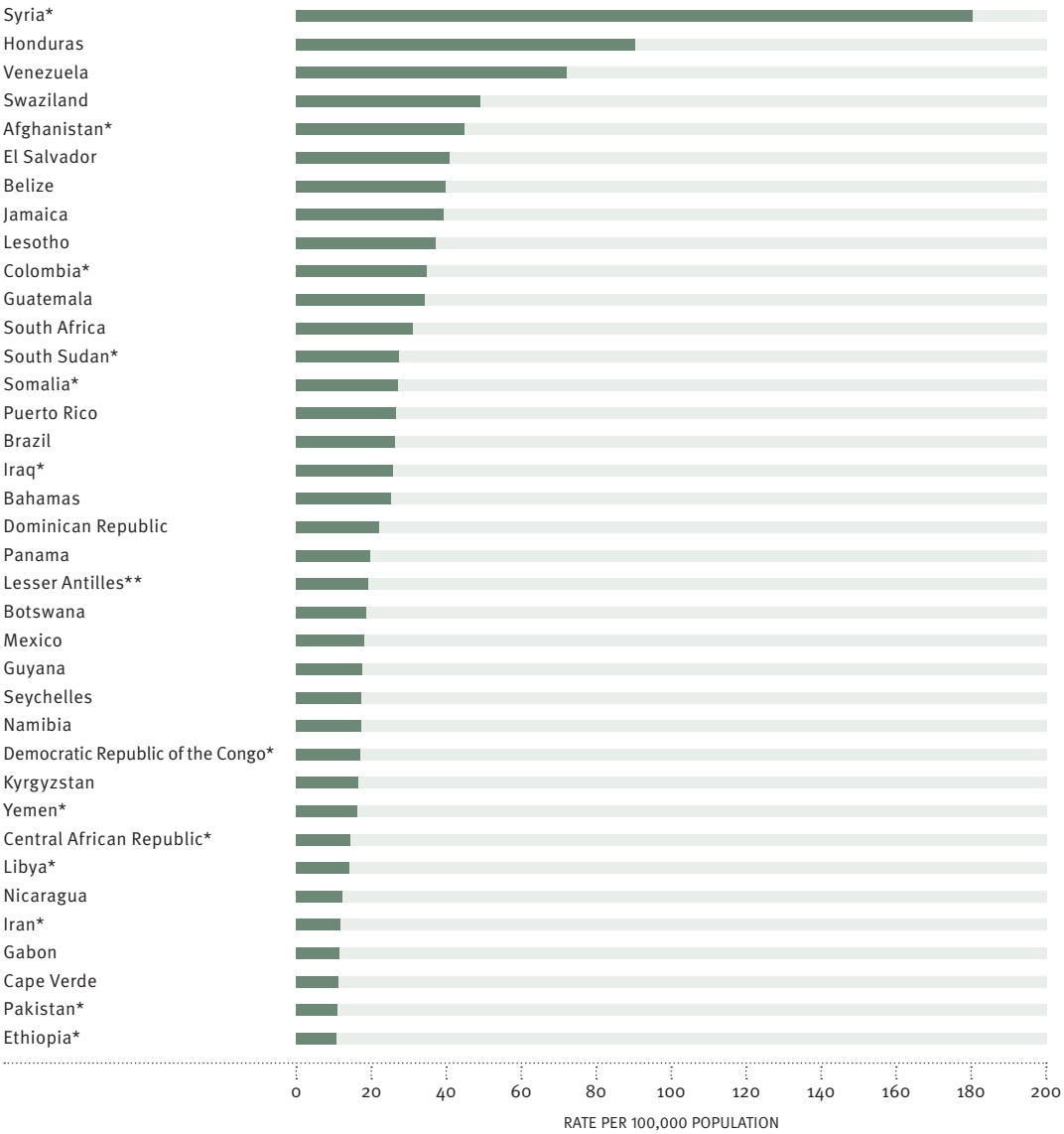
Nevertheless, Map 2.1 clearly illustrates where rates of violence are elevated. It shows that a few countries in Latin America and Southern Africa exhibit high and very high rates, as do conflict-affected countries in Africa and Western Asia. The countries with the highest average rates—the 18 countries with the darkest shade[8]—account for a total of about 280 million people and an estimated 121,000 violent deaths annually. This means that countries that are home to just 4 per cent of the global population experience 24 per cent of the world's violent deaths. In contrast, some countries have high absolute numbers of violent deaths, but very large populations. Specifically, violent deaths in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the United States total an average of 137,000 per year (which is equivalent to approximately 27 per cent of all violent deaths), yet the population of these six countries exceeds 3 billion people, which is almost 50 per cent of the world's population.

Homicides continue to account for the vast majority (74 per cent) of violent deaths worldwide. In contrast, the proportion of direct conflict deaths, which stood at just over 10 per cent of all violent deaths in 2004–09, rose to 14 per cent in 2007–12, largely due to the severity of the conflicts in Syria and Libya. Selected data can further illustrate why homicides represent the mammoth share of violent deaths. Brazil and India, for example, account for an annual total of more than 86,000 violent deaths; that figure alone exceeds the global number of direct conflict deaths per year. The highest number of global direct conflict deaths per year, as registered in the GBAV database, is just over 74,000 for the year 2012.

Map 2.1 can also serve to highlight broad patterns of regional violence, such as those linked to the trafficking of drugs in Central America's Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras), where criminal groups shape levels of violence (ICG, 2014a; Sánchez, Díaz, and Nowak, 2014). Similarly, the map reflects the impact of the Arab uprisings, which began in 2011 with mass protests in Tunisia (see Box 2.5). A fact-finding report produced after the Egyptian coup estimates the protest-related death toll at more than 800 (BBC, 2011). In Syria, protests rapidly escalated into a full-blown civil war.

Figure 2.5 presents the 37 countries and territories that are most affected by lethal violence, ranked according to their violent death rates in 2012 or the latest year for which data is available. The figure shows that Syria was the most violent country in the world in 2012, with a rate of 180.2 deaths per 100,000 population. That year, violence also spread beyond Syria's national borders; after Syrian government forces shelled a border town in Turkey, killing two women and three children, Turkey retaliated by opening fire on Syrian troops, leaving several dead (BBC, 2012). In Lebanon, tensions remain high among supporters and opponents of the Assad regime; in March 2014, related clashes in the town of Tripoli killed 11 people (Reuters, 2014). These 'contagion effects' in Syria's neighbours support the finding that 'a country is nearly twice as likely to experience an outbreak of conflict if at least one of its neighbors is involved in conflict' (Buhaug and Gleditsch, 2008, p. 225).

Figure 2.5 Countries ranked by violent death rate per 100,000 population, 2012 or latest year available



Notes:

* Emerging from or experiencing armed conflict.

** Given the small population of the Lesser Antilles, the eight sovereign states of the region were grouped together and their rates averaged to produce a regional estimate. The countries in question are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

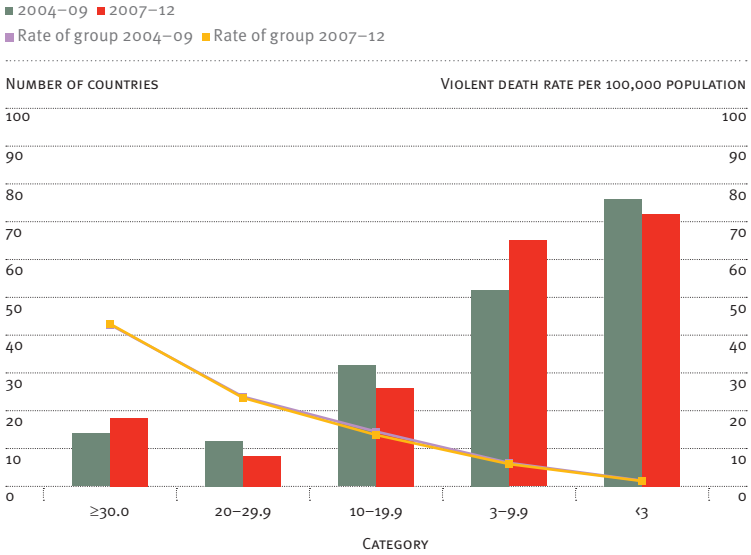
At the time of writing, 13 of the 37 countries and territories in Figure 2.5 were experiencing or had recently emerged from armed conflict. Twelve of the 37 exhibited rates of 30 or more deaths per 100,000 population. Only three of these most violent countries were experiencing conflict: Afghanistan, Colombia, and Syria. The other nine countries with rates exceeding 30 per 100,000 population were in the Americas and Southern Africa, the regions with the highest increases of lethal violence since 2004 (see Figure 2.7).

Changes in lethal violence, 2004–12

Data for the period 2004–12 shows that lethal violence is decreasing or remaining low in most parts of the world, with the exception of Central America and Southern Africa. The data also reveals that the countries that exhibit severe levels and rates of lethal violence are the ones where violent deaths have been on the rise or have remained very high for extended periods of time. In addition, a small number of states slipped into severe crises with a high number of associated deaths.

Figure 2.6 compares the distribution of countries according to average violent death rates in the periods 2004–09 and 2007–12. Well over two-thirds of the countries witnessed rates in the 'very low' and 'low' categories (<10 violent deaths per 100,000 population). The comparison reveals that the number of countries in these categories increased from 128 to 137, and that their average violent death rates decreased slightly. At the same time, the number of countries in the 'medium' and 'high' categories (10–29.9 violent deaths per 100,000) dropped from 44 to 34 and their average violent death rate remained relatively steady. The group of countries in the 'very high' category (≥30 violent deaths per 100,000) increased from 14 to 18; the group's average rate of violent deaths increased slightly.

Figure 2.6 Distribution of countries and territories by average violent death rates per 100,000 population, 2004–09 vs. 2007–12

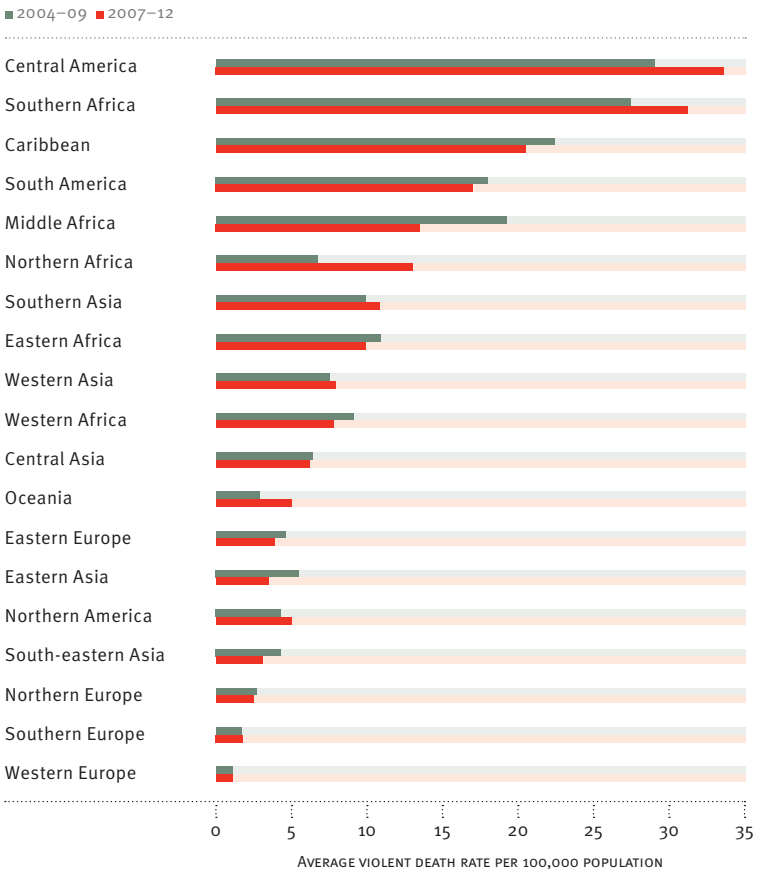


Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Figure 2.6 also reveals that the majority of the countries and territories reviewed for this chapter experienced either low and relatively stable or steadily declining levels of lethal violence. Observers of long-term trends and data agree that, in general, the incidence of lethal violence is decreasing. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program, for instance, stresses the long-term decline in battle-related deaths over the past decades (Themnér and Wallensteen, 2013). Research on homicide in Europe also points to a long-term decline (Goertzel et al., 2013; Gurr, 1981). Even some countries that were formerly affected by high levels of lethal violence—such as Colombia and the Russian Federation—have recently witnessed significant declines in the number of violent deaths (Aguirre and Restrepo, 2010; Lysova, Shchitov, and Pridemore, 2012).

In contrast, some countries have suffered from sustained high violent death rates. In Brazil, for example, annual homicide levels increased steadily from 14,000 deaths in 1980 to close to 50,000 deaths in 2002; since then, these levels have not varied significantly (Waiselfisz, 2013, p. 14). The relative consistency, however, hides important shifts within the country, as violence levels decreased in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, but increased dramatically in the Northeast region (see Chapter Four).

Figure 2.7 Average regional violent death rates per 100,000 population, 2004–09 vs. 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

An examination of the distribution of lethal violence across sub-regions shows that the Americas and Africa suffered from the highest rates of lethal violence in both periods under review (see Figure 2.7). Central America continues to exhibit the highest rate of violent deaths, which rose from 29.0 to 33.6 per 100,000 population; the next highest rate is that of Southern Africa, which rose from 27.4 to 31.2. Rates dropped slightly in the Caribbean (from 22.4 to 20.5) and in South America (from 18.0 to 17.0); while these averages are not as elevated as those of Central America or South Africa, they are still more than twice the global average of 7.4 per 100,000.

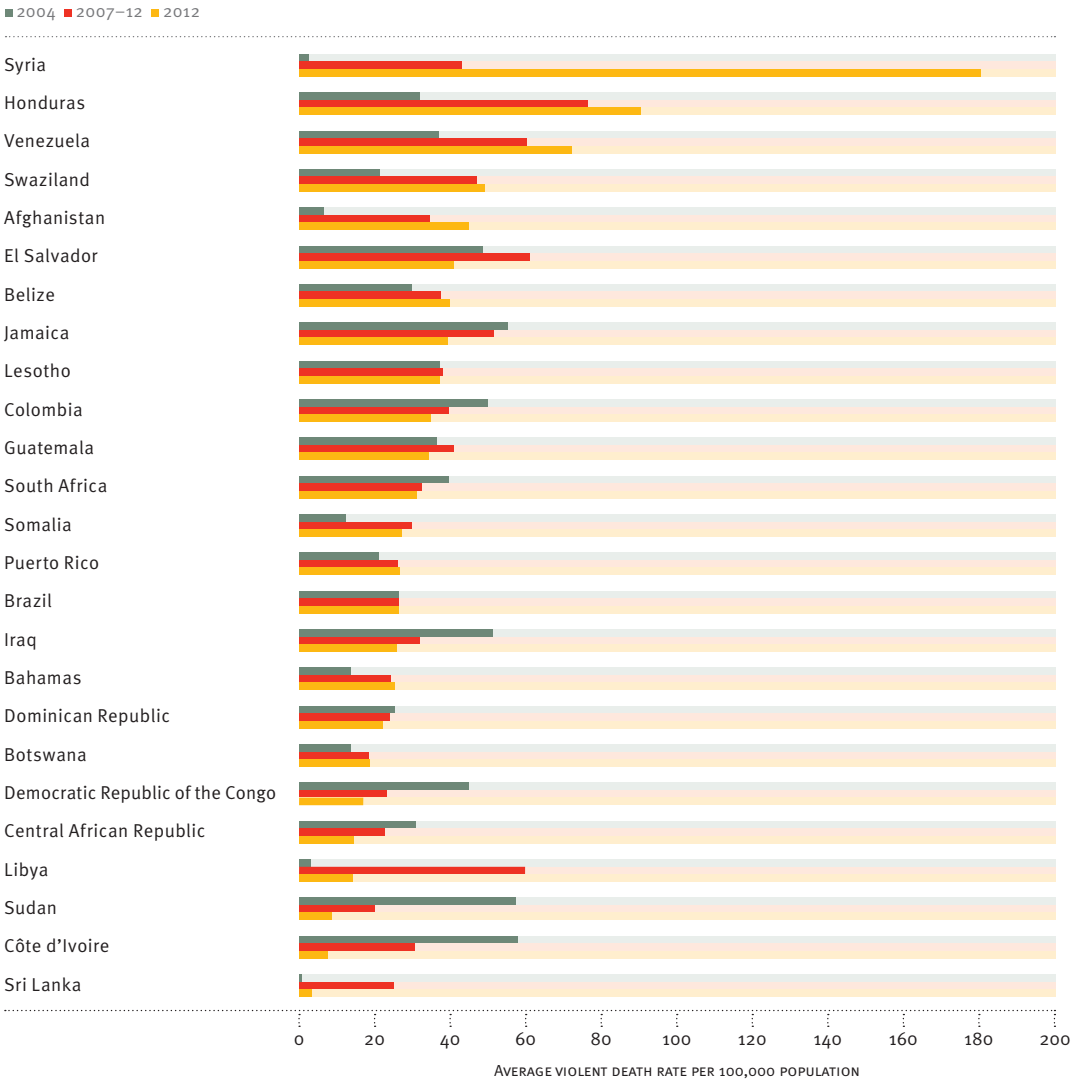
A few major findings emerge from these comparisons. First, the Central American and Southern African violent death rates have increased, reflecting protracted instability in both regions. Honduras, in particular, endured an ongoing spiral of violence in 2004–12, although the rate of increase in homicides began to slow in 2011 (Sánchez, Diáz, and Nowak, 2014). In contrast, El Salvador witnessed a discernible drop in the homicide rate in 2012, in the wake of the highly publicized—and polarizing—gang truce (see Box 2.4). In Southern Africa, rates of lethal violence in small countries remained high and increased in 2007–12, despite a marked reduction in South Africa. The comparisons also reveal a significant increase in the levels of lethal violence in Northern Africa—from 6.7 to 13.0 per 100,000 population—particularly following upheavals and conflicts in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia (see Box 2.5).

Figure 2.8 focuses solely on countries whose average violent death rates were 'high' or 'very high' (≥20 per 100,000 people) for the period 2007–12. The figure presents the violent death rates for the years 2004 and 2012—the earliest and latest years for which the data is available in the GBAV database—as well as the average rate

for the period 2007–12. In so doing, it provides a clear picture of which countries have suffered from high volatility, which have experienced steady increases, and which have exhibited decreases in violent death rates.

Syria is a conspicuous outlier in Figure 2.8. While the exact death toll in the Syrian conflict is highly contested (see Box 2.3), GBAV data shows that at least 39,000 people were killed in 2012 alone, which translates into a rate of

Figure 2.8 Changes in violent death rates per 100,000 population, 2004, 2007–12, and 2012



Note: This figure features only countries whose average violent death rate was at least 20 per 100,000 population for the period 2007–12.

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Box 2.3 Measuring violent deaths in Syria: a complex case

The counting of fatalities in the Syrian conflict, which began in March 2011, is both a complex and a highly politicized issue. Recording casualties is complicated not only by the country's forbidding security situation, but also due to the increasingly fragmented nature of the conflict. Casualty figures in Syria have featured prominently in the international news media and have been the subject of contention among all the parties that take an interest in the conflict, including the international community.

In an effort to call attention to the severity of the conflict and the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in Syria, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights commissioned the independent Human Rights Data Analysis Group to arrive at an aggregate casualty figure by compiling all known sources. While this research produced estimates that became widely used, the group's methodology has since drawn a significant amount of scrutiny and criticism (Narwani, 2013). In response, the UN stopped releasing the casualty figures, citing issues of access and an inability to independently verify the information as the principal reasons, while also expressing concerns over the impartiality and credibility of the sources used (Heilprin, 2014).

Although there are many sources of casualty data in Syria, the international community and the media have largely relied on civil society organizations that compile casualty information from a variety of primary and secondary sources. Among these, the most prominent are the Violation Documentation Center (VDC), the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), and the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). Operating mainly as human rights organizations, they gather data on casualties to support survivors in seeking justice and as part of a future transitional justice mechanism.

Their methodologies are similar: they all rely primarily on a network of information gatherers who collect data on conflict-related deaths in the country's various governorates and districts (see Box 1.4). These recorders gather basic information, such as the names of victims, their sex, where they died, how they died (which weapons were used), and, on occasion, additional demographic details. The information gathered by these networks is usually sent to a central database, hosted outside of Syria, where it is processed and compiled. The recorders submit reports on an almost daily basis, with the aim of being as comprehensive as possible.

Despite their similar methodologies, these organizations have differing total casualty figures (see Figures 2.9–2.11). As discussed below, the disparities are partly due to operational challenges, yet they also reflect problems related to accessing sources as well as variations in the classification of the data.

Operational challenges. The networks of information gatherers are rarely able to maintain complete coverage of all events taking place in the country, largely

FIGURE 2.9 Total number of fatalities in Syria, May 2011–June 2014

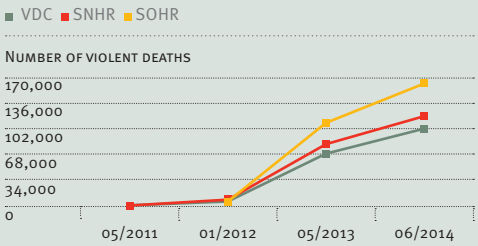
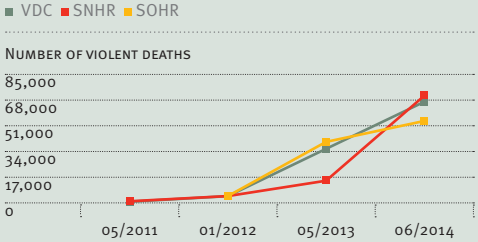
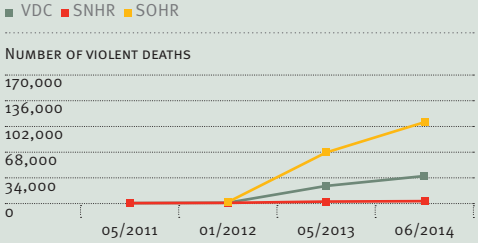


FIGURE 2.10 Total number of 'civilian' fatalities in Syria, May 2011–June 2014



NOTE: VDC categorizes its fatalities into two sub-categories: 1) deaths of *martyrs*, meaning individuals who opposed the regime or supported the revolution, and 2) deaths of *regime supporters*, including civilians and combatants. SOHR includes Syrian Army defectors in its civilian count.

FIGURE 2.11 Total number of 'combatant' fatalities in Syria, May 2011–June 2014



NOTE: The SOHR 'combatant' count includes the following categories: rebel fighters, regular soldiers and officers, non-Syrian fighters in various Islamic groups, Hezbollah fighters, popular defence committees, national defence forces, *shabiha* (pro-regime militias), and pro-regime informers.

SOURCES FOR FIGURES 2.9–2.11: Karimi and Abdelaziz (2014); Winstanley (2012); Zenko (2013); VDC and SNHR casualty data shared with Every Casualty

Photo ▲ A shell explodes in the Syrian city of Kobane, near the Turkish border, November 2014.

because of the security risks of working in a conflict zone. In some areas, information gatherers may be cut off from electricity or Internet access for long periods of time, and thus be unable to record or share their information about violent incidents in that area.

Uneven access to sources. Individual information gatherers may only be accessing a limited pool of sources, such as witnesses or official documentation (death or medical certificates), especially if they are opposition activists. The use of activists as primary data gatherers may also explain why some of the opposition-aligned organizations—such as SNHR and VDC—report similar figures. Access to a wider range of sources may be the reason why SOHR's figures are significantly different from the others. Indeed, SOHR reportedly has access to sources in the Assad government and receives information about the deaths of Syrian Army members, while the other organizations admit that this type of information is difficult to access.

Conflicting classifications. The varying categorizations of victims, especially in relation to their combat status, complicate assessments of casualty figures from the various organizations (see Figures 2.10 and 2.11). Their notions of who constitutes a civilian or a combatant and why are not always based on legal definitions and can thus differ greatly. Another problem is related to the frequent use of the term *shuhada* (martyr) to refer to those who have died in the name of the Syrian revolution. VDC, which is the only organization that defines 'martyr', uses the term to refer to anyone who was killed by Assad's government forces. SNHR, SOHR, and VDC classify the majority of fatalities recorded in their databases as 'martyrs'. The use of this kind of locally relevant yet highly subjective term causes additional ambiguity and can lead observers to question the impartiality of the information and even of the organizations themselves.

Author: Hana Salama, Every Casualty

180.2 deaths per 100,000 population. In stark contrast, Syria's average for the period 2007–12 is 36.3, a figure mitigated by low rates from before the outbreak of civil war in 2011. The rate for 2004 is lower still, at 2.4 deaths per 100,000.

After Syria, the three countries with the next highest violent death rates for 2012—Honduras, Venezuela, and Swaziland—all experienced increasing levels of lethal violence. In Honduras, the rate nearly tripled from 31.9 in 2004 to 90.4 in 2012; meanwhile, the number of homicides doubled from 3,200 deaths in 2007 to more than 7,000 in 2012—a rate only surpassed by the Syrian conflict deaths. Over the same period, Venezuela's violent death rate experienced a two-fold increase, from 37.0 to 72.2 (see Figure 2.13). In Swaziland, the lethal violence rate more than doubled, from 21.4 to 49.2 deaths per 100,000 population (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).

Following the military coup in Honduras that deposed President Manuel Zelaya in 2009, the United States suspended counter-narcotics assistance. A 'cocaine rush' subsequently took shape, giving rise to struggles for the control of Honduran drug routes. The country's 'flow events' shot up from 20 in 2000 to 233 in 2011, reflecting the southward shift of the battle over cocaine routes, which was partly brought about by Mexico's drug war (UNODC, 2012, pp. 19–20). Drug trafficking is strongly associated with violence in Honduras, particularly regarding territorial disputes over routes, especially in border areas with Guatemala and ports, which are some of the most lethal areas in the world (UNODC, 2012, p. 70; ICG, 2014a). The recent upsurge in lethal violence in Honduras—where the violent death rate rose from around 70 per 100,000 in 2009 to more than 90 per 100,000 in 2012—may reflect an increase in such competition.

Dramatic improvements in security levels may also take hold in a short period of time, as was the case in El Salvador. In 2009, the country's homicide rate had reached 71 per 100,000 population; by 2012, this figure had dropped to 41 per 100,000, following a truce between El Salvador's two major gangs, the Mara Salvatrucha and M-18 (see Box 2.4). From 2011 to 2012 alone, the number of homicides sank by more than 40 per cent, from 4,366 to 2,567 (IMLS, 2012; 2013; Sampó and Bartolomé, 2014; see Box 2.4).

A few other countries also exhibited improvements in the period under review. In Sri Lanka, for example, lethal violence rates improved substantially following the end of the conflict in 2009, after which no further direct conflict deaths were recorded. While the average annual violent death rate for 2007–12 comprises the conflict period and thus stands at 30.4 per 100,000 population, the rate plummeted to 3.3 per 100,000 in 2012, demonstrating that peace pays significant dividends.

During the period 2004–12, Iraq also witnessed a significant reduction in lethal violence. The year 2006 was the most lethal during that period, with close to 30,000 violent deaths, followed by 2007 (Crawford, 2013, p. 3). However, in 2013 and 2014 the situation deteriorated dramatically.

Among the countries whose average lethal violence rate remained below 20 per 100,000 population for 2007–12, a few have experienced significant gains in security. In Uganda violence linked to operations of the Lord's Resistance Army as well as to the 'cattle wars' in the Karamoja region decreased significantly over the period under review. In 2004, Uganda's violent death rate stood at 12.9 per 100,000 population. Lethal violence levels reached a low in 2012 (5.5) and the average rate for the years 2004–12 was 8.5—after a peak at 12.2 deaths per 100,000 population in 2009.

Box 2.4 The gang truce in El Salvador

On 14 March 2012, Salvadorans woke up to the news that the government was negotiating a truce with El Salvador's most prominent gangs, the Mara Salvatrucha and M-18—in exchange for a cutback in violence. Initially, government sources denied the talks were taking place, but soon it became clear that official representatives—including the security and justice minister, David Munguía—were involved (*El Faro*, 2012a; 2012b; Ayala Figueroa, 2013).

In view of a homicide rate that had reached 69.0 per 100,000 people in 2011, El Salvador had embarked on a bold and controversial initiative—a 'deal with the devil'—to identify viable ways to reduce the human toll of gang wars and to address widespread security concerns (*Economist*, 2012; Farah, 2012; IMLS, 2013). Within a few days of the truce, daily homicide figures had dropped from 14 to 10, then to 7, and on the Monday after the transfer of gang leaders to new facilities, they plummeted to 2 (*El Faro*, 2012c). Within the first 100 days, Salvadoran authorities claimed that the truce had reduced deaths by 60 per cent. Soon the country had witnessed its first homicide-free day—with the security and justice minister arguing that the remaining homicides committed by gangs were according to their own 'internal disciplinary measures' (*El Faro*, 2012c; Farah, 2012; Whitfield, 2013, p. 18; see Figure 2.12).

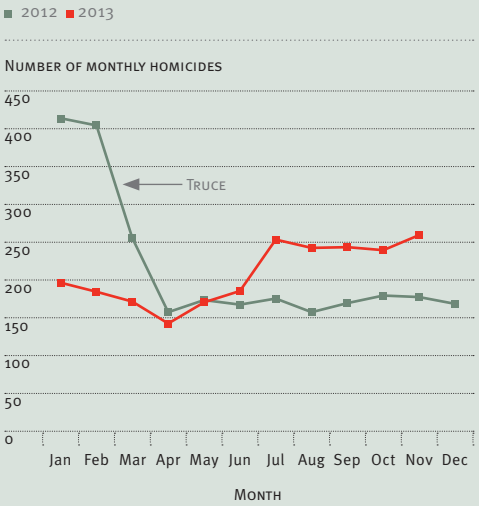
These positive results have not been sustained, however. In December 2013, the discovery of 44 dismembered bodies in a mass grave on the outskirts of San Salvador raised a worrisome possibility: the number of recorded homicides may have decreased only because gang war tactics had shifted away from the open display of victims towards the more discreet use of disappearances (Robbins, 2014). The discovery strengthened Salvadoran groups that had opposed the truce, arguing that gangs would simply kill more clandestinely while engaging in other crimes, such as extortion and robberies (Farah, 2012; Whitfield, 2013, p. 18).

As the controversy grew, left-wing presidential candidate Salvador Sánchez Cerén refused to take a clear position on the truce, fearing political fallout; by mid-2014, he had rejected the truce as president of the country (COHA, 2014). However, gangs seemed to be increasing pressure on the government, particularly with a series of very well coordinated attacks on police patrols (Bargent, 2014). On 23 May 2014, gangs in the country announced a 'Black Friday' and perpetrated at least 32 killings. The most recent reports indicate that the truce may be over, but that gangs are pressuring government officials and ministries to continue negotiating (Lindo, 2014; Martínez and Sanz, 2014).

Despite the current setbacks, 'at least 5,539 Salvadorans are alive today who would have died had the gang violence not been curtailed through dialogue and negotiation' (Wennmann, 2014, p. 269). The complexity of the negotiation and its reception by the Salvadoran public aside, the truce in El Salvador suggests pathways for solving security issues related to organized forms of crime. For such processes to be sustainable, however, 'they must be embedded in broader social and political transformation processes' (Wennmann, 2014, p. 269).

Author: Matthias Nowak

FIGURE 2.12 Monthly homicides in El Salvador, 2012 vs. 2013

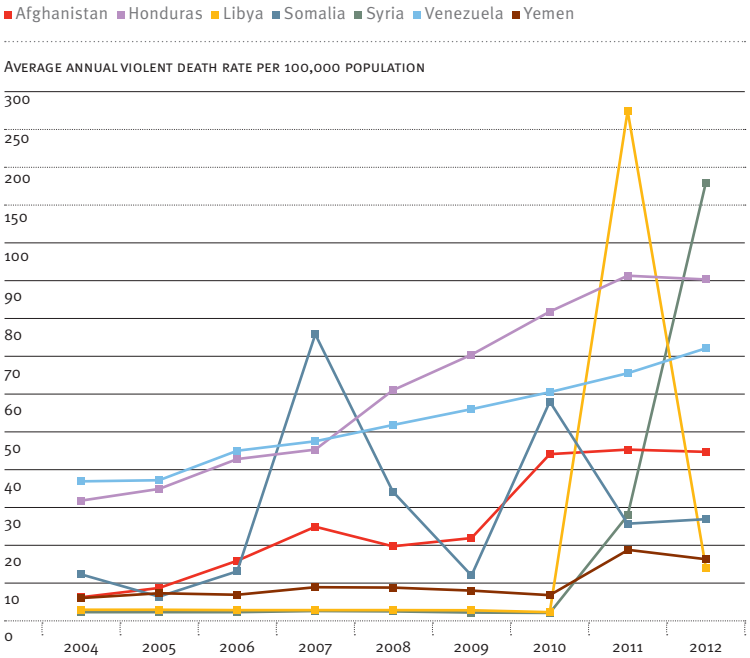


SOURCE: Southern Pulse (2013)

Libya had a lethal violence rate just above 3.0 per 100,000 population in 2004, and by 2012 that rate stood at 14.1. However, the country's average rate for 2004–12 was 34.6 violent deaths per 100,000 population—due to the war, the subsequent destabilization, and high levels of violence in 2011 and 2012. At the height of the conflict in 2011, the lethal violence rate in Libya peaked at 276.5 deaths per 100,000 population. This is the highest rate of violent deaths recorded in the entire database for the period 2004–12.

Figures 2.13 and 2.14 reflect data for selected countries that experienced significant increases and decreases—more than 50 per cent in either direction—in lethal violence for the period 2004–12.

FIGURE 2.13 Countries with significant increases in violent death rates, 2004–12



NOTE: For 2012, these countries had a violent death rate per 100,000 population that was at least twice as high as the lowest rate recorded for any given year in the period 2004–11.

SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

These changes are not necessarily linked to conflict dynamics, as evidenced by rates of countries with no recent or ongoing armed conflict, such as Honduras and Venezuela.

In Figure 2.13, the explosive nature of the conflicts in Syria and Libya is clearly reflected in the sharp increases to 180.2 and 276.5 violent deaths per 100,000 population, respectively. Both Honduras and Venezuela display steadily growing death rates, symptoms of their security crises. In contrast, the trend lines of Afghanistan and Somalia reveal volatility, with Afghanistan suffering marked increases in the death rate while Somalia exhibits strong fluctuations.

Sudden eruptions of lethal violence are typically linked to armed conflict or episodes of political violence; they tend to lead to a rapid deterioration of the security situation and can cause a high number of violent deaths. Recent upheavals and extremist violence in Nigeria and Ukraine are telling examples of how, within a few weeks, tensions can escalate and generate large numbers of violent deaths. In Nigeria in early 2014, at least 1,500 people were killed in Boko Haram-related violence (AI, 2014). Around the same time in Ukraine, clashes in Kiev claimed 100 lives, while subsequent fighting elsewhere in the country caused as many as 5,000 deaths (Cumming-Bruce, 2014; ICG, 2014b, p. 1). In mid-2014, Israel's Operation Protective Edge in Gaza claimed the lives of more than 2,000 Palestinians, of which an estimated 69 per cent were civilians, as well as 64 soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces (OCHA, 2014; *Jerusalem Post*, 2014).

In some cases, security threats remain high following initial upheavals, as has been the case in Syria. In other cases, security can improve after a peak of violence linked to conflict and political violence. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, political violence is exhibiting a 'shift away from

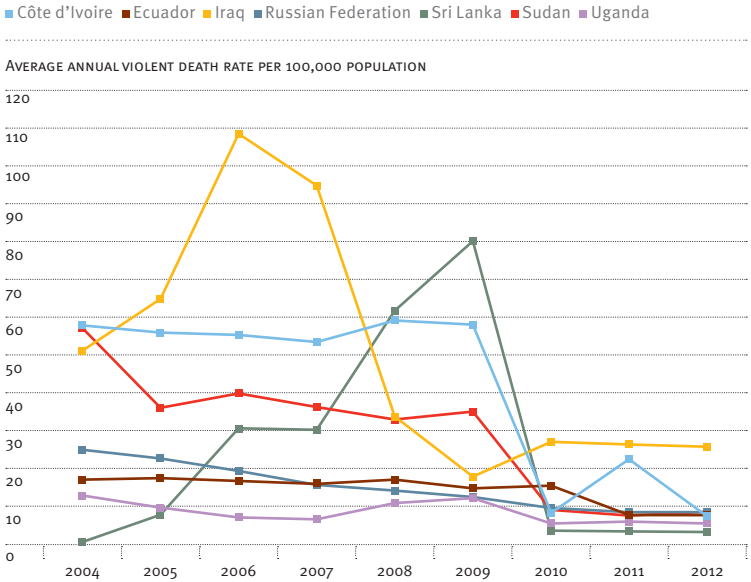
large-scale armed conflict to smaller, more peripheral wars', as well as a 'continuation of other forms of less lethal but important political violence, such as electoral violence and local violence related to access to vital resources' (Straus, 2012, p. 201).

Unlike the countries in Figure 2.13, the ones in Figure 2.14 benefited from significant gains in human security at some point during the period under review. In some cases, these gains followed intense peaks in violence, as in Iraq in 2006 and 2007 and in Sri Lanka in 2009. In 2010–12, the rate in Iraq seems to hover just over 25 violent deaths per 100,000 population, whereas the Sri Lankan rate rapidly sinks to 3.3. Sudan's drop in the rate of lethal violence is linked to the 2010 declaration of independence of South Sudan, which recorded annual rates of lethal violence averaging 30 deaths per 100,000 in 2010–12. Meanwhile, Sudan's rate plummeted to less than 10 deaths per 100,000.

Although the data series covers too short a period to allow for the identification of long-term trends, lethal violence in conflict settings appears to have increased, especially in the later stages of the period under review. The rise in deaths can largely be attributed to the Arab Spring and ensuing wars in Libya and Syria (see Figure 2.16 and Box 2.5).[9] Ongoing armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Somalia also continue to account for direct conflict deaths. The average of 70,000 direct conflict deaths annually for the period 2007–12 is thus significantly higher than the previous estimate, which stood at 55,000 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011).

As indicated above, the rise in direct conflict deaths is attributable to the civil wars and crises in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and elsewhere. In 2010, the global number of direct conflict deaths was just over 40,000, yet by 2012 this figure had almost doubled to more than 74,000 deaths (see Figure 2.15). Between 2010 and 2012, direct conflict deaths increased by approximately 85 per cent—the greatest hike in such deaths during the period under review.

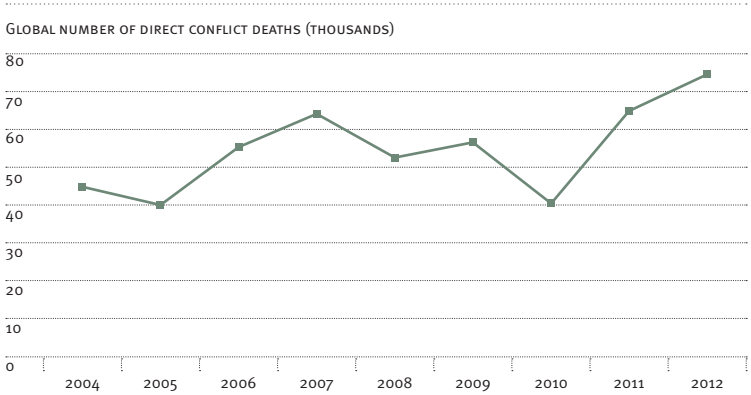
FIGURE 2.14 Countries with significant decreases in violent death rates, 2004–12



NOTE: For 2012, these countries and territories recorded violent death rates that were less than half the highest rate recorded for any given year between 2004 and 2011.

SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

FIGURE 2.15 Total direct conflict deaths per year, 2004–12



SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Box 2.5 Violent deaths and the Arab uprisings

During the first half of 2011, uprisings and popular protest spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Protest movements and civil resistance, followed by varying reactions of governments, 'brought about unexpected transformations on the ground' (Burgess and Constantinou, 2013, pp. 365–67). Violent clashes between state forces and protestors have taken on different forms across the region and led to a variety of security concerns among men and women during and since the uprisings.

Initially, violent clashes between government forces and demonstrators often led to civilian deaths. These fatalities do not fit neatly into the standard data set categories of homicide or conflict deaths, partly because the killings may not meet the minimum requirements for armed conflicts (see Box 2.1).

In times of regime change, state security structures are often weakened, while political factions and security agencies may be absorbed in power struggles. Sustained collective violence is unusual during such transition periods, yet the physical security of citizens has often been threatened by transition-related conflicts (Gledhill, 2013, p. 709). Indeed, the proportion of fatalities associated with violence against civilians has been high across the Middle East and North Africa (ACLED, 2014, p. 5).

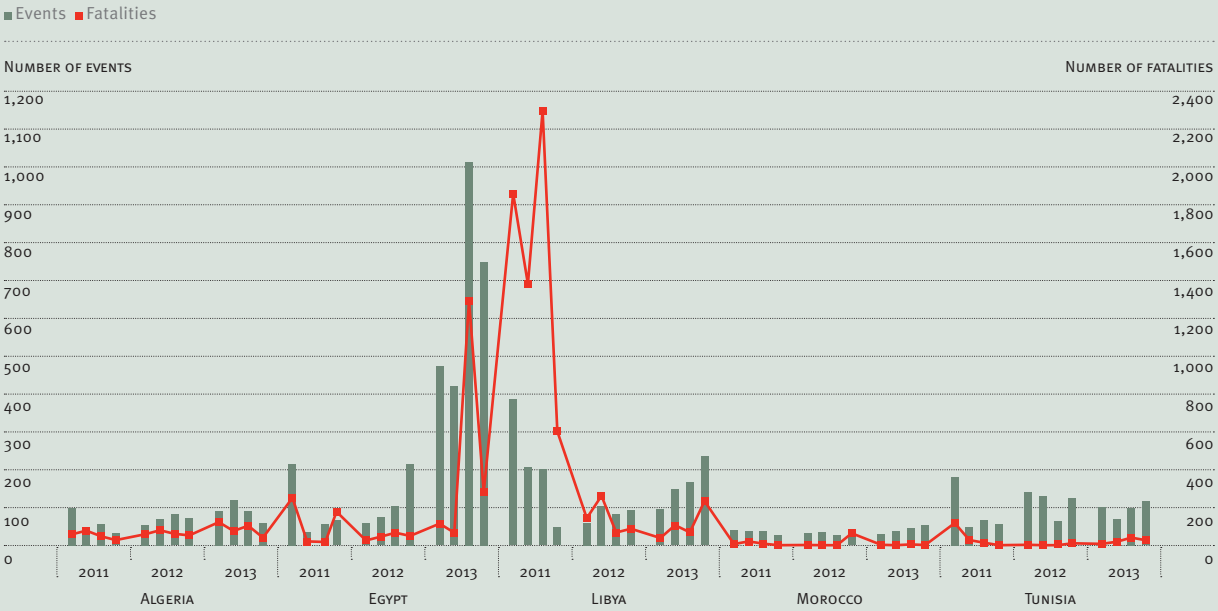
According to data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), the dominant conflict events in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia have been riots and protests, while battles are most prevalent in Algeria and Libya (ACLED, 2014, p. 5).

The cases of Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia are instructive in two ways: first, in that different approaches were applied to record casualties and events and, second, in that different states of instability arose in the aftermath of the uprisings (ACLED, 2014, p. 5; see Figure 2.16).

In **Tunisia**, violence was initially limited and sporadic. Security forces appeared to do no more than contain the demonstrations—until it became clear that the challenge to the regime was serious (Johansson-Nogués, 2013, pp. 399–400).

In the week prior to President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali's ousting on 14 January 2011, security forces killed at least 300 people and injured hundreds during mass demonstrations. As Amnesty International reports, many 'protesters were shot dead by security forces using live ammunition' (AI, 2012).

Figure 2.16 Quarterly conflict events and reported fatalities, January 2011–December 2013



Source: ACLED (2014, p. 1)

Photo Two injured people are carried during clashes between supporters and opponents of ousted President Mohammed Morsi, Cairo, Egypt, July 2013.
© Hassan Ammar/AP Photo

The Uppsala Conflict Data Program does not include violence perpetrated during demonstrations in its data sets, but it registers 86 fatalities that do not fit into the categories of armed conflict, state-based violence, or one-sided violence (UCDP, n.d.a). ACLED finds that '[w]hile conflict events spiked in January 2011, levels of unrest have remained much higher than their pre-uprising averages since the uprising', noting that riots and protests made up 80 per cent of Tunisian conflict events from 2010 to 2014 (ACLED, 2014, p. 6). Despite striking instances of Salafi violence, however, such incidents have not been widespread in Tunisia (ICG, 2013, p. i).

In **Egypt**, the beginning of the '25 January Revolution' was mostly peaceful. The army refrained from using violence against the protestors in the initial stages of the demonstrations at Tahrir Square (Johansson-Nogués, 2013, p. 400). Yet, by the end of the uprising, at least 840 people had been killed and 6,467 others injured (AI, 2011, p. 28).

As was the case in Tunisia, protest fatalities in Egypt were not included in the UCDP data sets; nevertheless, UCDP counts 316 fatalities prior to and 62 fatalities after President Hosni Mubarak's departure (UCDP, n.d.b).

The levels of violence in Egypt were relatively low in late 2011 and throughout 2012, but marked by a sharp resurgence in 2013. Countrywide demonstrations and a growing insurgency in eastern Egypt were met with heavy military force, as reflected by a significant rise in the number of conflict events, which far exceeded those of the previous peaks in January 2011 (ACLED, 2014, p. 5).

Estimates of the number of deaths in the **Libyan** uprising and subsequent civil war vary widely. The Libyan Transitional National Council estimated in September 2011 that at least 30,000 people had been killed in the six-month armed conflict (*Haaretz*, 2011). Recorded fatalities for 2011 range 'from 12,700 to 17,800, including 5,000 to 7,000 civilians, 5,500 to 7,500 rebels and 2,200 to 3,300 Gadhafi loyalists' (Ploughshares, 2014).

The number of conflict events and deaths between 2011 and 2013 remained below fatality levels witnessed during the NATO-led military operations. Yet they gradually increased, reflecting instability and potentially explosive dynamics not only among political and military actors, but also among local extremist groups that sought to take advantage of weak security institutions (ACLED, 2014, p. 4; McQuinn, 2013, p. 719).

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Furthermore, the updated version of the GBAV direct conflict deaths data set covers countries that had not previously recorded conflict-related fatalities. These include Libya and Egypt, where troops and pro-government armed groups opened fire and killed many people; Mali, which experienced an intervention and rebellion; Côte d'Ivoire, where post-electoral violence escalated into armed conflict; and South Sudan and Syria, where civil war erupted and intensified.

The country that suffered the highest number of direct conflict deaths in 2004–12 is Iraq, with an estimated 110,000 total fatalities. During the same period, Pakistan witnessed the second highest number of deaths: 46,000. In Syria, 44,000 people were killed between March 2011 and the end of 2012 alone; in 2013, a year not under review in this edition of the GBAV, another 36,000 people met violent deaths in Syria (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).

The number of conflict-related deaths in Iraq fell significantly after the upsurge in violence in 2006–07. Yet the number remained high and increased again in 2012 and 2013, such that the latter year was the deadliest in Iraq since 2008, with an estimated 8,868 deaths (7,818 civilians and 1,050 security personnel killed) (Salaheddin, 2014). In September 2013 alone, close to 1,000 people were killed in a surge of sectarian violence and due to a spillover of the Syrian conflict (BBC, 2013).

In Afghanistan, the rate of violent deaths actually began to increase in 2009, underscoring that the conflict was far from over. In particular, an increase in attacks and casualties in the Afghan military and police drove direct conflict deaths upwards (Themnér and Wallensteen, 2013, p. 512).

Other conflicts and crises erupted in 2013 and 2014, but the recording and tallying of related

Photo ▶ Residents look on as French soldiers take part in security operations in response to unrest in Bangui, Central African Republic, December 2013. © Miguel Medina/ AFP Photo


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fatalities remains distinctly flawed, as evidenced by the cases of Mali and the Central African Republic. In Mali, a military coup destabilized the political landscape in early 2012 and Tuareg rebels joined forces with Islamist militants to take over the north of the country, triggering military intervention by French (and Malian) soldiers in early 2013 (Heisbourg, 2013; Théroux-Bénoni, 2013). As noted by the media, the height of the conflict was characterized by a general information blackout, during which the collection and retrieval of data on conflict-related deaths was extremely difficult (Marthoz, 2013). That lack of information is reflected in the underreporting of casualty figures for 2012, such as in the *War Report 2012*, which records only 212 deaths for the year—a figure that remains difficult to verify (Casey-Maslen, 2013, p. 117). The sources consulted and compiled for the GBAV database record a total of 213 deaths for Mali in 2012, which is very close to the *War Report* estimate (see Box 1.4).

In the Central African Republic, a coalition of rebel forces (Séléka) ousted President François Bozizé in 2013, triggering an escalation in violence. Many of the rebel fighters reportedly engaged in serious human rights violations, such as massacres and systematic rape (HRW, 2013b). After the rebel leader took over as the republic's president and dissolved the coalition, violence levels increased again as reprisal attacks with an increasingly sectarian taint swept across the country. In a very short period of time towards the end of 2013, an estimated 400–500 people were killed (HRW, 2013a, p. 6).

Recording deaths in ongoing situations of conflict and civil unrest represents a challenging task. The data collection effort for the GBAV database intends to overcome some of the issues of updated information by integrating records from a wide range of sources.

Firearms and lethal violence

This edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* benefits from a marked improvement in the availability of nationally recorded and reported absolute values of firearm homicides across the globe. The firearm homicide data set comprises a total of 175 countries and territories.[10] Much of the information gathered in the GBAV database is drawn from two types of sources: 1) national-level sources, including international repositories based on national data, and 2) Global Burden of Disease and other public health estimates.[11]

The estimates presented in this section are subject to substantial limitations as the focus of the data collection and analysis is on firearm-related *homicide*. Although some of the conflict-related data provides details about the use of firearms, conflict settings generally prove more difficult for the gathering of such information. Consequently, this section is based mostly on homicide data provided by national records or reports, from either public health or criminal justice sources.

It should also be borne in mind that this edition of the GBAV covers *fatal* events only. Due to this focus, the analysis excludes a wide range of violent events whose outcomes are not fatal, such as robberies at gunpoint[12] and non-lethal gun-related injuries (see Box 2.6).

An analysis of the data on the mechanisms of killings reveals that firearms remain the instruments that are most widely used to commit homicides worldwide. Based on the data for the countries and territories under review, this report finds that close to half of all homicides are committed with a firearm (46.3 per cent), meaning that guns are the mechanism of violence in about 174,600 homicide cases every year. Recent research shows that sharp objects such as knives and machetes are used in about 24 per cent of all homicides,

while all other means—including blunt objects and physical force—account for an estimated third of all killings (UNODC, 2014, p. 65).

In view of a host of weaknesses in the data collection process, the above-mentioned number of annual firearm-related homicides should be treated as a conservative estimate. Many countries in the world do not produce any data on mortality or morbidity, nor do they release crime reports. As a result, these countries are not covered in the GBAV database. Meanwhile, certain countries that do publish data on homicides do not disaggregate it by mechanisms used to perpetrate killings. Still other countries publish disaggregated data, with some limitations. One example is Brazil, whose public health data for 2012 includes 1,801 homicides (roughly 3.5 per cent of all homicides) for which the mechanism has not been identified (MoH Brazil, n.d.). Similarly, records for the same year do not identify the means of killing in 126 homicide cases (roughly 5 per cent of the total) in El Salvador (IMLS, 2013, p. 7). While these figures may seem small, they can potentially add an error of 3–5 per cent in national totals.

Mis- and underreporting further weaken the reliability of data. In the public health sector, undercounting may be severe if medical staff members habitually 'misreport the context of a death' (Jackson and Marsh, 2011, p. 114). In Argentina, health statistics on firearm-related deaths for 2009 include 1,787 homicides and a further 1,050 firearm deaths of 'unidentified intentionality', meaning that the latter events—which comprise more than one-third of the total number of firearm deaths—could not be classified as suicides, accidents, or homicides (Fleitas, Lodola, and Flom, 2014, p. 15). Undercounting in public health and criminal justice statistics can thus introduce significant errors in the calculations of the global prevalence of firearm-related deaths.

As noted above, conflict settings pose their own sets of challenges to data collection. Yet although comprehensive data on firearm deaths remains elusive, some data on the mechanisms used in killing people in conflict situations is available

Box 2.6 Beyond homicide: non-lethal firearm violence

Estimates of levels of armed violence are typically based on homicide numbers and recorded conflict deaths. Yet this approach excludes non-lethal consequences of firearm injuries, which can require treatment and recovery that 'place a heavy burden on survivors, their families, communities, and society' (Alvazzi del Frate and De Martino, 2013, p. 1).

Analysts use 'case fatality rates' to shed light on the relationship between fatal and non-fatal firearm-related incidents. The rate can be employed to provide a rough indicator of the proportion of people who do not survive a specific type of injury over a certain amount of time (Alvazzi del Frate and De Martino, 2013, p. 2). A review of data available for 26 countries and territories indicates that 'the higher a country's firearm homicide rate, the higher its case fatality rate for all firearm violence' (p. 3). In other words, the higher a country's firearm homicide rate, the higher the proportion of gunshot victims who die from their wounds.

The average global case fatality rate for intentional, non-conflict firearm injuries can be estimated using extrapolation. Based on the average case fatality rate of the 26 countries for which data on both non-lethal and fatal firearms incidents is available, the case fatality rate for all countries is approximately 48 per cent, or roughly one non-fatal injury for every homicide (Alvazzi del Frate and De Martino, 2013, p. 3). Applying this average case fatality rate to the GBAV estimate for intentional homicides (377,000) suggests that at least 754,000 non-fatal firearms injuries occur each year.

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from case studies. Analysis of this data shows that the share and role of firearms are highly dependent on the context and nature of a conflict, including the types of armed actors, their access to materiel, the capacity of weaponry used, and the fighting strategy employed.

The Lebanon war, for example, was conducted largely via airstrikes and shelling, which is reflected in the low proportion of firearm deaths recorded in 2006; only 5 of 1,109 deaths—less than one-half of 1 per cent—were due to firearms (HRW, 2007, pp. 172–78). In Gulu province, Uganda, however, 168 of 397 deaths—more than 40 per cent—resulted from gunshots in the period 1994–99 (Kreutz and Marsh, 2011, p. 51). These Ugandan figures and data from other selected case studies listed in Table 2.1 suggest that close to one-third of all direct conflict deaths around the world are firearm-related.

For the period 2007–12, this edition of the GBAV estimates that almost 197,000 violent deaths—or 44.1 per cent of all violent deaths—were caused by firearms every year. This figure comprises 174,600 firearm-related homicides (46.3 per cent of all homicides) and 22,380 firearm-related direct conflict deaths (32.3 per cent of all direct conflict deaths). The global firearm death rate for the period was thus 3.0 per 100,000 population (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).

Yet these global figures hide significant sub-regional and national variations. Figure 2.17 shows regional variations for 2007–12. In Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia, and Oceania, for instance, only about 10 per cent or less of all homicides were firearm-related—a very low proportion compared to those of other sub-regions. Even in Western Europe, which is among the sub-regions with the lowest homicide rates in the world, 26 per cent of homicides were firearm-related. In Southern Europe that rate stood at 40 per cent, the highest in all European sub-regions, despite its low firearm homicide rate of 0.6 per 100,000 population (see Figure 2.17).

Table 2.1 Estimated firearm deaths in conflict settings

Location	Total deaths	Firearm deaths	Firearm deaths as a share of total deaths (%)
Syria (child victims only; 30 months of the war, 2011–14)	10,586	2,806	26.5
Iraq (2012)	4,594	1,624	35.4
Croatia (1991–92)	4,339	1,463	33.7
Various conflicts (June–October 2004)*	1,364	1,165	85.4
Gulu province, Uganda (1994–99)	397	168	42.3
Lebanon (2006)	1,109	5	0.5
Total	**22,389**	**7,231**	**32.3**

Note: * The 'various conflicts' took place in Aceh, Algeria, Burundi, Chechnya, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Nepal, and Uganda.

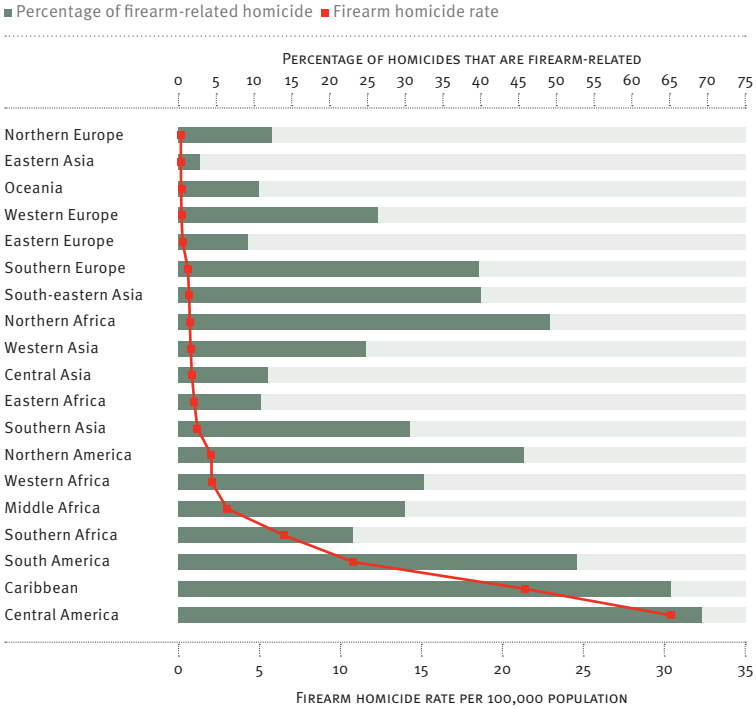
Sources: ICRC (1999, p. 10); Iraq Body Count (n.d.); Kreutz and Marsh (2011, p. 51); Kuzman et al. (1993); ORG (2013); Wille and Krause (2005)

At the other end of the spectrum, all the sub-regions of the Americas exhibit high firearm homicide rates as well as high proportions of homicides committed with firearms. In South America, which has a firearm homicide rate of 10.3 per 100,000 population, 52.7 per cent of homicides are firearm-related. In the Caribbean and in Central America, where the firearm homicide rates are 22.5 and 28.8 per 100,000 population, 65.0 and 69.0 per cent of homicides are committed with firearms, respectively. It should be kept in mind that the Americas is the region that experienced the greatest increase in lethal violence over the period under review (see Figure 2.2). In some countries where firearm homicide rates are low, notably in Southern Europe, Northern Africa, and South-eastern Asia, high proportions of homicides are firearm-related. Yet in no sub-region that exhibits a high firearm homicide rate is only a small proportion of homicides firearm-related.

Figure 2.17 highlights that the proportion of homicides committed with firearms and the severity of firearm homicide rates are not necessarily linked, although they seem correlated in the Latin American and Caribbean regions. Indeed, data for those two regions suggests that the greater the homicide rate, the greater the share of homicides committed with firearms (Gilgen, 2012).

Additional regional variations emerge with regard to homicide contexts and the use of firearms. For example, gang and organized crime-related homicides are more frequent in the Americas, where the share of homicides perpetrated with firearms is also high. In contrast, in Europe the most common context for homicides is intimate partner- or family-related violence, with a somewhat lower share of firearms use (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, pp. 90–93). This comparison may indicate that firearms are an important instrument in violence associated with gangs and organized crime groups. It also underscores that an understanding of country-specific contexts of lethal violence is key to assessing the relative risk that stems from the presence of firearms.

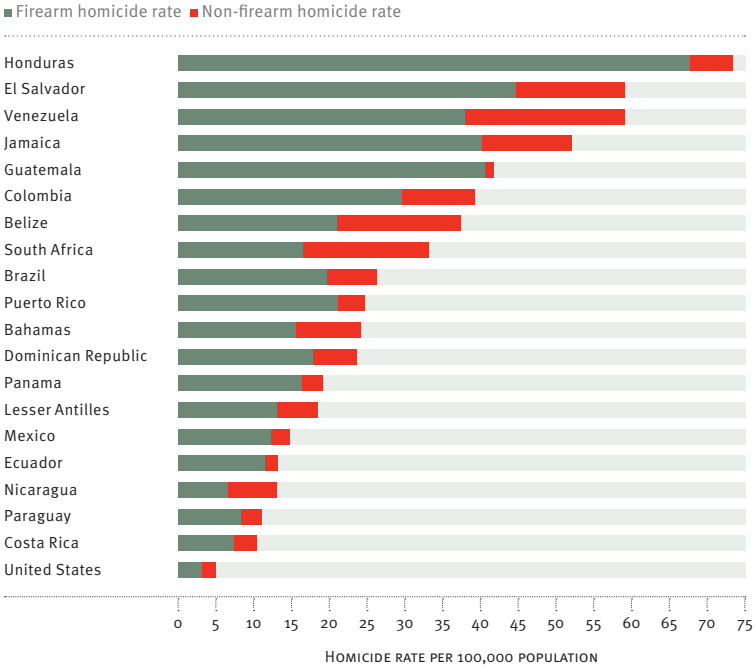
Figure 2.17 Average firearm homicide rate and percentage of firearm-related homicides, per sub-region, 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

The country ranking presented in Figure 2.18 is based exclusively on national reports of firearm homicides. The figure shows the 20 countries and territories that report an average firearm homicide rate of at least 3.0 per 100,000 people for the period 2007–12 (equal to or above the average global firearm-related violent death rate); the other countries and territories with available national data sources exhibit firearm homicide rates below that threshold. Since only a limited number of countries disaggregate data based on the means used to commit homicide, Figure 2.18 excludes

Figure 2.18 Average firearm and non-firearm homicide rates, by country or territory, selected countries, 2007–12*



Note: * This graph features only countries whose firearm homicide rates were at least 3.0 per 100,000 population for the period under review and for which a national data source was available. Given the small population of the Lesser Antilles, the eight sovereign states of the region were grouped together and their rates averaged to produce a regional estimate. The countries in question are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

many parts of the world, especially countries in Africa and Asia. The fact that Latin American and Caribbean states provide quality data that is readily available may in part explain why they feature more prominently than other countries whose violence levels also appear to be high but whose data on the mechanisms used in homicide is scarce.

In total, 18 of the 20 countries in Figure 2.18 are located in Latin America and the Caribbean. The remaining two countries are South Africa (with a firearm homicide rate of 16.5 per 100,000 population) and the United States (with a rate of 3.1 per 100,000

Photo ▶ A forensic expert takes notes after an 18-year-old man was stabbed to death during a fight between two groups of youths in central London, December 2011. © Finbarr O'Reilly/Reuters

Box 2.7 Knives and lethal violence

The mortality associated with the use of knives and other bladed weapons, such as scissors or a broken bottle, is measured on the basis of crime and health statistics.

Firearms represent the offensive weapon most commonly used to perpetrate violent acts in large parts of the Americas. In 2012 in Honduras, firearms represented the leading mechanism used in causing violent deaths, while blades were responsible for only 9 per cent of cases (IUDPAS, 2013, p. 3). In the same period in the United States, 12 per cent of murders were committed with knives or sharp instruments, while 69 per cent were carried out with a firearm (FBI, 2012).

In regions outside of the Americas, such as Europe, Asia, and Oceania, bladed weapons are used to commit a large proportion of killings. In the United Kingdom in 2012–13, for instance, more than one-third of all homicide cases involved sharp instruments, which represented the main method used to kill both men and women (Home Office, 2014, fig 2.3). Specifically, sharp instruments accounted for 35.2 per cent of male victims and 39.3 per cent of female victims in the period 2010–11 (Berman, 2012).

Recent crime statistics from Scotland suggest that sharp objects are used to kill about half of all victims of lethal violence in the country; in contrast, firearms are used in less than 2 per cent of cases. In total, sharp instruments were used to kill 23 men and 3 women in 2012–13, while a firearm was used to kill only 1 man (Scotland, 2013). In Australia in 2011, murderers used knives to kill almost half (47 per cent) of all their victims; the use of firearms in the commission of a murder was about half that rate, or 24 per cent (AIC, 2013, p. 17).

While the Western media may have devoted much attention to mass killings involving firearms, mass stabbings continue to take place, particularly in China (BBC, 2014; Hilal et al., 2014). Further research into the role of knives in lethal violence is necessary to understand their contribution to the global burden of violent deaths.

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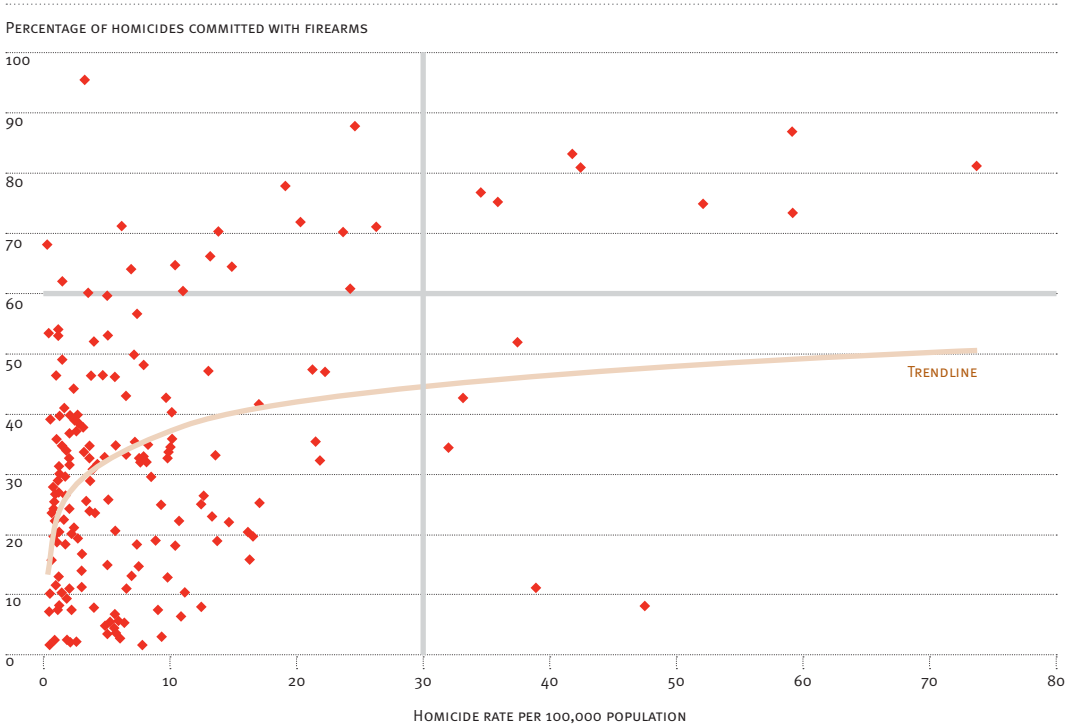
population). Based on the data available for this review, Honduras had both the highest average rate of lethal violence for the period 2007–12 (73.4 deaths per 100,000 population) and the highest firearm homicide rate for the same period (60.1 per 100,000 population).

The category of non-firearm homicides comprises incidents involving the use of other instruments, such as those referred to as 'bladed weapons', which include knives and other sharp objects, such as broken glass. The United Kingdom is one country in which these instruments are of particular relevance (see Box 2.7).

Figure 2.19 correlates homicide rates with the proportion of firearm homicides for 175 countries and territories for which data is available. The location of each point in the graph is determined by a country's average annual homicide rate per 100,000 population and by the percentage of homicides committed with firearms during the period 2007–12.

As discussed below, correlations are a contested area of research. Nevertheless, Figure 2.19 shows a clustering of data points. First, numerous data points are grouped together tightly in the bottom left corner of the graph—where both the homicide rates and the proportion of homicides committed with firearms are low. Many of these data points represent countries in Western and Northern Europe, regions characterized by

Figure 2.19 Average annual homicide rate per 100,000 population and percentage of homicides committed with firearms for 175 countries and territories, 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

such low rates. Another group of data points seems to run parallel to the trend line, above it, in the direction of increasing homicide rates and shares of homicides committed with firearms. Many of these data points represent Latin American and Caribbean countries, where such elevated rates are not unusual (Gilgen, 2012).

Yet some groups of data points do not fit neatly into either of these two categories. The data points in the top left corner, for example, represent countries where large percentages of homicides are perpetrated with firearms while homicide rates are low or very low. In these countries, the use of a firearm in one or several homicide cases can dramatically drive up the proportion of homicides committed with firearms. In 2007 and 2008, for example, the Maldives and Montenegro each registered five cases of homicide, respectively, all of which were committed with a firearm.

Near the centre of the graph area, a bit below the trend line, a few data points represent countries where the homicide rate is very high (≥30 deaths per 100,000) but fewer than 60 per cent of homicides are committed with firearms. These data points correspond to countries in the Southern African region—Lesotho, South Africa, and Swaziland—and show a relatively high incidence of violence with a relatively low involvement of firearms as the mechanism of violence used. Indeed, South African Police Service data consistently shows that at most 50 per cent of homicides are committed with firearms. The National Injury Mortality Surveillance System offers a hint as to why; its data indicates that 42 per cent of violent deaths are caused by sharp objects, although it should be noted that the data provides coverage below the national level (Jaynes, 2012, pp. 136–37).

Any links between homicide rates and the proportion of homicides perpetrated with firearms seem to be weak as the homicide rates drop below 20 per 100,000 population. Conversely, the links appear stronger as the rate increases above 30 per 100,000; in highly affected countries, a greater proportion of homicides are committed with firearms.

As mentioned above, efforts to link violent deaths to the accessibility of firearms remain contested. The debate around this relationship can be organized into three broad research approaches. The first revolves around the accessibility question, testing the hypothesis that easy access to firearms increases or deters violence. The second focuses on the substitution question, asking whether actors would seek other means or tools of violence in the absence of firearms (Florquin and Wille, 2004, p. 182). A third approach involves assessing the effects of firearms legislation, such as the introduction of more restrictive laws and controls, on access to firearms and armed violence (Aguirre and Restrepo, 2010).

While an exploration of the debate is beyond the scope of this chapter, a review of the literature suggests that while there does appear to be a link between access to firearms and homicide rates, the causality of the correlation is difficult to establish.[13] Studies are hampered by limited access to disaggregated data, especially on firearms holdings and accessibility, and by insufficient information about access to illicit firearms. Yet recent assessments of the impact of firearms legislation indicate with relative confidence that environments that suffer from high rates of lethal violence are responsive to legislative changes. Specifically, the Disarmament Statute in Brazil and a gun-carrying ban in Colombia have ushered in decreases in the rate of firearm homicides and overall levels of homicides (Cerqueira and Pinho de Mello, 2014; Restrepo and Villa, 2011).

In contrast, attempts to identify relationships between firearm violence and firearm possession through cross-national comparisons have yielded inconclusive results. Possession rates are comparatively low in Latin America, even with estimates on illicit firearms holdings taken into consideration: in 2007, these rates stood at 4.7 per 100 persons in the Caribbean, 6.8 in Central America, and 12.1 in South America. The possession rate in Western Europe is much higher at 24.9 per 100, yet the homicide rate is considerably lower than in Latin America (Gilgen, 2012, p. 32). In this context the United States appears as an anomaly: although it has the highest possession rate in the world (88.8 firearms per 100 persons), its homicide levels are relatively low—although they are very high when compared to those of European countries with similar income levels (Karp, 2007).

Conclusion

The availability of quality data on lethal violence is increasing, as revealed by the data available for the period 2004–12. Not only does that tendency facilitate more refined analyses and more accurate estimates, but it should also serve to enhance efforts to measure and monitor progress towards a goal for achieving peaceful and inclusive societies within the post-2015 development framework.

The data shows that in most parts of the world lethal violence is either decreasing, or low and stable, as reflected in a slight decrease in the average global number of violent deaths per year, which dropped from 526,000 for the period 2004–09 to 508,000 for 2007–12. The majority of countries and territories—137 of the 189 under review—exhibit very low or low rates of lethal violence (below 10 deaths per 100,000 population). Among these countries, the average rate of lethal violence is decreasing, confirming that already low levels of violence are continuing to fall.

Improvements in security levels are also apparent in countries that were previously affected by high or very high levels of violence (20 or more deaths per 100,000 population). Specifically, the past decade has seen marked reductions in the rates and levels of lethal violence in Colombia, the Russian Federation, and South Africa. Yet other countries, such as Brazil, have maintained high levels of lethal violence over extended periods of time.

Still other parts of the world have experienced severe volatility in terms of lethal violence. In Syria and Libya, relatively sudden eruptions of lethal violence resulted in high numbers of direct conflict deaths—the only category of violent deaths that registered an increase in the period under review. Meanwhile, lethal violence rates in some countries that are not experiencing armed conflict—such as Honduras and Venezuela—have been rising, reaching levels characteristic of countries at war. Although the 18 countries with the highest violent death rates in 2007–12 account for only 4 per cent of the global population, they witnessed almost one-quarter of the lethal violence in the world.

For a country that has experienced repeated cycles of violence, the escape to a 'virtuous cycle' may require complex, time-consuming steps to build resilience. As the *World Development Report 2011* highlights, such steps include restoring confidence in collective action, transforming the institutions that provide security, and reducing the risk that external stresses can pose to the process (World Bank, 2011, p. 103). A thorough understanding of the factors that drive lethal violence is essential in these types of structural

processes, especially if the risk of renewed conflict or violence is high. Gains in security can sometimes be obtained swiftly, as was the case in several Eastern Europe states, whose crime and violence levels dropped significantly following tumultuous transitions to democracy (Stamatel, 2012).

Most violent deaths in the world continue to occur outside settings of armed conflicts. The findings presented in this chapter build a strong case for stepping up the media coverage, monitoring, and analysis of lethal violence in so-called 'peaceful' settings, not least to better inform policy-making and programming at the national, regional, and international levels. At the same time, policy approaches should be adjusted if results prove less than promising, as has been the case in Mexico, where policies to prevent and reduce the impact of organized crime and gangs still rely heavily on the militarization of security (Moloeznik, 2013).

A better understanding of the role firearms play in lethal violence around the world—especially in areas affected by very high violent death rates—requires further disaggregation of data, and thus enhanced data gathering and recording practices. That better understanding is key to informing policies designed to ensure that the global violent death rate will continue to decline.

List of abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
GBAV	*Global Burden of Armed Violence*
IHL	International humanitarian law
NIAC	Non-international armed conflict
SNHR	Syrian Network for Human Rights
SOHR	Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
VDC	Violation Documentation Center

Endnotes

1 For a full presentation of the 'unified approach', see Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2011, pp. 44–51).

2 The GBAV 2008 finds that for each direct conflict death, there are at least four indirect conflict deaths in contemporary armed conflicts (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 32).

3 For details on the sources used in the GBAV database, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

4 A 'minimum level of intensity' can be reached when the hostilities in a conflict are collective in nature, or when the government uses military force, instead of the police, against insurgents. To meet the 'minimum of organization', non-governmental groups involved in the conflict must possess armed forces under a command structure that can sustain military operations (ICRC, 2008, p. 3).

5 For details, see Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2012).

6 The GBAV database covers 201 countries and territories. Since countries in the Lesser Antilles and Micronesia have populations below 100,000, however, this study counts each of these regions as one 'country'; this chapter thus discusses a total of 189 countries and territories. For details, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

7 For additional information on the GBAV database, sources, and the availability of data, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

8 The 18 countries are, in decreasing order of violent death rates, Honduras, El Salvador, Venezuela, Jamaica, Libya, Swaziland, Guatemala, Colombia, Somalia, Lesotho, Iraq, Belize, Syria, Côte d'Ivoire, Afghanistan, South Africa, South Sudan, and Sri Lanka.

9 For the period under review, the conflict deaths database registers 35 'focus countries' as experiencing armed conflict or a severe crisis that results in a high number of deaths. For details, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

10 The GBAV database contains information on firearm homicides for 183 countries and territories, including the Lesser Antilles region, which is counted as one 'country'. For more details, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

11 For the Global Burden of Disease firearms-related violent deaths database, see IHME (n.d.).

12 The proportion of such crime is not negligible. Research demonstrates that 4.9 per cent of the entire population of Latin America and the Caribbean have been victims of robberies involving firearms (Fleitas, Lodola, and Flom, 2014, p. 9).

13 See, for example, Aguirre and Restrepo (2010); Cerqueira and Pinho de Mello (2014); Florquin and Wille (2004); Jackson and Marsh (2011); Killias and Markwalder (2012); and Restrepo and Villa (2011).

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CHAPTER THREE

Lethal Violence against Women and Girls

ON THE VERGE of a post-2015 development framework, and in view of the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the focus on ending violence against women is ever-present in policy and research agendas. The Council of Europe 2011 Istanbul Convention spells out the obligation to address and prevent violence against women and domestic violence, building on previous international instruments, such as the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).[1] The last few years have also seen a convergence of the international agenda on women, peace, and security with that of small arms control, specifically through the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) (Bastick and Valasek, 2014).

Yet as countries attempt to forge targeted programmes to tackle and reduce violence against women and girls, that violence remains widespread and enduring, with far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, and society at large. Despite the increased awareness, there is a persistent lack of data on the killing of women, whether inside or outside the home. The chronic absence of details on circumstances surrounding female homicides also makes it difficult to understand and tackle the phenomenon effectively. Moreover, the lack of standardized guidelines, categories, and definitions renders cross-country comparisons difficult.

This chapter provides an update on the findings presented in the 2011 edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* (GBAV) by examining the figures and patterns of lethal violence against women globally and in selected cases. In highlighting the most recent and comprehensive data on female homicide available, it explores intimate partner femicides, conflict-related deaths and sexual violence, and firearm-related killings of women. The chapter finds that:

- On average, based on data available from 104 countries and territories, the GBAV estimates that 60,000 women and girls worldwide were killed violently every year, from 2007 to 2012. These deaths account for approximately 16 per cent of all intentional homicides committed globally.
- Since the 2011 edition of the GBAV, the median rate of women killed has decreased slightly and female homicide rates have become polarized, as the number of countries with very high and very low rates of lethal violence against women increased.
- While much of the lethal and non-lethal violence against women and girls takes place in non-conflict settings, the risk of multiple or repeat victimization of women is compounded during conflicts.
- In countries with high rates of firearm-related lethal violence the percentage of women killed with firearms is also higher.

- While the majority of homicide victims are men, women are the primary victims of intimate partner homicide, including homicide–suicide events.
- In countries with low levels of female homicide, most killings occur inside the home and are generally perpetrated by an intimate partner or member of the nuclear or extended family.

Beyond the numbers: challenges to collecting data on homicide and violence against women and girls

While considerable progress has been made in collecting and disseminating data on violence, few improvements have been made with respect to obtaining sex-disaggregated statistics (CCPCJ, 2014). Limited availability and accessibility of sex-disaggregated data stems largely from poor reporting practices, an absence of standardized definitions and coding, underreporting, and insufficient resources for training and data collection in relevant state and non-state agencies.

With growing media and public attention to statistics on crime and violence, police, public health, and national statistical institutions have come under increased pressure to publish and share relevant data. In some cases, this trend has helped to shed light on some problematic practices in crime recording, particularly in relation to violence against women. One such procedure, known as 'no-criming', involves the removal of a crime from the record if the victim retracts allegations or police officers conclude that no crime was committed. Indeed, a recent British government report finds that nearly 30 per cent of rape cases that were no-crimed by the Kent Police should not have been (HMIC, 2013, pp. 4, 16). Meanwhile, a whistleblower provided evidence that London's Metropolitan Police had underrecorded rape and serious sexual offences by up to 25 per cent (BBC, 2013a). Reports from Australia and the United States suggest that recorded crime data for sexual crimes and domestic violence were not comparable across jurisdictions because of different processing practices in initial stages of investigations (Australia, 2009, p. 59; Francescani, 2012).

In the absence of details on circumstances surrounding the killing of women, the accurate recording of femicide has proven difficult (see Box 3.1), as has distinguishing between homicide and other crimes. Suicides can be particularly difficult to categorize. A study of femicide–suicide in Argentina argues that some cases of female homicide and intimate partner femicide are mistakenly recorded as suicides (Fernandez, 2012). In the case of 'honour' crimes, or dowry deaths, some scholars also speak of 'forced suicide' or murder disguised as suicide (UN Women, n.d.). The absence of commonly accepted definitions and coding systems for female homicide, femicide, and intimate partner violence complicates cross-border comparisons.

If data collection on female homicide and violence against women and girls is difficult in non-conflict countries, these efforts are even more precarious in conflict zones. The absence of adequately trained persons to identify and record crime results in patchy record-keeping, if any. Crime data is particularly underreported in conflict areas, where the focus is, understandably, on conflict-related casualties.

Fortunately, some national governments and non-governmental organizations in a number of countries have paid particular attention to improving their data collection practices, with an eye to

reducing and preventing violence against women and girls and female homicide. National or sub-national observatories on crime and violence collect useful information from a variety of sources. In addition, crowd-sourcing has emerged as a method of gathering and diffusing information on crimes against women, especially among some local organizations in Egypt, Syria, and elsewhere (HarassMap, n.d.; Hollaback, n.d.; WMC, n.d.). While these tools are innovative, the extent to which they are able to capture the phenomenon remains unknown.

Box 3.1 In search of a label: female homicide, femicide, and intimate femicide

Feminist scholars have argued that the term *homicide*—defined as the 'intentional killing of a person by another person'—obscures the gendered dimension of the killing of women (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 68; Radford and Russell, 1992; Sagot and Carcedo, 2000). Introduced by the feminist movement in the 1970s and popularized in the 1990s, the term *femicide* was to expose the hidden power dimension within gender relations. Initially signifying 'the misogynous killing of women by men' (Radford and Russell, 1992, p. 3), the term has since gained traction in the legal, criminology, policy, and political spheres (GHRC, 2009; Spinelli, 2011; UNGA, 2006).

A side effect of this wide dissemination is the dilution of the term to include 'any killings of women or girls', irrespective of the circumstances of the killing (PAHO, 2012). This definition has the advantage of increasing the comparability of figures (Alvazzi del Frate, 2011); however, the use of *femicide* to mean homicide with female victims has its critics. Feminist scholars place *femicide* on the continuum of violence against women or, more specifically, that of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988; Radford and Russell, 1992).

At the international level, there is no commonly agreed definition of femicide, although in some countries legal definitions bring some clarity to the term by stipulating the circumstances under which the killing of a woman qualifies as femicide (CCPCJ, 2014).[2] The penal codes of Chile and Peru treat femicide as an aggravated form of homicide (ELLA, 2013, p. 3). Other countries, such as Costa Rica and Mexico, have enacted dedicated legislation on combating femicide, defining the crime either as intimate partner femicide (Costa Rica, 2007) or as a particularly extreme category of crime against women, which culminates in death (Mexico, 2007, art. 21).

Debates over the definition of femicide have also spurred the emergence of related terms. Feminist scholar Marcela Lagarde uses *feminicide* to encompass the aspect of moral and political responsibility for the killing of women because of their sex. She argues that political and judicial systems also hold a degree of responsibility for not addressing pervasive violence against women and girls and thus enabling, to some extent, their killings (ELLA, 2013, p. 2). Other scholars have opted for a deepening rather than a broadening of the term, adopting 'intimate partner femicide' as the preferred term for the killing of a woman by her current or former partner on the grounds of her sex. Also called *uxoricide*—from the Latin *uxor*, meaning 'wife'—the killing of a woman by her husband (or intimate partner) is the ultimate expression of inequality within the couple (Spinelli, 2011, p. 18).

In the absence of comparable definitions and reliable cross-sectional, time-series data on femicide, this edition of the GBAV focuses more broadly on *female homicide*, which benefits from a wider availability of sex-disaggregated data. To highlight the need for better information and data collection tools that capture information on femicide, this chapter also provides in-depth analysis of international statistics on *intimate partner femicide,* for which more solid data is available. Widespread patriarchal gender relations within couples determine dynamics of violence, which have similar characteristics in many countries. These dynamics terminate with death of the woman, often after protracted domestic violence or abuse.

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In view of the challenges inherent in the collection of sex-disaggregated data on homicide, this edition of the GBAV draws on a combination of sources, including national statistical reports as well as data from law enforcement and research institutions (see Chapter One). This chapter features information from 104 countries and detailed data from 96 countries and territories.[3]

The state of female homicide in the world

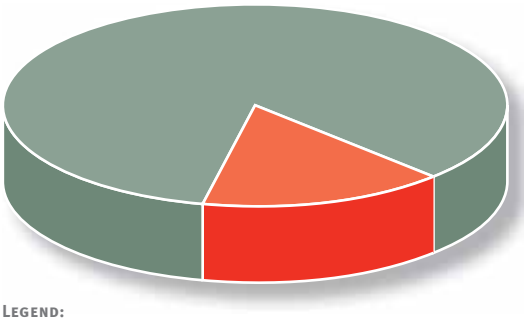
Almost 35 years after the signing of CEDAW and in the run-up to the Beijing+20 commemorations, women continue to face a series of challenges—and that despite substantive improvements in education, equality, and empowerment.[4] Women continue to die at the hands of their partners, family members, and strangers, and many more fall victim to sexual, physical, and emotional violence, by virtue of their gender.

The GBAV 2014 database reveals that between 2007 and 2012, on average, 60,000 women were killed violently around the world every year, representing approximately 16 per cent of the global number of intentional homicides (see Figure 3.1).[5] These figures have decreased slightly compared to the reporting period covered in the 2011 edition of the GBAV. The number of women killed annually dropped from 66,000 to 60,000, and the percentage of women among homicide victims fell from 17 to 16 per cent.

Men are both the primary victims and perpetrators of homicide in the world, accounting for more than

Photo ▼ Police tape cordons off the body of a young woman, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, September 2011. © Orlando Sierra/ AFP Photo

Figure 3.1 Estimated global average proportion of female vs. male homicide victims per year, 2007–12



Legend:
- Male victims (317,000): 84%
- Female victims (60,000): 16%

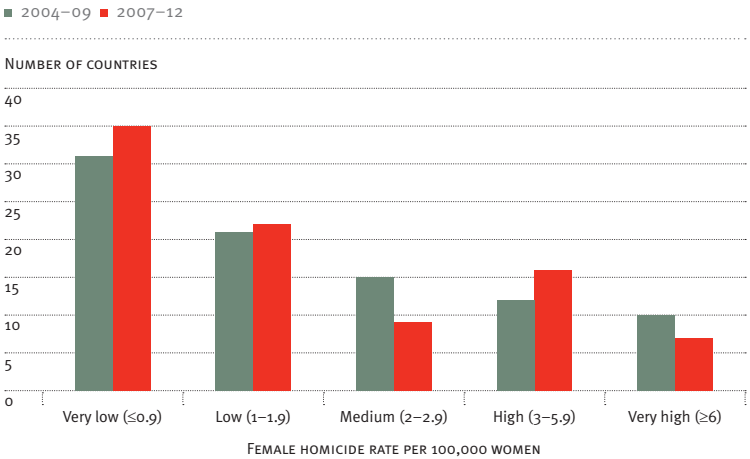
Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

80 per cent of all intentional homicides. In other words, five out of six homicide victims are men, a ratio that has remained almost constant since 2004 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, pp. 117–18). Various explanations have been offered for this 'gender gap' in victimization. Some criminologists argue that gendered lifestyles and social roles—which cast men as titular heads of the family and main economic providers—make men more likely than women to become victims of homicide (Lauritsen and Heimer, 2008). Other studies suggest that there is a link between gender and crime perpetration, and that violent crimes, and particularly homicide, follow different dynamics depending on the perpetrator's sex (Lei et al., 2014; Schwartz and Steffensmeier, 2007). These distinctions raise questions about the determinants of the 'gender gap' for homicide victimization and perpetration.

Although useful in painting a picture of the degree to which men and women are affected by lethal violence, global figures mask a multitude of regional, sub-regional, and national variations. Since the 2011 edition of the GBAV, the number of countries with high rates of female homicides per 100,000 women increased from 12 to 16 (see Figure 3.2). The number of countries with low and very low rates also registered small increases. The most notable change was the drop in the number of countries with medium rates of women killed, from 15 countries down to nine. The average rate of female homicide per 100,000 women for countries studied in the 2011 and current editions of the GBAV fell from 2.48 to 2.27, respectively (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011; 2014).[6]

The graph suggests a polarization of the distribution of female homicides; while the number of countries with low and very low as well as the high and very high rates generally increased, those with medium rates decreased markedly.[7] These changes may be attributable to shifts in contextual factors that influence female femicide rates, or they may reflect improved reporting practices. A closer examination of country-by-country variations over time is required to assess whether Figure 3.2 is pointing to an emerging trend.

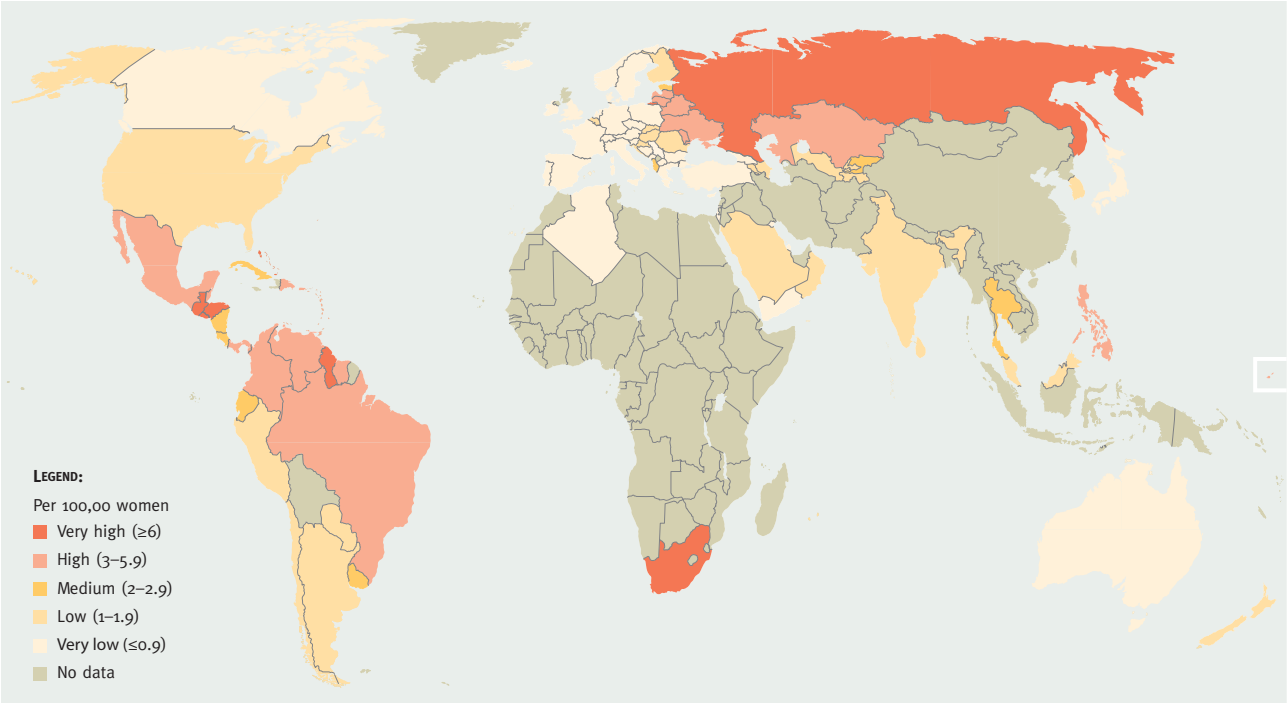
Figure 3.2 Number of countries, by average female homicide rate per 100,000 women, 2004–09 and 2007–12



Note: This graph is based on 89 countries and territories, all of which were included in the GBAV 2011 as well as the GBAV 2014 databases.[8]

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Map 3.1 Female homicide victims per 100,000 women, 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Map 3.1 displays the distribution of female homicides in the 96 countries and territories[9] for which reliable data was available for the 2007–12 timeframe. As was the case for the GBAV 2011 database sex-disaggregated information was unavailable for most African and many Asian countries. This suggests that efforts to improve data collection in these regions have yet to produce accessible data. The absence of information results in unequal global coverage of female homicide. The Americas and Europe have the most developed reporting systems, such that coverage is almost complete for these regions.

At the sub-regional level, Central America and the Caribbean exhibit the highest rates of female homicide. There is little variation across the other regions, with Western Europe ranking at the bottom of the scale (see Figure 3.3). In contrast to variations in the distribution of total homicide rates, the average rate of women killed is relatively flat across North America, most of Europe, and Western Asia. One possible explanation for this finding is that these regions, which exhibit low rates of homicide, can have comparatively higher rates of intimate partner and domestic violence, bringing the ratio of male-to-female homicides closer to 1:1. This tendency was also observed in the 2011 edition of the GBAV.

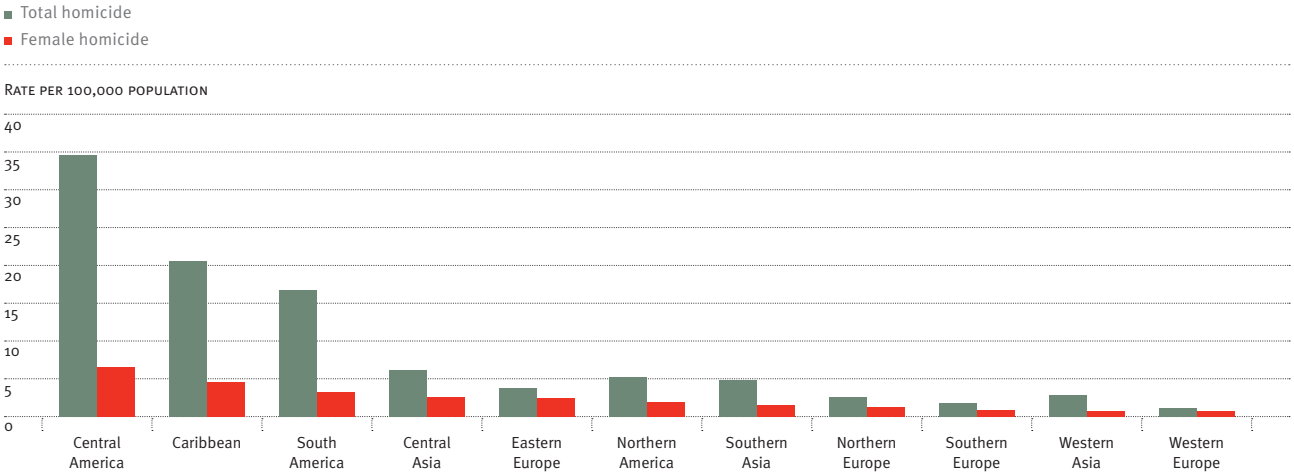
According to local and international activists, the escalation of lethal violence targeting women in Latin America may be the result of a confluence of factors, from the increased militarization of the

state and society in response to drug wars, which directly affect or even target women, to the persistent machismo culture (NWI, 2012; HBS, 2013). Some also point to impunity and a lack of judicial redress, two factors that perpetuate the cycle of violence (HBS, 2013). Other regions exhibit their own peculiarities. In Asia, for instance, selective abortion of female fetuses and infanticide of baby girls have long been documented as widespread, translating into millions of 'missing women' (Laurent, 2013; Liisanantti and Beese, 2012). In Europe, as well as in many other regions, persistent gender inequality and patriarchal social norms perpetuate violence against women and intimate partner femicide (PAHO, 2012; UNODC, 2014).

Of the 96 countries for which relevant data is available, 25 display high and very high rates of female homicide,[10] accounting for more than 54 per cent of the total number of women killed in the period under review. This suggests that female victimization is highly skewed, with approximately one-quarter of the analysed countries accounting for more than half of all female homicides. This finding indicates that the distribution differs slightly from that presented in the 2011 edition of the GBAV, according to which the 25 countries and territories with the highest rates accounted for 47 per cent of the total number of women killed.

A closer examination reveals that two countries—El Salvador and Honduras—stand out with rates of more than ten female homicides per 100,000 women (see Figure 3.4). The rate for El Salvador (14.4 per 100,000 women) is more than double the base rate for the category (6.0 per 100,000). Honduras comes a close second with a rate of 10.9 homicides per 100,000 women. Both countries also rank highest in terms of overall homicide rates, with 73 persons killed per 100,000 population in

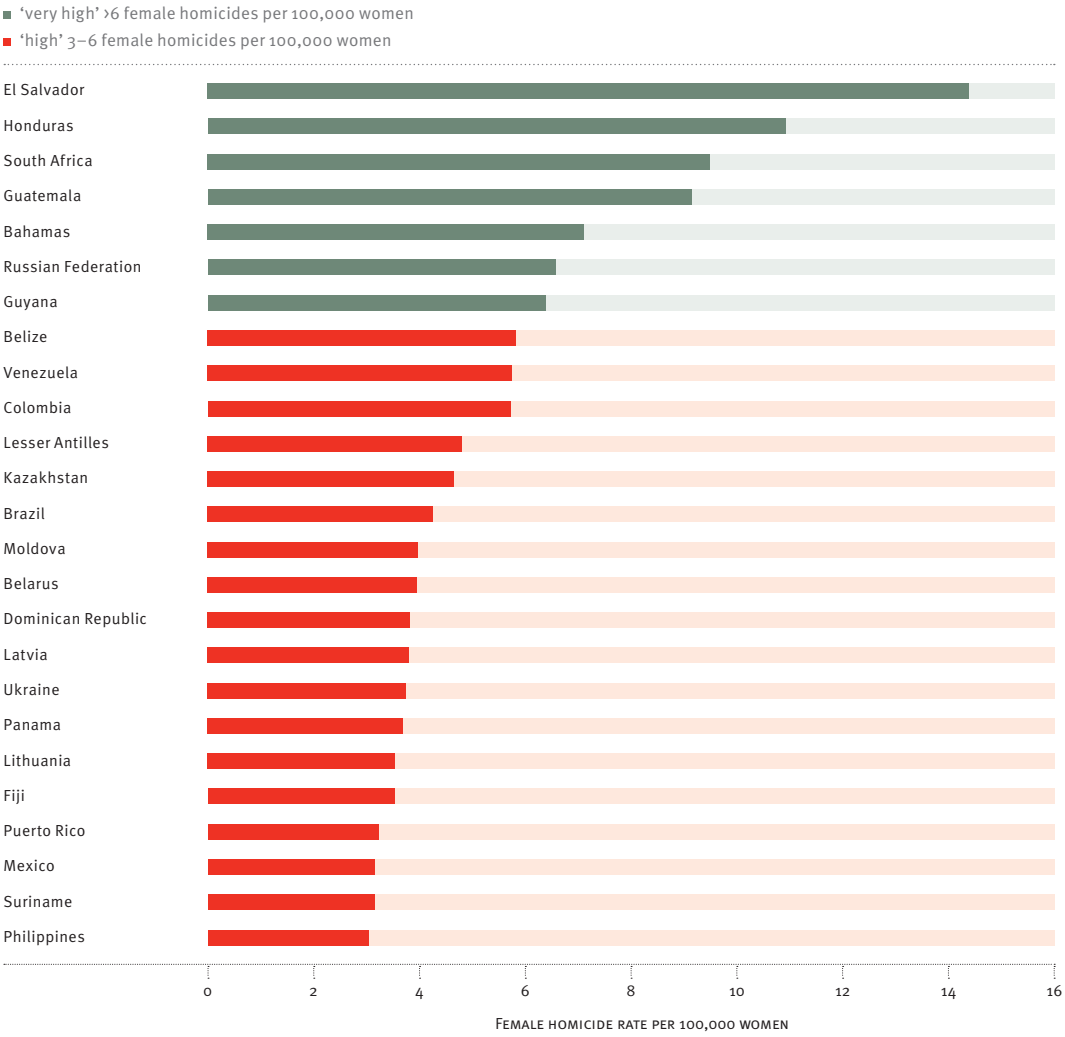
Figure 3.3 Average homicide and female homicide rates per 100,000 total population, by sub-region, 2007–12



Note: This table features only sub-regions in which more than half the countries have reliable data, namely: Northern America (3/3, i.e. 3 of 3 countries in the sub-region), Central America (8/8), the Caribbean (11/14), South America (13/13), Northern Europe (11/11), Western Europe (9/9), Southern Europe (13/13), Eastern Europe (10/10), Western Asia (11/18), and Central Asia (5/5 countries).

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

FIGURE 3.4 Average high and very high female homicide rates per 100,000 women, 2007–12



SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Honduras and 59 in El Salvador, indicating particularly high mortality rates due to intentional violence. The level of lethal violence affecting women in El Salvador is such that it surpasses the overall rate of male and female homicides in some of the 40 countries with the highest rates worldwide, such as Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Tanzania.

A few countries with small populations, such as the Bahamas and Guyana, exhibit very high rates of women killed violently. From 2007 to 2012, an average of 13 women were killed each year in the Bahamas, while 25 lost their lives annually in Guyana. In the independent countries of the Lesser Antilles sub-region, an average of four

women were killed yearly. The exception is Trinidad and Tobago, where an average of 46 women were killed during each year under review.

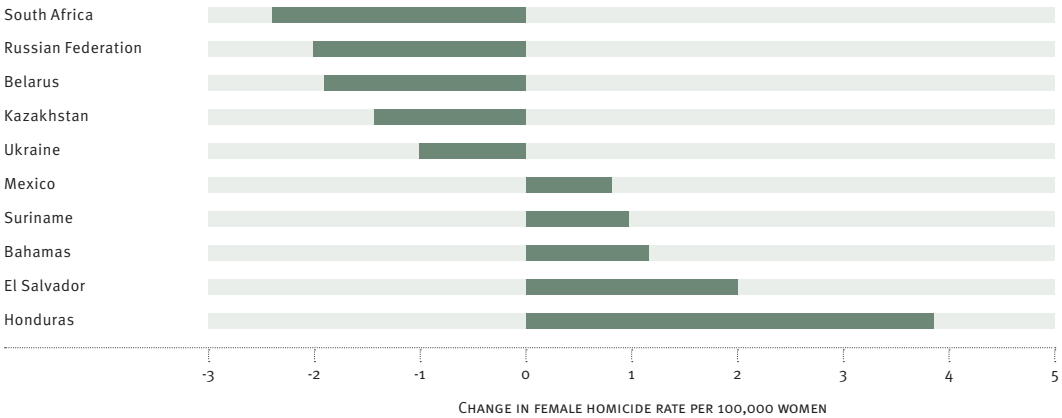
Of the 25 countries with the highest rates of women killed, only Colombia, the Philippines, and the Russian Federation are currently affected by conflict (UCDP, n.d.). All the others are non- or post-conflict countries. This is consistent with the finding that, based on available data, the majority of violent deaths of both men and women occur in countries that are not at war (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 44). Still, the dearth of reliable sex-disaggregated data on female homicide in conflict environments obscures the real figures.

Female homicide through the years: trends and patterns

The lack of reliable historical data on the homicides of women around the world precludes the identification of trends. Yet the GBAV 2014 database offers an opportunity to examine certain changes in lethal violence towards women over the past ten years.[11] Countries for which time-series trends are available may also be studied.

A comparison of information in the GBAV 2011 and 2014 databases reveals that a number of countries registered noticeable decreases in the rate of female homicide (see Figure 3.5). Similarly, a 2013 study of femicide in South Africa finds that the rate of female homicides decreased by half from 1999 to 2009—from 24.7 to 12.9 (Abrahams et al., 2013). Although the level of total lethal violence towards women has decreased in South Africa over the past ten years, partly due to policy efforts to reduce gender inequality and control the spread of illicit firearms, the level of intimate partner femicide has remained high, supported by social norms that tolerate domestic violence (Abrahams et al., 2013; Jaynes, 2013; Thaler, 2012). This form of violence may thus be much more inelastic than total female homicide and may require more targeted policy approaches. South

Figure 3.5 Countries with the greatest decreases and increases in female homicide rates, 2011 vs. 2014



Note: The graph shows the five countries with the largest increases and five with the greatest decreases. Another 82 countries that are not shown in this figure registered changes between zero and one or zero and minus one.[12]

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

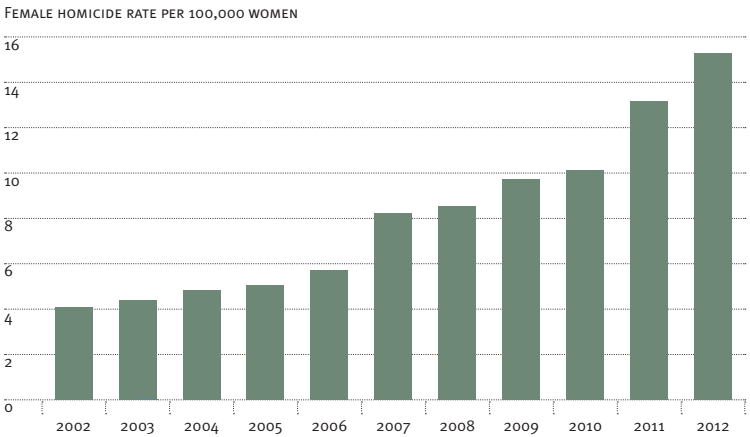
Africa still registers some of the highest rates of homicide and female homicide in the world, although these rates are dropping steadily (Jaynes, 2013).

In its official statistics, the Russian Federation has also recorded an important decrease in the overall rates of homicide and female homicide, the latter from almost 13 killings per 100,000 women in the year 2000, to 10 in 2005, and down to around 5 in 2010. Although the rates of female homicide in large Russian cities exceed the national rate, this decreasing pattern holds true for sub-national data on female homicide across the 66 Russian municipalities with female populations of more than 100,000 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).[13] The murder and dismemberment of a Russian journalist by her husband in early 2013, widely covered by the media, drew attention to the persistence of intimate partner violence in the country (Balmforth, 2013; BBC, 2013b; Frolov, 2013).

Another 37 countries, located mostly in Europe and Oceania, display little to no change in homicide rates, suggesting that crime patterns have remained stable. This also holds true for a number of Asian countries, such as India, Malaysia, Thailand, Turkey, and Yemen, some of which have persistently high rates of female homicide (such as India and Thailand). Several countries whose female homicide rates were among the highest in the 2011 edition of the GBAV—such as Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, and Guyana—also appear to be holding steady.

On the other end of the spectrum, Honduras registered by far the largest increase in the rate of female homicide, followed by El Salvador. Countries that witness a high volume of narco-trafficking—such as El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico—are also plagued by rising female homicide rates, which has prompted human rights activists to redub the 'war on drugs' the new 'war on women' (Fox, 2012b). *Mano dura* (iron fist) interventions, designed to improve security and combat drug-related violence, can have the opposite effect, inadvertently increasing insecurity among the civilian population, and particularly among women (Carlsen, 2012). Women are targeted as 'drug mules', executed as public messages to the authorities to desist from combating drug trafficking, or killed to settle accounts with rival gangs (Fox, 2012b; Giacomello, 2013; IRIN, 2014).

Figure 3.6 Female homicide rates per 100,000 women in Honduras, 2002–12



Note: For details on the methodology used to calculate the homicide rates based on reported absolute values, see the online annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

Sources: CONADEH (2013, p. 26); Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014); IUDPAS (2013, p. 1)

Spotlight on Honduras: a decade of rising lethal violence against women

A closer look at the evolution of female homicide in Honduras shows a continuous upward trend (see Figure 3.6). The latest figures from the Observatory for Violence in Honduras, IUDPAS, suggest that lethal violence against women continues to escalate in the country, with 629 women killed in 2013, compared to 606 the previous year (IUDPAS, 2014, p. 1).[14] In contrast, the Honduran Commission of Human Rights reported that 441

women had lost their lives in 2013 (CONADEH, 2014). According to IUDPAS, close to 40 per cent of killings took place in a public space, while 28 per cent occurred indoors; more than 75 per cent of these crimes involved the use of a firearm (IUDPAS, 2014, p. 2). This confirms what some human rights activists in Honduras have noted, namely that the majority of female homicides are not related to domestic violence (Pavon and Gallardo, 2012). Rather, some activists link the rise in the number of female homicides to the insecurity generated by the 2009 institutional crisis and the targeting of women human rights activists (NWI, 2012).

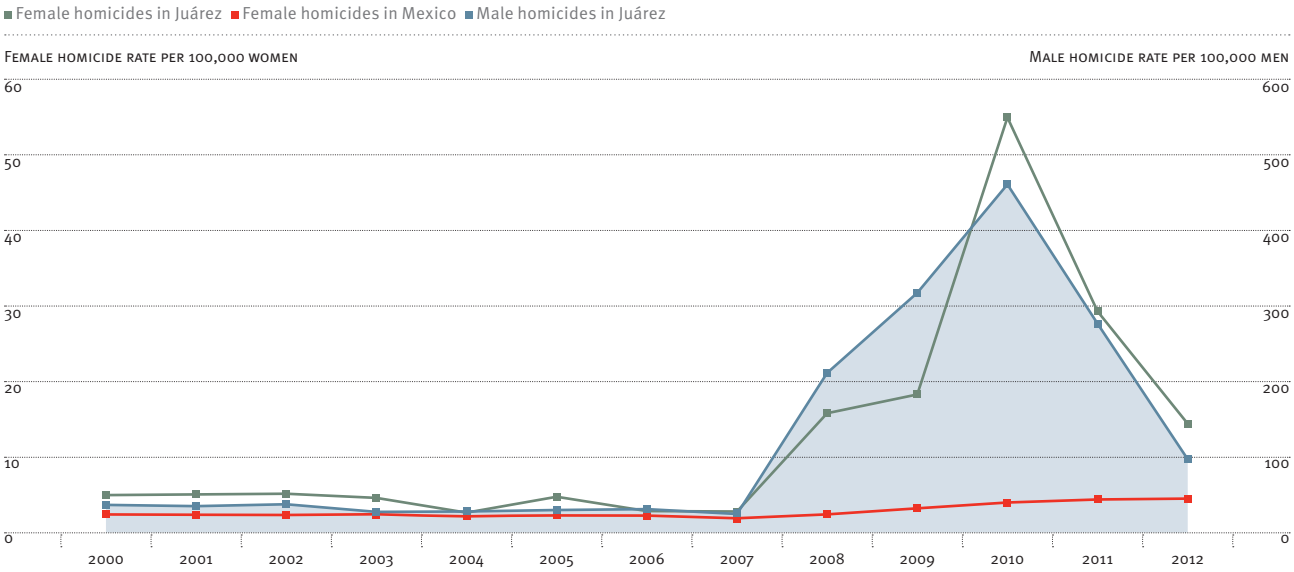
However, the female homicide rate started to climb exponentially in 2007, with the largest jumps occurring in 2011 and 2012. By 2012, the female homicide rate had increased by more than 270 per cent, whereas the total homicide rate had increased by 125 per cent since 2000 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014). This accelerated pattern suggests that multiple contextual factors may be at play, such as the rise in drug and human trafficking and associated activities in the country (Fox, 2012a). An estimated 80 per cent of cocaine and other illegal drugs bound for the United States pass through Honduras, which has consequently witnessed a rise in its female homicide rate (INL, 2013; Fox, 2012b). In Honduras as elsewhere in Central America, the killings are at times characterized by extreme levels of brutality—as evidenced by mutilation and signs of torture on many of the bodies—which tend to indicate that the victims were killed specifically because they were women (Fox, 2012b; Gonzáles Rodríguez, 2012, p. 13; Carcedo, 2011). To stem this tide of female homicide, Honduran authorities recently raised the minimum penalty for femicide to between 30 and 40 years in prison (RESDAL, 2013, p. 93). Yet given that more than 90 per cent of female homicides reportedly go unresolved, a more concerted effort is required (p. 89).

Sub-national data suggests that in many Central American countries, cities have a higher concentration of female homicides than do rural areas. This disparity may not only be due to higher rates of violence in cities, but also to different reporting standards in urban and rural areas. According to IUDPAS data from 2012, nine Honduran municipalities present rates of female homicide that are almost five times higher than the national average, namely Santa Fe (118.3 homicides per 100,000 women), San Fernando (65.9), San Antonio del Norte (72.0), Lauterique (67.1), Sabá (64.9), San Luis (64.1), Cabañas (60.5), Alianza (60.1), and Belén (60.1) (IUDPAS, 2013, p. 2). Similarly, the municipality of Guatemala accounts for more than 20 per cent of women killed in Guatemala in 2012. Taken together, the ten municipalities with the highest female homicides rates in the country account for around 45 per cent of the national figure (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).

A lethal city for women: Ciudad Juárez from 2000 to 2012

The Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez attracted international attention in 1993 with a series of brutal murders of women and, in 2008, with a considerable spike in the local femicide rate, which was well above the national average (Alvazzi del Frate, 2011; AI, 2003). Since then some observers have challenged the focus on the 'Juárez femicides', arguing that the phenomenon was awarded disproportionate attention compared to overall victimization or circumstances of the killings (Hooks, 2014; Wright, 2011; Albuquerque and Vemala, 2008). Yet while men continue to be the primary victims of violence in Juárez, the rise in the rate of female victims is significant.

Figure 3.7 Female homicide rates per 100,000 women in Juárez and Mexico, and male homicide rates per 100,000 men in Juárez, 2000–12



Note: For representational purposes, female homicides are depicted on the primary axis (left), and male homicides on the secondary axis (right).

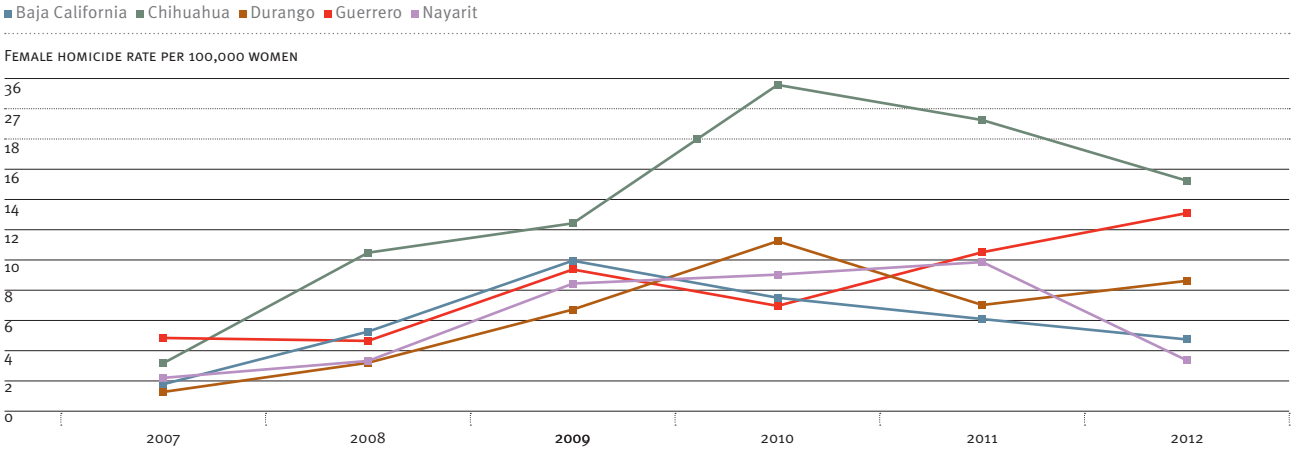
Source: INEGI (n.d.)

The rate of women killed in Juárez continued to rise after 2009, reaching almost 60.0 per 100,000 in 2010, before decreasing in 2011 and 2012, and dropping back to 2008 levels (see Figure 3.7). The year 2010 saw a spike in homicides involving both men and women victims (INEGI, n.d.).

In addition to the extremely elevated homicide rates, the notoriety of Ciudad Juárez is also due to the violent circumstances surrounding the killings, with victims showing signs of torture and mutilation before being dumped in public places (Pineda-Madrid, 2011, pp. 12–13). According to the Juárez Observatory of Violence, almost half (48 per cent) of the 673 female homicides registered between 2009 and 2012 took place in the street or in a public area, followed by private residences (25 per cent) and commercial areas (7 per cent) (OSCCMJ, 2013, p. 20). Other analysts have underscored that many of the victims belonged to the poor working class (often employed in the *maquila* industry) (Wright, 2013).[15]

Not all regions in Mexico are affected by violence in the same way over time. In 2012, the state of Chihuahua, which includes Ciudad Juárez, had the highest rate of female homicide—15.2 per 100,000 women—which is almost four times the national average for the year. And, although the rate is still the highest among federal states, it has decreased substantially since 2010, when it had reached 34.0 per 100,000 women (almost ten times the national average for 2010). In contrast, the female homicide rate in the state of Guerrero increased steadily in 2011 and 2012 (see Figure 3.8). In 2012, two other states exhibited rates of female homicide that remained higher than the national average despite a decrease compared to

Figure 3.8 Female homicide rate per 100,000 women in the five most violent states in Mexico, 2007–12



Source: INEGI (n.d.)

the previous year: Durango (8.6) and Baja California (4.7). In addition, women in Juárez and other cities across Mexico also suffer from forms of non-lethal violence, such as physical and sexual violence, the full extents of which remain unclear.

Women killed in conflict settings: difficulties in establishing trends

In non-conflict settings, lethal violence against women is generally captured under the label of intentional homicide, intimate partner femicide, or female homicide. In countries plagued by conflict, victimization takes a variety of different forms. Like men, women can become victims of direct conflict deaths (as combatants or as civilians); they can also become indirect victims of conflicts, including by bearing the burden of displacement or reintegration. Data scarcity is particularly dire in conflict and post-conflict countries, due to a volatile security situation, an absence of resources, and shifting priorities. Even where conflict data is available, sex-disaggregated data is rare and when published, it is usually by either UN bodies or local human rights research institutions.

For instance, the Israeli non-governmental organization B'Tselem collects data on both Israeli and Palestinian casualties disaggregated by sex, in Israel as well as in the Occupied Territories. It found that from 2000 to 2008—before Israel launched Operation 'Cast Lead',[16] also known as the Gaza War—security forces killed 221 Israeli and 147 Palestinian women. Subsequently, the three-week operation reportedly claimed the lives of 110 Palestinian women, two of whom were police officers, and one Israeli woman. From the conclusion of 'Cast Lead' in January 2009 until 7 July 2014, five Israeli and 19 Palestinian women fell victim to Palestinian and Israeli forces, respectively (B'Tselem, n.d.a–c). During Operation 'Protective Edge', from 8 July to 10 August 2014, 200 women below the age of 60 were reportedly killed (B'Tselem, n.d.d). These figures suggest that lethal violence affecting women is more concentrated during conflict than non- or post-conflict periods.

FIGURE 3.9 Number of women and men killed in Afghanistan, by sex of the victim, 2010–13

NOTE: For representational purposes, the number of men killed in Afghanistan between 2010 and 2013 is displayed on the secondary axis.

SOURCE: UNAMA (2011; 2012; 2013; 2014)

Since 2011, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has recorded a steady increase in conflict-related deaths of women (see Figure 3.9). The proportion of female-to-male casualties remains skewed, as men are the primary victims of violence in the country. Yet, in 2013, 235 women were reportedly killed, up from 196 in 2011 (UNAMA, 2014, p. 11). This increase corresponds to the intensification of the war, and more frequent Taliban attacks.

For every woman killed by an improvised explosive device (IED) or in ground engagements in 2013, two more were injured (UNAMA, 2014, p. 11). Women were killed or injured as they carried out their daily activities, in their homes, while travelling, or while working in the fields (AP, 2014; UNAMA, 2014). These findings suggest an increased militarization of public space in Afghanistan, largely due to the planting of IEDs in public areas and the use of suicide bombers, both of which result in a marked decrease in security for all civilians, including children.

While some data on civilian casualties is recorded, little is known about the magnitude of female homicide and violence against women in the country. From March to September 2012 the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission registered 889 incidents of physical violence and 256 cases of sexual violence (Hasrat and Pfefferle, 2012, pp. 4–5). Various NGOs and international organizations have argued that Afghan women are habitually confronted by violence outside the conflict setting, particularly in the domestic sphere (APHI et al., 2011; Habib, 2012). In a 2013 study, the World Health Organization finds that more than one-third of the world's women have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence during their lifetimes (WHO, 2013). These figures vary according to geographical location and context (see Box 3.2).

Weapons used in lethal violence against women

The instruments used in the killing of women vary depending on the contexts, types of perpetrators, and circumstances of the crimes. This section explores some of this variation, looking at the use of firearms in intimate partner violence as well as in female homicide. While it is known that firearms are frequently used in the killing of men, their use in female homicide is underresearched. Some recent studies have identified statistically significant links between gun ownership and firearm-related deaths (Bangalore and Messerli, 2013; Siegel, Ross, and King, 2013).

Box 3.2 Sexual violence against women during war

Of the UN Security Council resolutions dealing with women, peace, and security, four specifically focus on sexual violence in war.[17] This framework calls special attention to sexual violence that is 'used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations' (UNSC, 2008, art. 1). In defining 'crimes against humanity', the International Criminal Court—whose rulings have shaped the legal definition of sexual violence—refers to a broad category of sexual acts, including 'rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity' (ICC, 2002, art. 7(1)(g)). More recently, scholars and analysts have added sexual mutilation and sexual torture to this list (Wood, 2009; Cohen and Nordås, 2013, p. 7).

Sexual violence varies across different types of armed conflict; it occurs in both inter-state and intra-state wars, those characterized by ethnic mobilization, those that involve genocide, and secessionist wars (Plümper and Neumayer, 2006; Mullins, 2009; Wood, 2012). Sexual violence also varies across regions, with incidents reported in almost every region of the globe during the time period 1980–2009. Data from the US State Department indicates that, on a per-conflict basis, sexual violence—and rape in particular—was more frequent in wars in Eastern Europe than in sub-Saharan Africa, even though the latter region experienced the largest number of wars during the period (Cohen, Hoover Green, and Wood, 2013, p. 3). Recent data on sexual violence in 129 active conflicts and 625 armed actors shows that reports of sexual violence were either numerous or widespread in 18 conflicts (14 per cent), while no such reports appeared in 55 conflicts (43 per cent) (Cohen and Nordås, 2014, p. 423).

Opinions on the evolution of conflict-related sexual violence vary. The lack of relevant data prevents the distillation of global patterns (Cohen, Hoover Green, and Wood, 2013; Roth, Guberek, and Hoover Green, 2011). It is possible that increases in the reporting of rape cases during conflicts are sometimes interpreted as a rise in the number of incidents (HSRP, 2012). The focus on armed actors can also obscure instances of civilian or non-combatant sexual violence. This is problematic since in some cases of armed conflict—such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo—the incidence of intimate partner sexual violence is much higher than the overall rate of reported rape (Peterman, Palermo, and Bredenkamp, 2011).

Reports on sexual violence in times of war indicate that men are the primary perpetrators of these crimes, and that they tend to be members of non-state armed groups. Recent studies have questioned both of these assumptions. Of the 625 actors active from 1989 to 2009, 42 per cent of state actors (56 of 132) reportedly perpetrated sexual violence, in contrast to 24 per cent of non-state armed groups (65 of 275) and 17 per cent of pro-government militias (38 of 218) (Cohen and Nordås, 2014, p. 423). These findings suggest that non-state armed groups are not necessarily the predominant perpetrators of sexual violence in war (Green et al., 2013; Leiby, 2009; Nordås and Cohen, 2012).

Surveys on sexual violence rarely inquire about the sex of the perpetrator or of the victim; instead, they tend to assume that perpetrators are men, thereby fostering the view that men are the sole perpetrators of sexual violence in war (Cohen, Hoover Green, and Wood, 2013, p. 3). Recent research focusing on women as active participants in armed conflict—whether as part of national armed forces, members of armed groups, or individuals—questions this assumption, underscoring that wartime sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, is common and perpetrated by men as well as women (Cohen, 2013).

Researchers are paying increasing attention to the social context in which sexual violence takes place in war. For instance, studies on the internal dynamics of non-state armed groups have shown that women's participation in and experience of sexual violence is not homogenous but rather shaped by their status within a group (Marks, 2013). Moreover, it appears that sexual violence is not solely, or necessarily primarily, committed by combatants—whether male or female; indeed, it is often perpetrated by individuals known to the victim, such as intimate partners or acquaintances (Cohen, Hoover Green, and Wood, 2013, pp. 6–7).

Author: Jovana Carapic

However, research suggests that more factors come into play in the use of firearms and other weapons in female homicides (Killias and Markwalder, 2012).

The presence of a gun in the home can influence lethal violence against women in several ways. Austria, Finland, and Switzerland have very high civilian firearms ownership rates, although the overall rate of murders committed with firearms remains low compared to the world average (Small Arms Survey, 2007). In some cases the presence of a firearm in the home was found to be an important risk factor for intimate partner femicide, or serious injury resulting from intimate partner violence, particularly when compared with other types of weapons (Shaw, 2013, p. 25). Though there is a lack of data on non-fatal firearms injuries sustained by women, research suggests that lethal incidents form just a small part of overall female victimization (p. 29).

More frequently, guns are used to intimidate and coerce women, yet such cases are severely underreported (Hemenway, 2011, p. 5; Shaw, 2013, p. 29). A pilot survey on removing guns from batterers in California found that women felt safer as a result of the policy (Frattaroli, 2009; Vittes et al., 2013). Accordingly, some US states implemented legislation on court-ordered or police removal of guns from people with a record of intimate partner violence (Frattaroli, 2009; Frattaroli and Vernick, 2006).

Moreover, the presence of a gun in the home has been associated with an increased risk of suicide for the gun owner, spouse, and any children (Hemenway, 2011, p. 3). The lethality of firearms, together with the frequent impulsiveness of suicide, increases the risk of fatality in suicide attempts in the United States and elsewhere (Lewiecki and Miller, 2013). The risk posed by the availability of a gun in the home also applies to homicide–suicide events, which are among gun-related

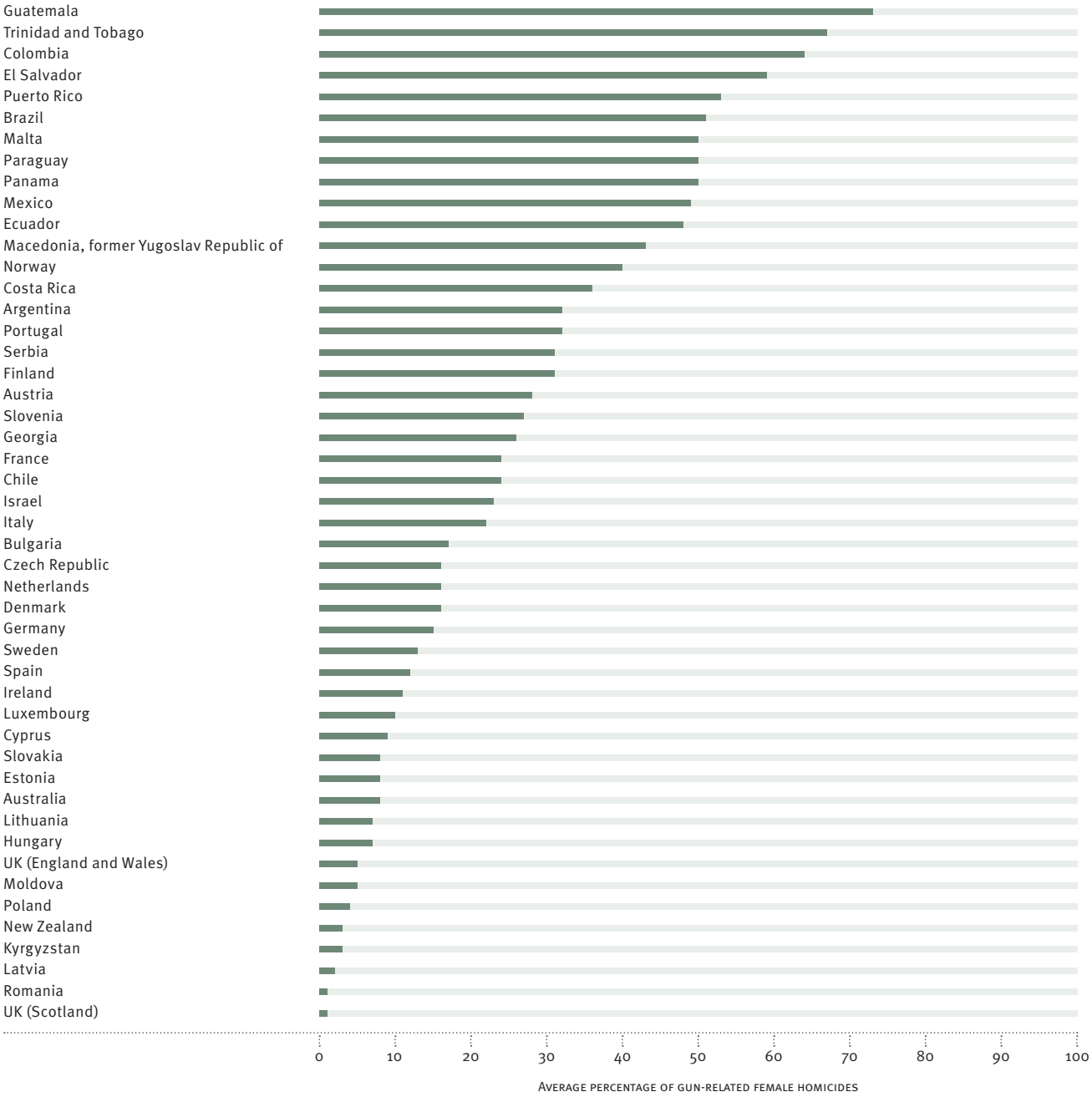
Photo ▶ Forensic specialists remove a body from the scene of a homicide–suicide incident that left four dead, California, May 2014. © Alex Gallardo/Reuters

homicides committed in the family sphere, and which typically involve intimate partners. This risk of fatalities increases in the case of homicide–suicide in the domestic sphere. According to one study on firearm-related homicides in Switzerland, firearms were used in 80 per cent of the cases in which homicides were followed by the suicide of the perpetrator (Killias and Markwalder, 2012). Of the 85 persons who were killed in homicide–suicide events recorded in Switzerland in 1991–2008, the majority (62) were women (Panczak et al., 2013). Military firearms were the most frequently used types of weapons in these cases (Grabherr et al., 2010).[18] A study on homicide–suicide events in the United States found that more than 1,300 people died in such circumstances in 2011 alone, that more than 90 per cent of cases involved the use of a gun, and that 94 per cent of the victims were women (Shaw, 2013, p. 27; VPC, 2012, p. 12).

In some cases, firearms are the primary instruments involved in female homicides. In nine of the 50 countries for which reliable data is available for the period 2007–12, more than 50 per cent of female homicides were firearm-related (see Figure 3.10). With the exception of Malta, the ten countries with the highest percentages of firearm-related female homicides are located in Latin America. This is consistent with a recent study by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, which concludes that the Americas had the largest proportion of gun use in homicides (UNODC, 2014).

In 2011, more than 60 per cent of female homicides in El Salvador involved the use of firearms (ISDEMU, 2012, p. 9). Similarly, firearms were the most common weapons used in homicides in Brazil, accounting for 72 per cent of male and 49 per cent of female victims in 2010. A higher

Figure 3.10 Average percentage of female homicides committed with firearms in 48 countries, 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

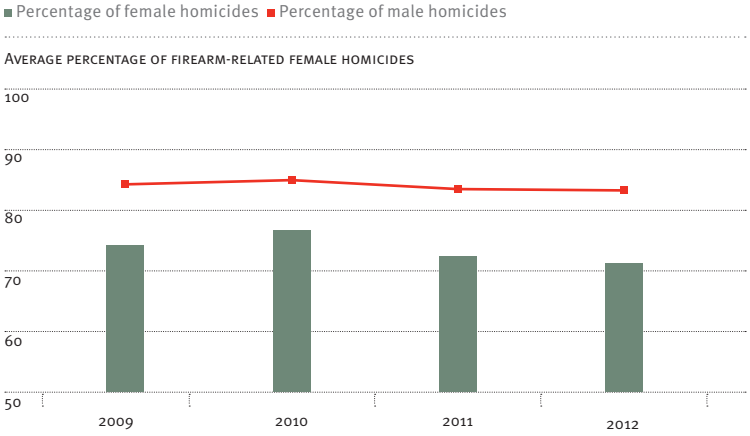
percentage of Brazilian women (26 per cent) were killed with bladed or penetrating weapons as compared to men (15 per cent) (Waiselfisz, 2012, p. 10).

In Guatemala, a large percentage of male and female homicides are committed with firearms each year (see Figure 3.11). In 2010 close to 77 per cent of all female homicides and 85 per cent of male homicides involved the use of a gun. The years 2011 and 2012 registered decreases in the overall number of men and women killed, as well as a drop in the percentage of homicides involving firearms.

This drop in firearm-related homicides in Guatemala is attributed to a confluence of factors, including increased attendance among primary and secondary school students, civil society-led programmes for the reduction of armed violence, the implementation of programmes and policies targeting areas with the highest crime rates, the improvement of criminal investigations and prosecutions, and the adoption and application of the 2009 Law for Arms and Munitions (IEPADES, 2013, p. 32).

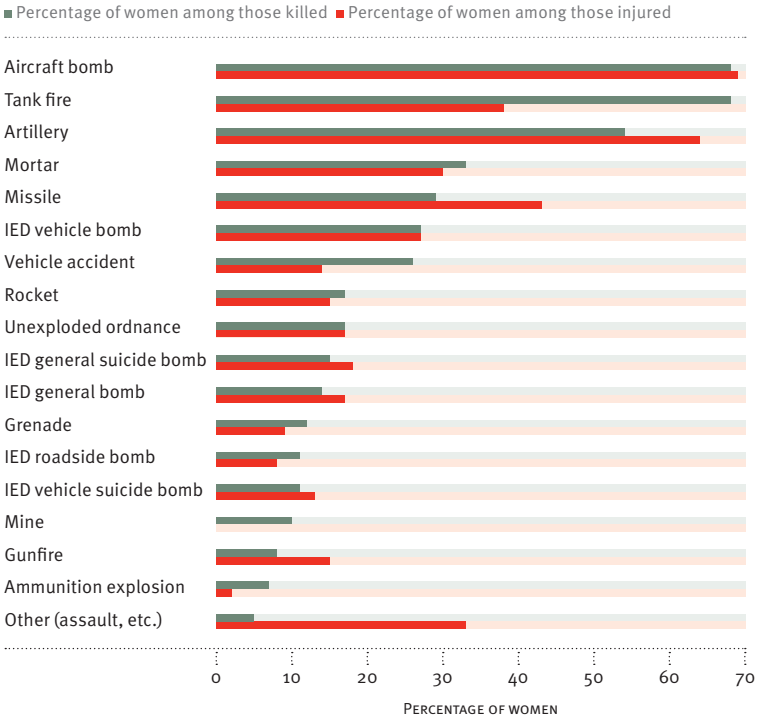
In Italy one-third of all female homicides recorded from 2000 to 2012—1,570 killings—involved the use of a firearm; bladed weapons were used in another third, blunt instruments in about 13 per cent, and various forms of physical violence—such as strangulation, beating, or drowning—in the remaining incidents (Iezzi, 2013, pp. 54, 57). In countries with low firearm ownership rates, knives were the primary instruments of homicide involving both male and female victims. In 2011–12 in the United Kingdom, where 39 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women were killed with knives, only 9 per cent of male and 4 per cent of female homicides involved the use of firearms (ONS, 2013, p. 28).

Figure 3.11 Percentage of firearm-related male and female homicides in Guatemala, 2009–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

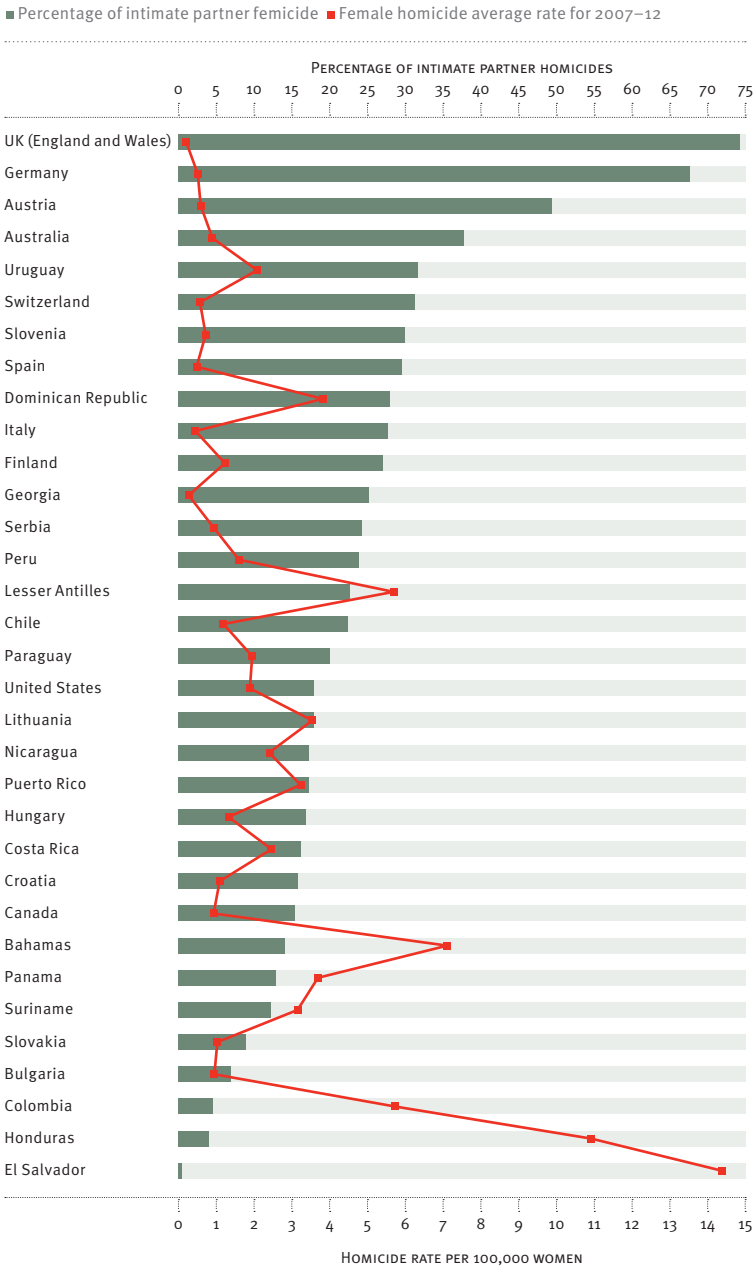
Figure 3.12 Proportion of women among those killed and injured in Iraq, by weapon type, 2003–11



Source: Moyes (2012)

Photo ▲ Red shoes line the steps of the Piazza della Santissima Annunziata to raise awareness of violence against women during International Women's Day, Florence, March 2014. © Maurizio Degl' Innocenti/ANSA

Figure 3.13 Total female homicide rates per 100,000 women and estimated percentages of intimate partner femicide in selected countries and territories, 2007–12



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Weapons of war and female casualties

In conflict settings, numerous women are killed by IEDs, explosive remnants of war, and artillery fire. In Afghanistan in 2013, for instance, IEDs claimed the lives of 177 women (out of 235 killed), 20 per cent more than in 2012 (UNAMA, 2014). Small arms fire that occurs in ground engagements primarily affects combatants and causes fewer civilian casualties than explosives do. In Iraq, women were the principal victims of aircraft bombs as well as

Box 3.3 Gender and the Arms Trade Treaty

On 2 April 2013 UN member states adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the first legally binding global instrument regulating the international transfer of conventional arms and ammunition. The central provision of the treaty requires states parties to assess the risk that weapons to be exported might be used to commit or facilitate certain wrongful acts, including a serious violation of international humanitarian law (IHL) or human rights law, and to deny the authorization of exports if there is an 'overriding risk' of such consequences (UNGA, 2013, arts. 7(1)(b)(i)–(ii), 7(3)).

Certain acts of violence against women are recognized as a violation of human rights.[19] Gender-based and sexual violence during conflict have also been categorized as crimes against humanity and war crimes,[20] that is, serious violations of IHL. Accordingly, Article 7(1) of the ATT implicitly addresses violence against women through references to serious violations of IHL and human rights law. Nevertheless, the treaty includes a further requirement that states parties 'take into account' the risk of arms 'being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children' as part of an export assessment (UNGA, 2013, art. 7(4)).

For those who lobbied for the inclusion of specific references to 'gender-based violence' and violence against women, these references in the ATT represent a coup, especially given the strong resistance to their incorporation by several states.[21] However, the explicit references to 'gender-based violence' and to violence against women in the ATT also have negative consequences. First, the ATT highlights violence against women as a human rights concern above other human rights violations that might be committed with the exported weapons, but that are not explicitly mentioned in the treaty.

Second, the placement of the reference to gender-based violence in a separate paragraph *after* the main criteria listed in Article 7(1) could lead states to distinguish it from the category of 'risks' to which it might otherwise belong, namely serious violations of IHL and human rights law. If the reference to gender-based violence had instead been included as an example of a serious violation of IHL or human rights law in Article 7(1), the treaty would clearly have acknowledged the relationship and ensured that states parties would be required to deny exports if they detected an overriding risk of such violence.[22]

Third, the phrasing of the provision leaves it open to interpretation. The requirement to 'take into account' the risk of the arms being used for gender-based violence 'in making this assessment' could imply this is one of the 'relevant factors' states parties must take into account when making the export assessment under Article 7(1). This would lead to a denial of an export if a determination were made that there was an overriding risk of, for example, a serious violation of human rights law in the form of violence against women. However, as it stands, the provision could be interpreted as simply requiring states parties to consider the possibility that arms to be exported could be used to commit violence against women without a corresponding requirement for them *not* to authorize the export. In other words, 'it does leave scope to argue that denial is not always required' (Green et al., 2013, p. 559).

Author: Sarah Parker

tank and artillery fire between 2003 and 2011 (see Figure 3.12). In contrast, mines, gunfire, and ammunition explosions affected mostly men in the same period.

Death in the family: intimate partner and intimate circle femicide

Femicide remains firmly anchored in the continuum of gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, and domestic violence. To supplement this chapter's focus on female homicide, this section examines intimate partner violence and, particularly, intimate partner femicide.

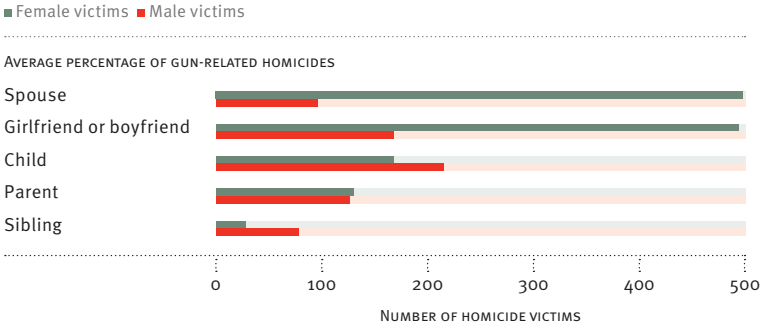
In countries with low and very low rates of female homicide, intimate partners account for the majority of perpetrators—more than 60 per cent in some countries (see Figure 3.13). In societies that experience low levels of homicidal crime, intimate partner femicide may thus be seen as a subset of female homicide that is more difficult to tackle. In Colombia, El Salvador, and Honduras, where female homicide rates are extremely high, intimate partner femicide is responsible for only a fraction of all victims of female homicide. In these contexts, women face a higher risk of becoming victims of violence outside the private sphere.

Although men account for the majority of homicide victims worldwide, women are the primary victims of intimate partner violence and intimate partner femicide (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014; Stöckl et al., 2013).

Recent studies have found that nearly 20 per cent of women in Western Europe have experienced some type of intimate partner violence, while in Eastern Europe this figure is closer to 27 per cent (WHO, 2013, p. 47). The increased policy and

Photo ▲ A victim of a landmine explosion learns to walk again, Afghanistan.

FIGURE 3.14 Number of victims of intimate circle homicide by sex and victim's relationship to the perpetrator, United States, 2012



SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

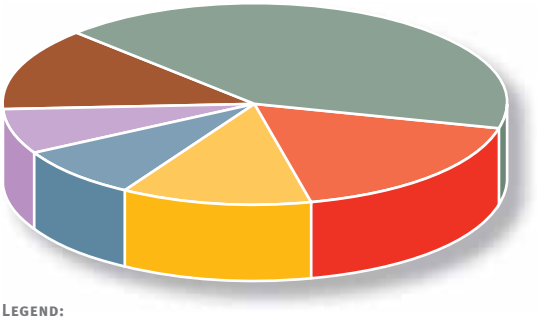
research attention on intimate partner violence has resulted in a flurry of studies and data collection initiatives. But while case studies abound, few have attempted to provide a regional or global overview of the prevalence of intimate partner violence and intimate partner femicide (UNODC, 2014; Stöckl et al., 2013). Given the scarcity of sex-disaggregated data on victim–perpetrator relationships, many studies fail to distinguish between male and female victims of intimate partner femicide and opt for inclusive definitions of 'intimate partner' to include both current and former partners (Norman and Bradshaw, 2013).

A closer look at two case studies with rich information on the circumstances of homicide, disaggregated by sex of the victims, underlines the need for similarly in-depth information across countries. In the United States, in 2012, women accounted for the majority of intimate partner homicide victims. While women were overwhelmingly killed by their intimate partners, men were more frequently killed by their children or other relatives (see Figure 3.14).

These findings make the case for a closer investigation of homicide that occurs within the 'intimate circle'—that is, in the family sphere—not just in intimate partner relationships. It also underlines the need for collecting data on both male and female victims of lethal intimate partner violence and on groups that may be more at risk. A 2010 survey on intimate partner violence in the United States finds that some sub-populations, such as racial or ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, and households with low income and food security, were disproportionately affected by intimate partner violence (CDC, 2013; 2014).

In Italy, about three-quarters (74 per cent) of the 126 female homicides recorded by Casa delle Donne in 2012 occurred within the intimate family sphere—inside the couple or nuclear family—while the remaining cases were committed by acquaintances, such as colleagues or friends (Casa delle Donne, 2013, p. 22). While the number of documented killings of women increased to 135 in 2013, the distribution by perpetrators remained similar (Casa delle Donne, 2014, p. 12).

FIGURE 3.15 Intimate circle female homicide in Italy, 2000–11, by type of victim's relationship to the perpetrator



LEGEND:
- Spouse or live-in partner: 41.6%
- Ex-spouse or ex-partner: 17.6%
- Mother or stepmother: 12.1%
- Daughter or stepdaughter: 8.5%
- Partner or lover: 7.1%
- Other relatives: 13.2%

SOURCE: EURES and ANSA (2012, p. 13)

Box 3.4 'Honour' killings in the family sphere

'Honour' killings are grossly underreported and underdocumented (UNGA, 2012, art. 44.). The planning and execution of such homicides often involves several family members rather than a single perpetrator, which makes the crimes even more difficult to identify, investigate, and prosecute (Belfrage et al., 2012). As is the case with other forms of femicide, they are usually preceded by episodes of non-lethal violence.

Although they lack a universally accepted definition, 'honour' killings may be described as 'acts of violence perpetrated upon a woman when an honour code is believed to have been broken and perceived shame is brought upon the family' (Meetoo and Mirza, 2007, p. 187). In most cases, women and girls are the victims and men are the perpetrators of such crimes (Hague, Gill, and Begikhani, 2013, p. 385).[23] Triggers for 'honour' killings include a variety of circumstances, such as if a woman is suspected to have committed adultery, engaged in premarital sex, or become pregnant as a result of adultery or rape, or if she has fallen in love 'with an inappropriate person', dresses 'in a manner unacceptable to family or community', or seeks to 'terminate arranged marriage' (Elakkary et al., 2014, p. 76; Belfrage et al., 2012, p. 21).

As a form of femicide, the killing of a woman under the pretext of honour tends to follow other types of family, domestic, or intimate partner violence that also occur in the name of 'honour', including physical violence and psychological abuse. In some cases, the killings are disguised as suicides or accidents, which precludes an understanding of the prevalence of this phenomenon (Laviosa, 2010).

Some 'honour' killings may be carried out in public, such that they might influence 'the conduct of other women' (UNGA, 2006, para. 84). In principle, these homicides can be distinguished from intimate partner killings (Oberwittler and Kasselt, 2011, p. 6); however, lines can blur, as is the case in Pakistan, where 40 per cent of the 'honour' killings of married women are carried out by their husbands (HRCP, 2012, p. 167). Distinguishing between 'crimes of passion' associated with individual violent behaviour and 'crimes of honour' arising from cultural traditions therefore remains problematic (UNGA, 2012, art. 23: Pope, 2011, p. 21).

'Crimes of passion' and other forms of domestic violence differ from 'honour' killings in that the latter tend to involve members of the extended family—such as in-laws, uncles, and cousins—as well as the broader community (Chesler, 2010; Meetoo and Mirza, 2007, p. 187). Unlike in dowry killings, women are typically killed by their families of origin and perpetrators may include minors (Chesler, 2010; HRCP, 2012, p. 68).

To tackle 'honour crimes' some countries, including Turkey, have enforced harsher penal codes while others, such as Sweden, have supported training programmes to assist police officers in recognizing and combating these crimes (Belfrage et al., 2012). Meanwhile, the magnitude of 'honour' killings worldwide remains unknown.

Author: Hannah Donges

Photo ▲ Demonstrators protest against the killing of a pregnant woman who was stoned and beaten to death by her family for marrying against their wishes, Islamabad, May 2014. © Faisal Mahmood/Reuters

Time-series data on female homicide in Italy supports this finding on the predominance of partners as perpetrators of crimes in the extended family circle. Of the 1,459 female homicides registered between 2000 and 2011, more than 66 per cent took place within the couple, involving a spouse or live-in partner, ex-partner, or lover; another 20 per cent occurred within the nuclear family and involved parents and children (EURES and ANSA, 2012, p. 13; see Figure 3.15).

The same time-series data reveals that more than 80 per cent of the 1,459 domestic female homicides that took place in Italy between 2000 and 2011 occurred in the home, yet only about 6 per cent were committed in towns (EURES and ANSA, 2012, p. 17; Iezzi, 2013, p. 58). The motives recorded for family homicides in Italy range from 'crime of passion' to quarrels or disagreements, raptus,[24] money-related disputes, and mental health issues (EURES and ANSA, 2012, p. 15; Iezzi, 2013, p. 56). Yet not all family femicides or intimate partner femicides can be attributed to these motives; 'honour crimes', for instance, may have other root causes (see Box 3.4).

Intimate partner violence and domestic violence in conflict settings

Intimate partner violence and violence against women in conflict and post-conflict settings are linked in complex ways. Recent research underscores the need for a holistic approach to understand how these phenomena are related and to challenge the 'prioritization' of conflict-related violence, as perpetrated by combatants, over domestic violence, as perpetrated by intimate partners in conflict settings (Babalola, Gill-Bailey, and Dodo, 2014; Hossain et al., 2014a; 2014b; McWilliams and Ní Aoláin, 2013).

Although data on intimate partner violence and family violence in conflict settings is scarce, country-based studies suggest that female victimization is compounded. By leading women to take on the roles of combatants, heads of household, or wage earners, conflict can challenge the 'classical patriarchy' and facilitate a certain empowerment of women. However, this dynamic has been found to increase violence against women in some cases, especially if men support patriarchal views, as in Afghanistan (Fluri, 2010, p. 285).

Furthermore, the exposure to wartime violence can also translate into violence within the home or within the couple. A study on intimate partner violence in Palestine finds that exposure to political violence significantly increased the odds of intimate partner violence (Clark et al., 2010), but this dynamic extends across societies. A study in northern Uganda concludes that women who experienced violence during the conflict were at much higher risk of multiple or repeat victimization at the hands of family members or intimate partners (Annan and Brier, 2010). In May 2013, the brutal murder of a woman by her husband, a doctor in a town in South Sudan, called attention to the persistence of intimate partner violence in conflict-affected societies, not just in households that had been directly affected by violence (SIHA Network, 2013).

Besides direct victimization, women in conflict settings also experience lasting effects of intimate partner violence and wartime violence. A study of the effects of wartime violence and intimate partner violence among women refugees at the Thai–Burma border identifies a link between these types of violence and pregnancy complications (Falb et al., 2014). Conflict-related trauma has also been linked to suicide in Afghan women, particularly through self-immolation (Aziz, 2011).

To tackle domestic violence in conflict settings, some organizations, including the UN, and scholars have proposed working more closely with men, rather than solely with women (Vess et al., 2013). A successful pilot programme in Côte d'Ivoire that targeted men recorded reductions in intimate partner violence in the control group after the intervention (Hossain et al., 2014a).

Conclusion

The global picture of lethal violence against women remains incomplete. While some countries have made progress in data collection methods and increased the availability of sex-disaggregated information on homicides, others—particularly in Asia and Africa—are still under-researched.

This chapter calls attention to variations in female homicide rates, highlighting improvements as well as deterioration. Since the publication of the 2011 edition of the GBAV, the distribution of female homicide has become more polarized, with the number of countries with low or very low and high or very high rates of female homicide generally increasing, while those in the middle category decreased substantially. The 25 most violent countries towards women account for more than half of all women killed over the past five years. Of the countries where reliable information is available, those located in Central America and the Caribbean exhibit the highest rates of female homicide for the period 2007–12.

The instruments used in female homicides vary widely across contexts and regions. Women are killed with firearms, knives, or brute force, depending on the circumstances of the incident, the type of perpetrator, and other contextual factors, such as the presence of firearms in the home. In some conflict settings, the risk of women falling victim to IEDs, explosive remnants of war, or artillery fire is higher than that for small arms. The wide variety of factors at play in femicide calls for a broad set of context-specific policy mechanisms to curb lethal violence against women worldwide.

In many countries women continue to die disproportionately at the hands of their partners as well as members of their nuclear and extended families. Intimate partner femicide shows little variation across time and regions: it remains generally inelastic, suggesting that more targeted policies are needed to reduce this type of 'hidden' violence. In countries with high levels of societal violence, the circumstances of female homicide are markedly different, with a higher proportion of women killed by unknown perpetrators than by their husbands or family members; moreover, the killings are generally perpetrated in public spaces, rather than inside the home—in contrast to intimate partner and family femicide.

List of abbreviations

ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
GBAV	*Global Burden of Armed Violence*
IED	Improvised explosive device
IUDPAS	Instituto Universitario en Democracia, Paz y Seguridad

Endnotes

1 Signed in 1979, the Convention contains an agenda for national action to tackle discrimination and ensure gender equality (CEDAW, 1979).

2 Article 148 Bis of the decree amending the Mexican penal code to include femicide—referred to as *feminicide*—as a crime stipulates that the offence occurs when: '(i) The victim presents signs of sexual violence of any kind; (ii) The victim suffered dishonouring or degrading injuries or mutilations before or after she was killed; (iii) It is known that the perpetrator threatened, harassed or injured the victim or used violence against her; (iv) The victim's body was exposed, discarded or thrown out in a public place; or

(v) The victim was confined for any length of time before her death' (Mexico, 2011, p. 14; translation: IRB, 2011).

3 For details, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

4 For more information on the situation of women worldwide in 2014, see the speech delivered by the executive director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the UN commemoration of International Women's Day 2014 (UN Women, 2014).

5 In calculating the global number of female homicide victims, regional rates were applied to countries for which data was missing or unreliable.

6 This calculation cannot be carried out for the data set used in the 2008 edition of the GBAV, as the data was not comparable.

7 To produce averages, the low and very low categories were grouped together, as were the high and very high categories.

8 To ensure comparability, a number of countries were excluded from the GBAV 2011 and 2014 female homicide data sets, partly because some sources were discontinued and thus not available for the 2014 database. Countries for which data was available for 2014 but not for 2011 were also excluded from this analysis.

9 Given the small population of the Lesser Antilles, the eight sovereign states of the region were grouped together and their rates averaged to produce a regional estimate. While six of the states have very similar rates, they are higher in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (7.86, based on an average of 4 women killed) and in Trinidad and Tobago (6.94, based on an average of 46 women killed per year in 2007–12).

10 These category names—*high* and *very high*—reflect the fact that they exceed the world average of 2.27 female homicides per 100,000 women.

11 The time periods covered by the GBAV 2011 and 2014 databases overlap by two years, namely from 2007 to 2009, to allow for two five-year periods, which are averaged. For details, see the online methodological annexe at www.genevadeclaration.org.

12 The Lesser Antilles region registered an overall decrease compared to average rates recorded in the GBAV 2011 database. This decline is not consistent across all countries within the region, however; while some female homicide rates decreased, as in Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, others increased, as in Dominica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).

13 The municipality of Ulan Ude has the highest rate of women killed in the Russian Federation, with an average rate of 11.7 in 2007–12, although a closer look at trends reveals an overall decrease, from a rate of 14.7 in 2007 and 18.0 in 2008, to 8.3 in 2012. The next highest female homicide rates were registered in Chita, Habarovsk, Kemerovo, and Yakutsk municipalities, where they exceeded 9.0 per 100,000 women.

14 While IUDPAS used to produce reports on homicide and femicide in cooperation with the National Police in Honduras, this data exchange ceased in July 2013 with the appointment of a new security minister (Radio Progreso, 2014). Since then, the two institutions have reportedly engaged in a 'media war', with the police reporting a marked decrease in homicide numbers in 2013 and IUDPAS challenging those figures (*Tiempo*, 2014).

15 The *maquila* industry relies on factories that produce goods for export. In 2006 these factories, also called *maquiladoras,* accounted for 55 per cent of Mexico's manufacturing and 45 per cent of exports (Kopinak, 2011, p. 635).

16 Operation 'Cast Lead' was an Israeli military campaign against Hamas in the Gaza strip that began on 27 December 2008 and lasted 23 days. It reportedly claimed the lives of approximately 1,440 Palestinians and 13 Israelis (CRS, 2009, p. 2).

17 UN Security Council Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960, and 2106 address issues related to women, peace, and security.

18 Following a protracted public debate on a law to ban army rifles from the home, 18 of the 26 cantons rejected the proposed draft in 2011 (*Guardian*, 2011).

19 See Part II of the UN Secretary-General's report on violence against women (UNGA, 2006) and the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN, 1995).

20 For example, the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda recognize sexual violence, including rape, as an act of torture, as a crime against humanity, and as an element of genocide in some circumstances (ICTR, 1998; ICTY, 2002). Note that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines 'crimes against humanity' to include: 'Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity' (ICC, 2002, art. 7(1)(g)).

21 For example, the Holy See argued that the term 'gender-based violence' was unacceptable as it was ambiguous, further noting that it made 'some victims more equal than others' (Nielsen, 2012; Whall and Lee, 2012b).

22 In fact, the Holy See, which had argued against the inclusion of a specific reference to 'gender-based violence' in the treaty, suggested that if the term 'women' could not be included instead of 'gender', then it would consider integrating the section into the section on IHL and human rights law (Whall and Lee, 2012a).

23 While most victims are women, these attacks can be directed at anyone, but particularly against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons (UNHCR, 2011).

24 Raptus, also called *raptus melancholicus*, refers to a state of mind characterized by intense anxiety and despair (Milner, 2000, p. 127; Schlesinger, 2004).

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Chapter Four

Unpacking Lethal Violence

This chapter examines how disaggregated data on lethal violence can serve to inform effective evidence-based policy-making to prevent and reduce armed violence. In addition to providing quantitative information, this type of data can provide insight into qualitative factors such as the socio-economic characteristics of victims and offenders, locations, motives, methods and weapons used, and circumstances leading to a lethal outcome. Moreover, it allows for the generation of diagnostics, the identification of targets for interventions, and assessments of programme efficiency. Yet such data-based processes represent only one of the two complementary components that enable effective policy-making. The other component is political will—not only to promote the collection and processing of data and its public dissemination, but also to make use of evidence to develop and implement policies and programmes.

The past few years have witnessed a significant increase in the availability of systematically disaggregated data on lethal violence. This trend is clearly reflected in successive editions of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* (GBAV): while the 2008 edition offers only broad regional estimates based on limited data, the 2011 edition is able to produce a global overview at the national level (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008; 2011; see Box 2.2). By the latter edition, more countries were making relevant information available, encouraged not only by advances in data collection technology, but also by an increased awareness of the importance of sharing data on crime and violence in the context of monitoring trends and measuring the impact of crime and violence prevention policies.

Like the 2011 GBAV, this volume takes a 'unified approach' to armed violence, meaning that it considers both conflict and non-conflict settings or, put differently, that it covers all conflict, criminal, and interpersonal forms of lethal violence (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, pp. 11–42).[1] While data from conflict situations largely documents casualties,[2] data from non-conflict environments is generally focused on homicides, as recorded by law enforcement, criminal justice systems, and public health authorities. Wealthy countries tend to have the greatest capacity to establish and maintain efficient recording systems on violent deaths, and thus to collect detailed and disaggregated data; in contrast, limited recording capacities tend to prevent effective data gathering in middle- and low-income countries, including ones that suffer from high levels of violence.

When disaggregated, comprehensive national data can reveal useful information about the distribution, intensity, and impact of lethal violence, which may be significantly higher among specific demographic groups, at particular times, or in certain areas, such as border zones or urban areas. Indeed, detailed local information can shed light on perpetrators and victims, as well as on armed actors and communities at risk (Florquin, Kartas, and Pavesi, 2014; Wepundi and Lynge, 2014).

Mis- and underreporting can weaken the reliability of data on lethal violence. 'Honour' or dowry-related killings, or mob killings of alleged 'witches', mostly targeting females, may not be reflected in homicide statistics because they are not considered by law, public consent, or prevailing cultural norms to be homicide (Alvazzi del Frate et al., 2014; Dziewanski, LeBrun, and Racovita, 2014, pp. 13–14). With families of the victims and close members of the community often involved in the killing, cases may not be reported—adequately or at all. Furthermore, law enforcement and criminal justice actors may tacitly endorse the crimes or downplay their severity, for instance by failing to carry out a proper investigation or by meting out lenient sentences (Alvazzi del Frate et al., 2014). Meanwhile, some victims of lethal violence may not be acknowledged due to inefficiencies in the criminal justice or public health sectors or because a state is experiencing destabilizing hostilities that complicate casualty recording (Minor, 2012a). To some degree, the establishment and maintenance of sub-national data frameworks that capture multiple forms of violence can help to prevent such underreporting.

This edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* is able to rely on significantly more disaggregated data than the previous editions. Consequently, it broadens the scope of analysis, capturing manifestations of lethal violence in a multitude of settings.

This chapter finds that:

- The geo-localization of lethal events is an analytical tool that can assist policy-makers in setting priorities and designing interventions to target high-risk areas and groups, as well as in monitoring their effectiveness.
- In addition to shedding light on local dynamics in lethal violence, sub-national data allows for the detection of transnational patterns, such as increasing violent death rates in border areas of neighbouring states.
- Institutions that collect disaggregated data on casualties—be they criminal justice and public health agencies or civil society organizations in non-conflict settings or casualty recording systems in conflict zones—currently use varying definitions, methods, and degrees of coverage. Efforts are under way to establish international standards on casualty recording.
- Observatories on crime, conflict, and violence can mobilize a large number of stakeholders and can also raise the bar regarding quality standards for collecting, processing, and disseminating local and national disaggregated data on violence.
- In the context of violence reduction programming, municipal-level and other sub-national data on violent deaths is particularly relevant in that it reveals drivers of violence that are not discernible at the national level and allows for more accurate assessments of the effects of interventions.
- The collection and dissemination of disaggregated data can help to shed light on inequalities across groups and communities and can serve to inform violence reduction programming in response to changing dynamics in lethal violence. In particular, details on violent events and data disaggregated by sex, age, and other socio-demographic characteristics of victims and perpetrators can be of key significance in tracking progress towards the post-2015 development goals.

Local dimensions of lethal violence

National-level data on lethal violence tends to mask variations within countries. In contrast, sub-national data can provide details regarding the distribution of lethal incidents, armed groups,

Box 4.1 Mapping lethal violence

Geo-referenced technology can provide insight into spatial and temporal features of crime and violence. In particular, geographic information systems (GIS) enable the mapping of institutions, services, events, and other points or activities of interest for analytical purposes. By attributing spatial and temporal coordinates to data on lethal violence, GIS mapping allows for a better understanding of the distribution and patterns of crime (Chainey and Ratcliffe, 2005). Recent developments in this technology have resulted in low-cost software and hardware, including web applications that provide public access to open-source satellite maps. This type of technology forms the basis of approaches such as intelligence-led policing, which uses diagnostics to assess and manage risks (Ratcliffe, 2008).

One of the functions of GIS mapping is the identification of 'hot spot' areas, which are characterized by elevated rates of violence and a high risk of victimization. Inversely, 'cool spots' exhibit low rates of violence (Eck et al., 2005, p. 2). Hot spots correspond to concentrations of violence, regardless of their physical or population size; as a result, they can be analysed at the micro, meso, or macro level. At the micro level, the unit of analysis is the street corner and event data is disaggregated on the basis of addresses or GPS locations. The meso level corresponds to neighbourhoods; community mobilization, social control and prevention programmes, victim profiling, local police stations, and accountability are of relevance at this scale. At the macro level, the urban area serves as an entity that allows for strategic analysis of factors such as policy-making, the allocation of resources, levels of crime, public transportation safety, and disaster management (Quéro, 2009).

The geographical localization of violence provides key information for policing. Indeed, crime mapping has become a common component of policing strategies in many countries. A growing number of law enforcement agencies are making up-to-date street-level crime maps available online.[3] In addition to serving as representational tools, such maps offer layers of information—including the locations of police stations or public facilities such as schools—to allow for further interpretation and cross-referencing of violent events.

The Jamaican government, for one, has been incorporating GIS technologies in its evidence-based programming and prevention activities for more than a decade (Lyew-Ayee and Greene, 2013). The Violence Prevention Alliance brings together a number of stakeholders—including government representatives, law enforcement, the Kingston West Crime Observatory (KWCO), and experts in social mapping—to plan, implement, and evaluate prevention strategies. The KWCO operates within one police division based in Kingston and involves multiple stakeholders, including the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Security, and non-governmental organizations (Weekes, 2013, p. 6). The observatory collects data on serious crime and injuries from police and hospitals and uses geo-referenced information to track crime distribution and to inform the design of security interventions.

KWCO's approach makes use of 'asset mapping', which involves the plotting of services, buildings, and street characteristics; crime and violent incidents are then layered over the assets, allowing for assessments of ongoing law enforcement activities and the planning or adjusting of responses to evolving needs. In Kingston, these mapping exercises revealed that police stations were unevenly distributed among city districts and that their responsiveness to crimes was consequently inadequate, highlighting the need for a redistribution of resources (Lyew-Ayee and Greene, 2013).

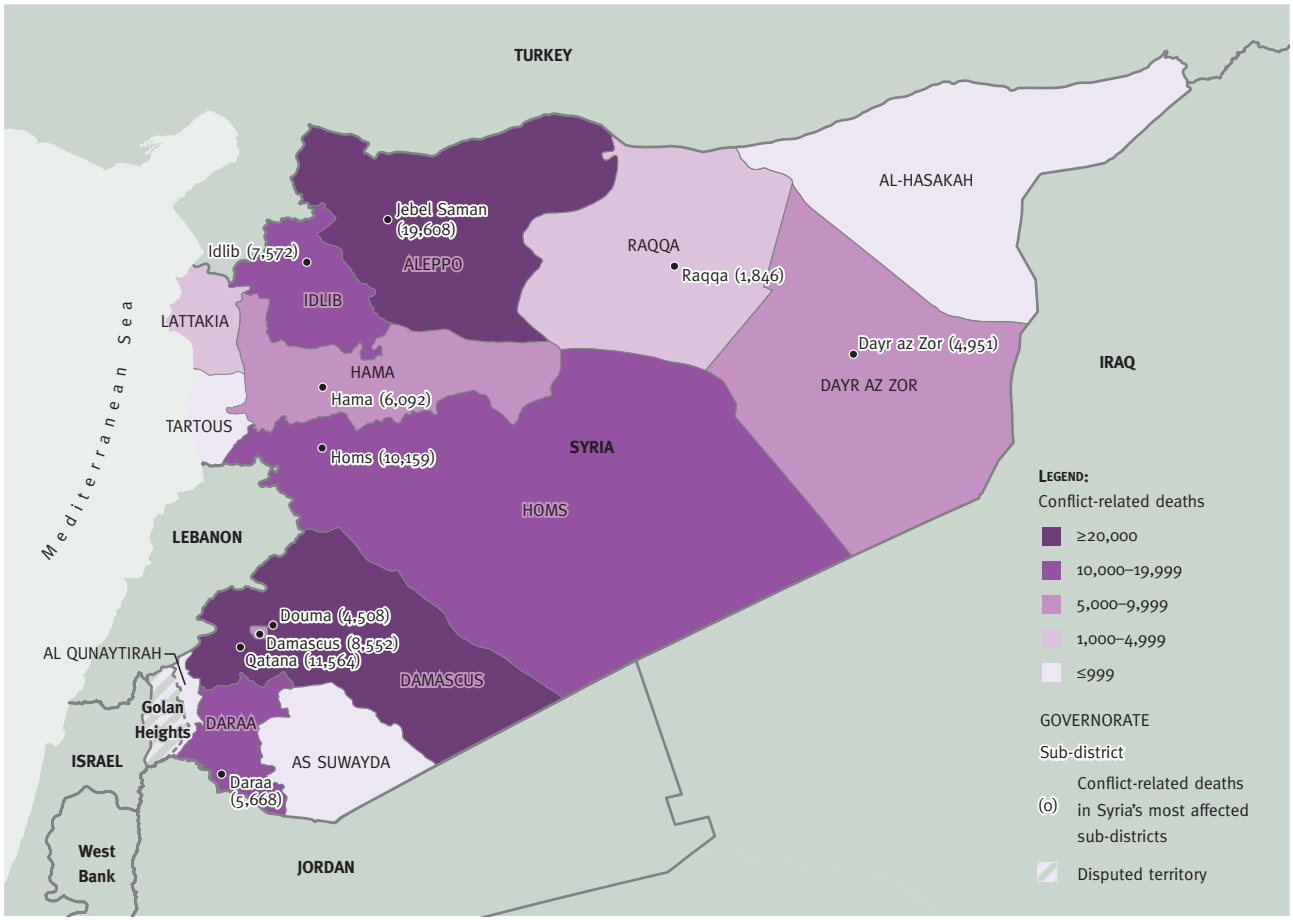
While the work of the KWCO has raised awareness of the need for standardized data on violence among local authorities, progress in the area has been impeded not only by a reluctance to manage and share data, but also by a scarcity of resources (Weekes, 2013). Nevertheless, in 2009, the Jamaican government established a National Crime Observatory in the Ministry of National Security, which, in September 2013, signed a memorandum of understanding with several government agencies to promote the standardization, accessibility, and sharing of timely and reliable data to support prevention and reduction efforts (Saunders, 2013).

Author: Irene Pavesi

and communities at risk across regions, municipalities, neighbourhoods, and even streets.

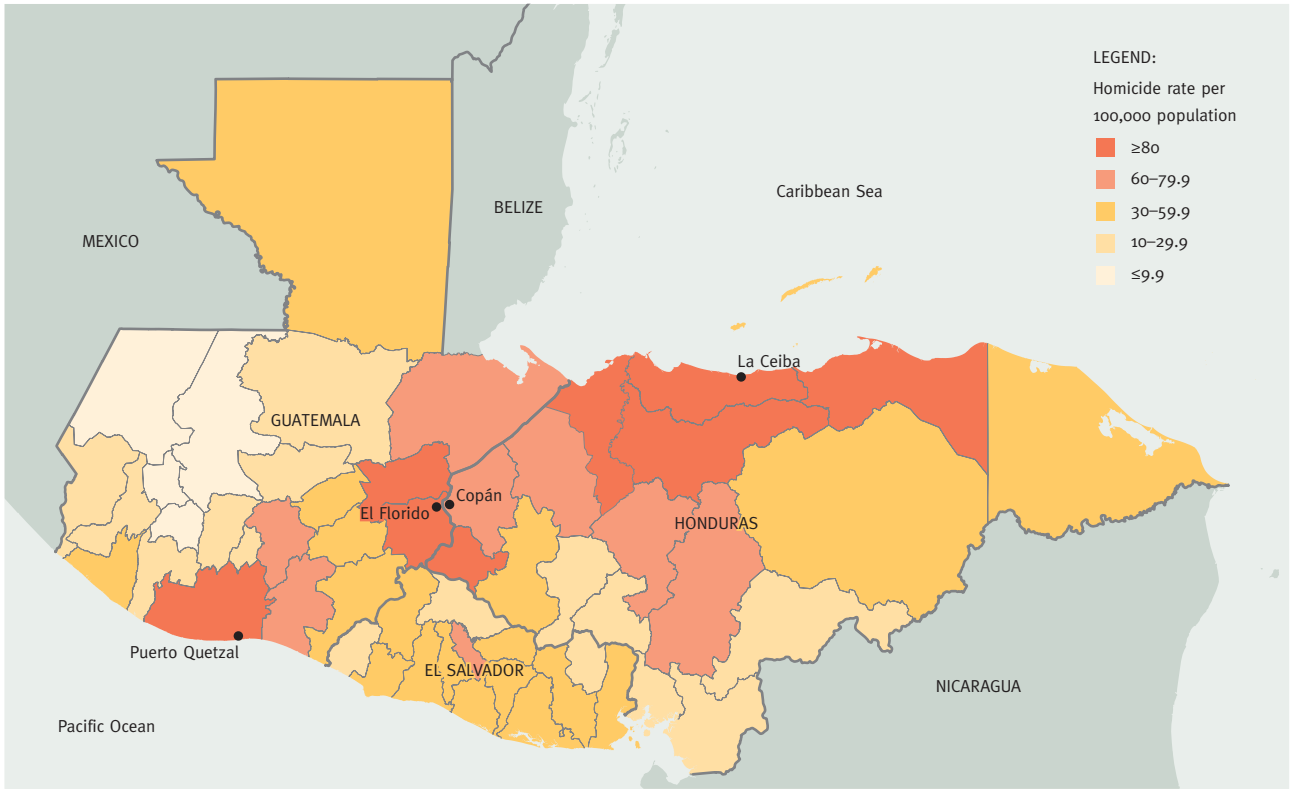
A variety of actors—from law enforcement to humanitarian agencies and early warning systems—are increasingly relying on local data to conduct geo-localization. This tool can assist policy-makers in setting priorities and designing interventions to target high-risk areas and groups, as well as in monitoring their effectiveness (Eck et al., 2005; see Box 4.1). While the provision of local data and the availability of tools to analyse it are crucial to the design and implementation of evidence-based policing and programming, political will is needed not only to ensure that evidence is used to support policy decisions, but also to promote its dissemination to mobilize stakeholders involved in implementing policies and programmes (OECD, 2011). At the local level, municipalities and affected communities can play a decisive role in supporting evidence-based policing.

Map 4.1 Localization of conflict-related deaths in Syria, March 2011–September 2014



Source: Humanitarian Tracker (n.d.b)

Map 4.2 Homicide rates by department in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, 2013



Source: ACAPS (2014)

Local hubs of violence

When plotted on a map, lethal incidents tend to appear as clusters. Many armed conflicts are concentrated in spaces that do not correspond to that of national territories; indeed, these spaces can be smaller than the states themselves or extend beyond the national borders.

Map 4.1 shows that most of the conflict in Syria over the period of 2011 to 2014 was concentrated in the western part of the country. The majority of clashes occurred around the urban areas of Aleppo, Damascus, and Homs (Humanitarian Tracker, n.d.b; BBC, 2014a). The crisis in Syria has also affected neighbouring countries, where existing tensions between ethnic minorities in the cities along the border with Syria have been fuelled by the conflict (Dziadosz, 2014; Johnson, 2014).

The localization of lethal events in non-conflict settings can also be instructive. Map 4.2 shows homicide rates in the departments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, which together form a region known as the Northern Triangle. With national homicide rates exceeding 30 per 100,000 population, these countries are experiencing higher violent death rates than some conflict zones (see Map 2.1). The distribution of homicides at the sub-national level reveals large variations within

the national territories—as well as transnational patterns. The highest levels of lethal violence have persisted along the Honduran coast on the Caribbean Sea and along the border between Honduras and Guatemala.

As reflected in Map 4.2, levels of lethal violence are acute along the three countries' national borders, which are considered porous and prone to illegal border crossings (Espach and Haering, 2012). Along the northern border between Honduras and Guatemala, for instance, neighbouring municipalities such as Copán (Copán department, Honduras) and El Florido (Chiquimula department, Guatemala) serve as crossroads for cocaine shipments, which apparently pass through official checkpoints on the way from Colombia and Venezuela to the United States (UNODC, 2012, p. 37). Other hot spots can be found in port cities, such as La Ceiba, in the Atlántida department on the Caribbean coast of Honduras, or Puerto Quetzal, in the Escuintla department on the western coast of Guatemala (p. 38).

The geography of lethal violence in the region can largely be linked to former Mexican president Felipe Calderon's hard-line policies to stem cartel activity. From 2006 until 2012, the drug enforcement operations involved the capturing and killing of cartel leaders, which resulted in the fragmentation of the Mexican drug trade and the establishment of new cocaine trafficking hubs and routes in the region (Lessing, 2012, p. 54; UNODC, 2012, pp. 18–19).

In addition to drug cartels, the Northern Triangle is also home to gangs: in 2012, there were an estimated 20,000 members in El Salvador, 22,000 in Guatemala, and 12,000 in Honduras (Ribando Seelke, 2014). The extent to which gangs in the region are involved in transnational drug trafficking depends on traffickers' needs. While the Mara Salvatrucha (or MS-13) seems to have the strongest relationship with drug traffickers in El Salvador, the gang is barely involved in the trade in Honduras, where trafficking occurs mostly by air (Farah and Phillips Lum, 2013, p. 9).

To what degree the extreme levels of lethal violence in the Northern Triangle are linked to gang activities is difficult to ascertain, partly because gang-related homicides are not necessarily reported or, if they are, the circumstances of the killings may not be known. In many cases, the perpetrator remains at large, the investigation is dropped, or the killing is simply recorded on the basis of the victim's characteristics, such as age, clothing, or tattoos. Gang-related disappearances and the clandestine dumping of bodies in mass graves further complicate the recording of homicides (Nowak, 2010, p. 53; Wolf, 2012, pp. 76–79).

In 2012, a truce negotiated between the government of El Salvador and the Mara Salvatrucha and Mara 18 resulted in a significant drop in homicides at the national level, suggesting that a large portion of the lethal violence experienced in the country had indeed been due to gang-related activities (see Box 2.4). Yet the distribution of homicides at the sub-national level reveals that the truce did not have the same impact everywhere. The comparison of municipal homicide rates 14 months before and 14 months after the truce indicates that there was no net change in homicide rates in one-fifth of all municipalities, a number of which are located along the trafficking corridors connecting Honduras and El Salvador. This implies that while gang activities may have appeared to account for the bulk of lethal violence in the country, a host of other factors may be at play, including drug cartels and organized criminal groups active in those areas (Garzon, 2013).

Data collection, protection, and dissemination

The availability of information for the geo-localization of armed violence depends on numerous factors. The most relevant is the existence of data collection mechanisms, which are often contingent on governmental and non-governmental institutions with the capacity to record and disseminate detailed contextual data on crime and violence.

In non-conflict settings, data on lethal violence is generally collected by the criminal justice system—including by the police, prosecutors, courts, and prisons—and by the public health sector, via hospitals, morgues, and vital registration systems.

The criminal justice system typically focuses on criminal cases as reported to or discovered by law enforcement, and on alleged perpetrators in investigations. Consequently, crime and criminal justice statistics generally provide information on cases, suspects, and persons who are charged, convicted, and sentenced (Alvazzi del Frate et al., 2013, p. 7; UNODC, 2014, p. 91; Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 48). Information on victims, which tends to appear in police and court records, is rarely published in police and criminal justice statistical reports, which may, however, provide information on the circumstances or motives of killings. Meta-information on definitions, counting rules, and methodology are hardly ever provided.

In contrast to criminal justice statistics, public health data concerns mainly the victim and the causes of death. This data generally captures demographic characteristics and details on the mechanism of death, such as intentional interpersonal violence.[4]

In conflict settings, where the criminal justice and public health sectors may be unable to record casualties effectively, other agencies, organizations, or individuals may take on that role, either by collecting information in real time during a conflict or once hostilities have ceased (Minor, 2012b, p. 19). Casualty recording systems systematically gather data from incident-based reports produced by state agencies or intergovernmental organizations, as well as from reports produced by the press, social media, and NGOs (Sloboda and Minor, 2012, p. 6; see Box 1.4). The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, for example, gathers disaggregated information on political violence events in developing countries from a variety of sources, recording details such as the date, location, and type of event (battle, civilian deaths, or riots), the number of casualties, and the types of perpetrators. Such disaggregated data offers insight into key characteristics of violent events and episodes, such as their scale, distribution, and dynamics, as well as the motivations of active armed actors.

At the international level, manuals and guidelines have been published for the development of both criminal justice and health statistics (UN, 2003; WHO, n.d.). Nevertheless, the harmonization and comparability of statistics across countries is still limited, largely due to differences in definitions, data collection mechanisms, and coverage (Alvazzi del Frate et al., 2013; Bhalla et al., 2012; Minor, 2012b). While international standards on casualty recording have yet to be established, the preparatory work has already begun. Every Casualty, for example, have reviewed existing casualty recording practices with the aim of developing common standards for practitioners (Every Casualty, n.d.; Minor, 2012a).

In addition to the application of standards, guidelines, and good practices, the quality of statistics also depends on the availability of human, logistical,

technical, and financial resources of the involved institutions or organizations (Alvazzi del Frate, 2010).

In the process of collecting and disseminating data, the protection of the safety and rights of victims of violence, their families, and their communities is of utmost concern. The release or leaking of sensitive information may heighten the risk of harm to individuals and communities. If, for example, information on a victim's or a perpetrator's clan affiliation, ethnicity, or religion is not properly stored and protected, with the consequence that it is stolen, lost, or leaked, it may be used in renewed or retaliatory violence. Similar concerns apply with respect to the dissemination of street-level crime data through real-time maps, as individuals who have been victimized may become exposed to reprisals. In order to protect victims and avoid revealing sensitive information, anonymization processes can be put in place. In the mapping of crimes, for example, authorities can truncate the date of an incident to reveal only the month and the year, just as they can provide an approximate location of an event—rather than a precise address (Home Office, n.d.b).

Only when they are gathered ethically and systematically can raw numbers on violent deaths serve as useful information. Such systematic collection calls for a consistent methodology that allows for the tracking of trends and patterns against a baseline. When disseminated to target audiences, such details on violent deaths—including on the victims, perpetrators, and local characteristics of violence—can serve to inform the development of prevention and reduction strategies.

Overall, however, only a small proportion of subnational statistics on lethal violence is publicly accessible, most of it in developed countries (Alvazzi del Frate, 2010; UNODC, 2014, p. 101). Notably, the quality and completeness of police reports varies greatly across countries, ranging from simple tabulations on the frequency of events at the national level to in-depth analyses that provide details on perpetrators, victims, instruments, and circumstances of killings as well as charts and maps illustrating the sub-national distribution of violence (UNODC, 2014, pp. 99–102).

The flow of data on lethal violence should be transparent, sustainable, and cross-sectoral—from the primary sources to the institutions tasked with the collection and analysis of the data as well as the dissemination of findings, to the policy-makers who use the research results to inform their programming. Among the institutions in this chain, observatories on conflict, crime, and violence can play a key role, as they typically work within a network of stakeholders and can assist policy-makers in designing effective violence reduction and prevention strategies (Gilgen and Tracey, 2011; see Box 4.2). Observatories can engage various actors by establishing bodies such as boards, ethical committees, and scientific working groups. These bodies help to guarantee the legitimacy of an observatory, ensure the security of data, and set common priorities (Quéro, 2013b). When properly equipped and supported financially, these monitoring systems can supplement official data, enhance awareness of lethal violence in the local context, and serve as think tanks (Gilgen and Tracey, 2011, pp. 19, 51).

The urban factor

Among researchers and policy-makers, urban space has emerged as a key unit of analysis and potential site of interventions (Beall, Goodfellow, and Rodgers, 2011; ICRC, 2010). Large urban settings and capitals act as social, political, and financial hubs; the convergence of assets, services,

Box 4.2 Observatories on conflict, crime, and violence

'Observatory' is the term applied to a variety of institutions that deal with data on conflict, crime, and violence. They typically collect and analyse raw data for the purposes of monitoring trends; generating information for violence reduction programming and policy-making; and evaluating the impact of violence-related programmes and policies (Gilgen and Tracey, 2011; Quéro, 2013b; Wennmann, 2013). Observatories are established by or in close collaboration with local, regional, or national governments, often in private–public partnerships or with support from various donors and international organizations; they tend to engage with institutions in various sectors, including law enforcement, criminal justice, health, and education (Gilgen and Tracey, 2011).

Observatories may be grouped into different categories based on their governance structures. Some are government-led and serve as public-access or closed-access data management systems, usually providing systematic official data; others are based in university departments; and a certain number are completely independent (Quéro, 2013a). In addition to these basic models, there are observatories with hybrid governance structures, in which governmental and non-governmental components collaborate at various levels (Gilgen and Tracey, 2011, p. 30).

Some observatories operate at the local level—be it within a city, municipality, or community—while others function at the state, national, regional, or even international level (Gilgen and Tracey, 2011, pp. 31–32). Evidence shows that the impact of observatories established at the sub-national level is greater than that of those operating at higher levels, largely because the interaction with local stakeholders is more immediate and partly because the proximity allows for greater awareness of the local context (see Box 4.1).

Observatories have a variety of objectives, ranging from the centralization of information to the facilitation of cross-sectoral collaboration (OAS, 2009, p. 22). They can disseminate information to policy-makers, the media, researchers, and the broader public, enabling access to security and justice information that is generally difficult to obtain or understand. By producing baseline data and indicators, observatories can also assist governments, donors, and civil society in monitoring and evaluating crime and violence prevention policies and programmes (Gilgen and Tracey, 2011). In addition, they can help to raise the bar on the quality of local and national data on violence (Wennmann, 2013). To provide such services and have an impact in the long term, however, observatories must be able to rely on steadfast political commitment and ongoing financial support (Quéro, 2013b; Hinton, 2013, p. 2).

One example of a city-level observatory of crime and violence is that of Ciudad Juárez in Chihuahua, Mexico. Established in 2008 as a joint effort of the Juárez municipal government, the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez, and the United States–Mexico Border Office of the Pan American Health Organization, the observatory serves to monitor and measure the magnitude and characteristics of various forms of violence suffered by the residents of Juárez. To promote and inform local evidence-based violence reduction programmes, the observatory produces and disseminates periodic reports that provide details on homicide rates and weapons used, as well as indicators on youth violence and violence against women (OSCC, n.d.).

Author: Anna Alvazzi del Frate

and institutions lends urban areas the characteristics of key public spaces, where power resides. As a result, cities represent opportunities—for crime and violence as well as for prevention and reduction of the same (OECD, 2011, p. 13).

The strategic importance of cities also means they are likely to be hubs for conflicts and 'target[s] for political, symbolic, propaganda, economic, or logistical reasons' (ICRC, 2010, p. 439; see Box 4.3).

Photo ◀ An injured woman is carried to safety after masked gunmen fired at shoppers in Westgate mall, Nairobi, 21 September 2013. © Simon Maina/ AFP Photo

Box 4.3 Nairobi: a hub of conflict?

Like many other large cities, Nairobi suffers from many different forms of crime and violence. At the end of December 2007, as the presidential elections drew to a close, the Kenyan capital was overwhelmed by an unprecedented escalation of violence, fuelled by allegations of irregularities during the electoral process. Minutes after the results were announced, violent demonstrations poured onto the streets (KNCHR, 2008). In the aftermath, official statistics reported that nearly 1,200 people had been killed and 3,500 injured, that property damage was extensive, and that well over a quarter of a million people had been displaced from their communities.[5] At the same time, there was a dramatic hike in domestic violence against women. The Gender Violence Recovery Centre at the Nairobi Women's Hospital recorded 524 cases of rape, nearly 60 per cent of which occurred in the capital (Mc Evoy, 2012, p. 11).

Nairobi hit the headlines again in September 2013, when Al Shabaab attacked the Westgate mall, claiming the lives of at least 61 civilians and six security officers, while injuring many more (BBC, 2013; Karimi, Almasy, and Leposo, 2013). Since then, a series of fatal attacks have shaken the city (BBC, 2014b–e).

Survey data shows that city dwellers in Kenya reported feeling somewhat less safe than did residents in rural areas, including with respect to the likelihood of becoming the victim of a burglary (UNODC, 2010, p. 6; Pavesi, 2013). A recent survey on small arms and security issues in Kenya reports that people's perceived need for protection from a range of dangers and fear of attacks by neighbouring clans have driven a demand for small arms (Wepundi et al., 2012, pp. 22, 40). Indeed, almost two out of three self-declared firearm owners indicated personal protection as one of the main reasons for owning a firearm (Pavesi, 2013).

Author: Irene Pavesi

Urban sociologists have long been studying crime in cities by analysing the organization and social texture of urban areas (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1981; Byrne and Sampson, 1986; Shaw and McKay, 1942). Recent research has provided evidence that violent events tend to 'cluster' in urban areas; moreover, it has shown that, compared to violence in rural areas, urban violence tends to be 'more concentrated, more lethal, more variable, and less detectable' (Frost

and Nowak, 2014, p. 2). At the same time, cities have been at the vanguard of violence reduction strategies as they bring together resources and stakeholders, thereby facilitating outreach to affected communities (OECD, 2011, pp. 17–18).

A number of methodological issues should be taken into consideration with respect to city-level data on violence. While lethal violence rates may indeed be higher in cities than in rural areas, they may also be a reflection of more efficient and

Box 4.4 The fast growth of Karachi

Research shows that Pakistan's rate of urbanization is the most rapid in South Asia. Yet although half of the country's population is expected to live in urban areas by 2030, an urban policy has yet to be developed to support the process (UN-Habitat, 2014). Karachi, the largest city in Pakistan, has grown so fast that the size of its population is difficult to estimate, with figures ranging from 18 to 24 million inhabitants (Amer, 2013; UN-Habitat, 2014; Yusuf, 2012, p. 3). Since the early 1970s, following the separation of Pakistan into east and west and the subsequent crisis in Afghanistan, migrants have been flowing into Karachi (Memon, 2005, p. 2). Since around the year 2000, Karachi's industry sector has drawn economic migrants from the poorest districts of southern Punjab (Amer, 2013; Memon, 2005, pp. 16–17). Today, the multi-ethnic city accounts for a considerable proportion of the national gross domestic product (Yusuf, 2012, p. 4; ICG, 2014, p. 24).[6]

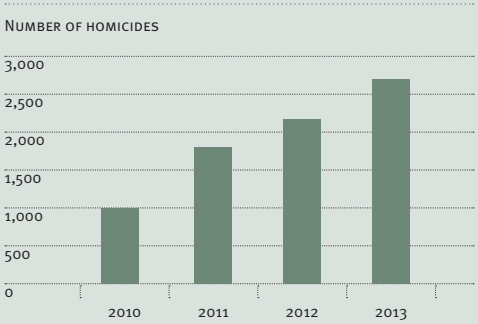
Like other megacities, Karachi is experiencing high levels of inequality, with almost half of the population living in informal settlements (ICG, 2014, p. 27). Rapid, unplanned urbanization is at the root of local power vacuums, a near or total absence of basic services in many areas, and resulting competition over resources. These issues have fuelled crime in Karachi, which exhibits higher levels of lethal violence—be it political, ethnic, sectarian, or criminal—than other large urban agglomerations (p. 24).

Starting in 2006, the number of political killings began to increase, with 'target killers' on motorbikes carrying out hits on individuals on the basis of their political or ethnic affiliations (ICG, 2014, pp. 10, 26). In 2010, the assassination of a member of parliament triggered violent riots and targeted attacks, causing at least 90 deaths and more than 100 injuries, mostly among Pashtuns (CBC News, 2010; Imtiaz and Walsh, 2010). Law enforcement officers were reportedly granted permission to shoot on sight in an attempt to restore order (CBC News, 2010). The event marked the beginning of a steady increase in ethnic and political violence, which peaked with 2,700 reported fatalities in 2013 (ICG, 2014, p. 24; see Figure 4.1). As the exact size of the city population is unknown, those killings translate into a violent death rate of 11–15 per 100,000 population, or much higher if only residents of the city centre are taken into consideration.

An estimated 200 criminal gangs are operating in Karachi, contributing to crime and insecurity. These gangs, a large number of which are affiliated with political parties, also act as suppliers of illicit firearms (Yusuf, 2012, pp. 11–12).

Author: Irene Pavesi

Figure 4.1 Number of reported homicides in Karachi, Pakistan, 2010–13



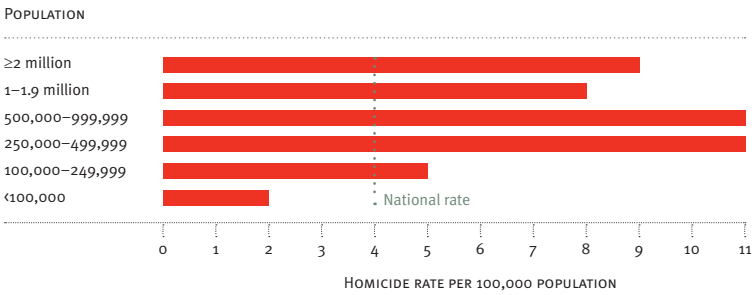
Source: FBI (n.d.a)

Photo ◀ Madrassa students attend the funeral of their cleric and teacher who was killed by unknown gunmen on a motorbike, Karachi, Pakistan, December 2012. © Shakil Adil/ AP Photo

sophisticated data collection systems (OECD, 2011). Furthermore, the comparability of violent death counts in urban areas may be undercut by methodological discrepancies or shortcomings. If, for example, the law enforcement and public health sectors apply inconsistent district boundaries, their recording systems will register varying numbers of incidents for different areas that are known by the same name, consequently complicating cross-sectoral calculations and comparisons (Eurostat, 2004, p. 9; Skogan, 1975; Weisburd, Bruinsma, and Bernasco, 2009).

Another challenge inherent in measuring urban violence is the difficulty of estimating the size of a population in a specific territorial unit, especially if it has undergone rapid urbanization, as have many informal settlements (see Box 4.4). In India, the census office and another survey agency recently applied two different methodologies to estimate the size of slum populations in the country; due to definitional discrepancies regarding what constitutes a 'slum', their results differed by more than 20 million people: 65 million vs. 44 million, respectively (Varma, 2014). This example demonstrates that population survey practices can have a direct impact on lethal violence rates—and on their reliability.

Figure 4.2 Average lethal violence rates in US municipalities, by population size, 2013



Source: FBI (n.d.a)

Even in cases where population estimates are considered reliable, no direct correlation has been established between city size and levels of lethal violence. In the United States, however, municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants experience rates of lethal violence that exceed the national level, which is 4 per 100,000 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014; see Figure 4.2).

Mid-sized cities with between 500,000 and 1 million inhabitants exhibit the highest incidence of lethal violence, followed first by smaller cities of 250,000–500,000 inhabitants and then by cities of more than 2 million people. Consequently, it could be expected that the homicide rate is higher in Boston (which is home to more than 640,000 inhabitants) than in New York (which has a population of roughly 8.4 million); indeed, their respective homicide rates for 2013 were 6 and 4 per 100,000 population. In the same way, the homicide rate for that year was higher in New Orleans (with more than 375,000 inhabitants) than in Chicago (which has more than 2.7 million inhabitants)—namely 41 vs. 15 per 100,000, respectively (FBI, n.d.a).

In 2013, among US cities bearing a population of more than 100,000, the highest homicide rate—45 per 100,000 population—was recorded in Detroit, Michigan, a city of roughly 700,000 people that witnessed 316 homicides (FBI, n.d.a). Since 1985, the list of cities with the highest homicide rates has featured Detroit along with Birmingham, Flint, New Orleans, Richmond, and Washington, DC (Desilver, 2014). With the exception of Washington, DC, all of these cities have been undergoing a process of depopulation, with high rates of violence driving out wealthier residents. In contrast, the US capital has grown as its homicide rate has dropped (Capps, 2014).

While medium and small cities seem to account for a considerable proportion of lethal violence,

the data does not suggest a causal relationship between city size and homicide rates. In fact, a host of other factors affect the rates and patterns of lethal violence, including changes in socio-economic and demographic characteristics of urban agglomerates, migration flows, the availability of firearms, and the implementation of security reforms, as discussed in the following brief case studies on cities in Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico.

Colombia: the case of Bogotá

After Bogotá, a city of 7.6 million, the cities of Medellín and Cali—each with about 2 million inhabitants—are Colombia's second- and third-largest urban areas, respectively. In 2012 the homicide rates were 17 per 100,000 in Bogotá, 53 in Medellín, and 81 in Cali (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).

Series data shows that Bogotá has witnessed a significant decline in its homicide rate since 1993, when the rate was 81 per 100,000 (FIP, 2013, p. 16). Since then, crime and violence prevention policies at the municipal level have helped to change the nature of violence in the city.

By the 1970s, Bogotá's central area—comprising Santafé, Los Mártires, and La Candelaria—formed a hotbed of drugs, prostitution, and smuggling. In the early 1990s, the Medellín cartel made inroads into these areas, which saw a dramatic rise in the use and distribution of crack cocaine as well as armed violence (FIP, 2013, pp. 30–35). Initial interventions designed to reduce violence focused largely on implementing urban renewal programmes, which foresaw the conversion of the most affected areas into parks and other public spaces. In 2003, for example, the Cartucho neighbourhood was demolished and replaced by the Third Millennium Park in an attempt to eradicate crime, violence, and disorder and to promote security (Zeiderman, 2013).

This transformation of the urban space essentially lowered the rate of armed violence in the central area of the city by displacing it to the peripheral areas of Tunjuelito and Rafael Uribe (FIP, 2013, p. 41). In north-western areas of the city, such as Kennedy and Corabastos, the deterioration of security started in the early 1990s and persists to this day, mostly due to the concentration of criminal networks and disputes related to the drug market (pp. 42–43).

A study on the distribution of homicide in Bogotá reveals that most firearm homicides in 2011 were concentrated in peripheral areas such as Ciudad Bolivar, Kennedy, and Tunjuelito, neighbourhoods where criminal groups are active (CEACSC, 2012; FIP, 2013, pp. 33, 43). These findings suggest that levels of lethal violence decreased in areas where urban renewal programmes and other interventions were implemented.

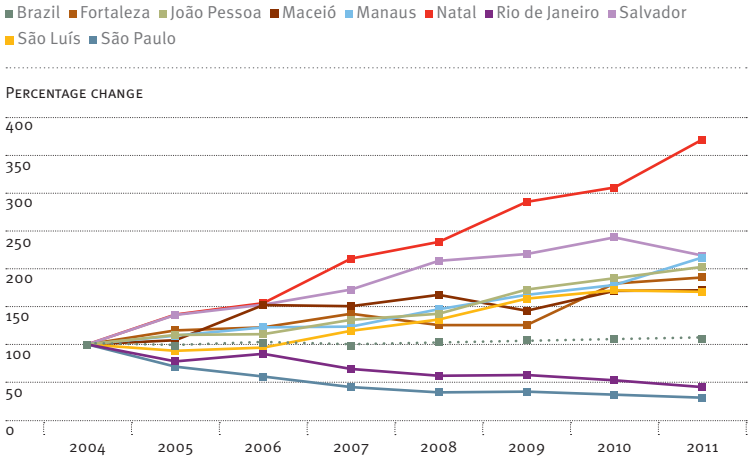
State capitals in Brazil

Among the state capitals of Brazil, the city of São Paulo has the lowest homicide rate (Waiselfisz, 2013, p. 48). From 2007 to 2011, the city experienced an average of more than 1,600 homicides per year, which corresponds to roughly 15 victims per 100,000 population—much lower than the national rate of 26 per 100,000 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014; Waiselfisz, 2013, p. 46; see Chapter Two). But this has not always been the case. Figure 4.3 presents homicide trends for Brazilian state capitals whose homicide rates increased or decreased by at least 50 per cent between 2004 and 2011.

The series data indicates that the highest levels of armed violence migrated from the south-eastern


FERRAZ

Figure 4.3 Percentage change in homicide rates of selected Brazilian state capitals and Brazil, 2004–11



Notes: The homicide rates of all state capitals shown increased or decreased by at least 50 per cent from 2004 to 2011. The index year is 2004 (100 per cent).

Source: Waiselfisz (2013)

to the north-eastern area of the country. A steep surge was evident in Natal, a city of about 800,000 inhabitants on the north-eastern coast of Brazil, where the homicide rate rose by around 270 per cent between 2004 and 2011. At the same time, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the largest urban areas in Brazil, both located in the south-east of the country, witnessed decreases of 70 and 56 per cent, respectively. Analysts have also identified a process of 'internalization' of armed violence in Brazil, referring to a shift of high concentrations of violence from state capitals to other municipalities within states (Waiselfisz, 2013, pp. 70–72).

Over the past 15 years, two interventions have had a considerable impact on violence trends in Brazil: the National Plan for Public Security, adopted in 2000,[7] and the Disarmament Statute of 2003 (Cerqueira, 2010, p. 52; Brazil, 2003). While the National Plan increased the deployment of security forces throughout the country, the Statute led

Photo ◀ Two armed officers carry out community policing in the Nordeste de Amaralina favela of Salvador, Brazil, March 2013. © Lunae Parracho/Reuters

to the seizure of more than 200,000 firearms and the surrender of another 130,000 in São Paulo, as well as the destruction of almost 2 million weapons nationwide (Mack, 2014; Instituto Sou Da Paz, 2010, p. 11).[8] At the same time, inequality was becoming less pronounced in Brazil, partly as a result of growing employment and an increase in per capita income (World Bank, 2013, p. 32; Cerqueira, 2010, pp. 36, 53).

The impact of these factors on homicide rates has not been uniform across Brazil. In particular, the increase in wealth has created new poles of development in the north of the country, which have consequently attracted people and investment as well as crime and violence (Waiselfisz, 2013, p. 65). Furthermore, the increased availability of cash has created the conditions for new drug markets in northern Brazil, generating competition and resulting in an upsurge of armed violence (Cerqueira, 2010, pp. 55–62).

The marked decrease in São Paulo's homicide rate has largely been attributed to a more efficient criminal justice system, improving socio-economic conditions, and the reduced availability of firearms (Cerqueira, 2010, p. 55; World Bank, 2013, p. 58). In comparing homicide patterns in São Paulo recorded in 1995 and 2012, a recent study finds a change in the profiles of perpetrators and victims of armed violence. In particular, a large number of perpetrators are no longer 19–25 years old, but rather 30–44; meanwhile, the proportion of female homicide victims has increased, not only in relation to domestic violence. The study also notes that firearms are now used in a smaller proportion of homicides in which the victim knows the perpetrator, as is often the case in domestic and intimate partner violence. Finally, it observes an increase in the number of cases in which the perpetrator is identified, especially

Photo ▶ Demonstrators march in protest at the disappearance in Guerrero state of 43 Mexican student teachers feared dead, Mexico City, October 2014. © Marco Ugarte/ AP Photo

those related to disputes and domestic violence (Bento and Rechenberg, 2013, pp. 37–38). While these findings may be indicative of shifts in lethal violence dynamics, it should be noted that they rely on incomplete data for 2012, a year for which only 50 per cent of homicide perpetrators were identified (p. 9).

Cities in Mexico

As noted above, national data on lethal violence can mask variations within a country. Mexico is a case in point. In the period 2007–12, the country exhibited an annual average of 15 homicides per 100,000 population. During that same time, its lethal violence rate doubled; within the region, only Honduras experienced a similar increase in violent deaths, although its homicide rate is almost five times higher than Mexico's (see Chapter Two).

Sub-national homicide trends reveal that, between 2007 and 2011, violence rates shot up in nine out of ten Mexican states, more than two-thirds of which experienced increases of at least 50 per cent (Pavesi, 2014). In 2012, however, nearly half of the states witnessed a decrease in homicide rates, even in states that had been affected by very high lethal violence rates. Among these states was Chihuahua, which had previously attracted international attention due to extremely high levels of lethal violence in Ciudad Juárez (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 64; Corcoran, 2013); between 2011 and 2012, the state's homicide rate dropped by almost 40 per cent (see Figure 4.4).

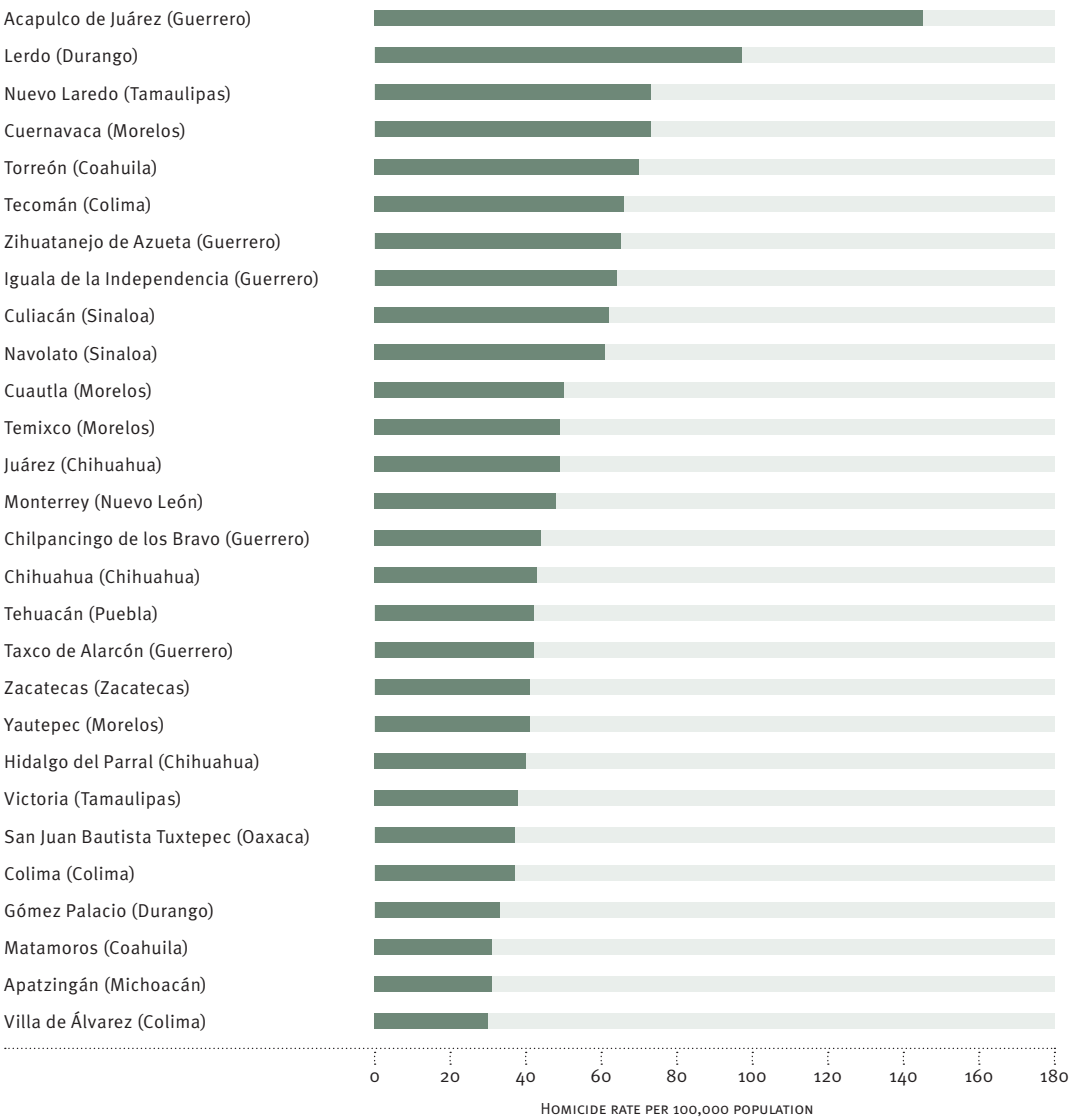
Nevertheless, Ciudad Juárez remains affected by very high levels of violence, with 49 homicides per 100,000 population in 2012 (see Figure 4.5). In 2012, Juárez was one of only two municipalities

FIGURE 4.4 Variations in homicide rates in Mexican states, 2011–12

NOTE: The states are listed in the order of decreasing homicide rates for 2012.

SOURCE: INEGI (2014)

Figure 4.5 Homicide rates >30 per 100,000 population in Mexican municipalities, 2012



Source: Seguridad, Justicia y Paz (2013)

with more than 1 million inhabitants whose homicide rates exceeded 30 per 100,000 population, the other being Monterrey, in Nuevo León state. Overall, a significant portion of Mexico's lethal violence is concentrated in a small number of municipalities. Indeed, the cities that exhibit at least 30 homicides per 100,000 population account for 44 per cent of all recorded homicides, even

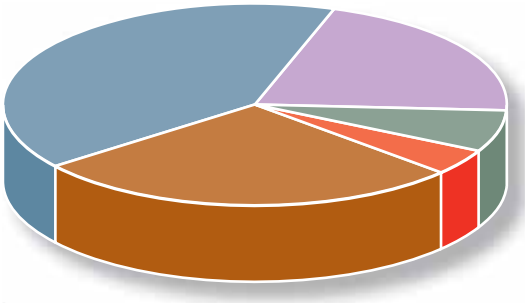
though they are home to a mere 13 per cent of the national population (Pavesi, 2014).[9] Five of these municipalities are located in Guerrero state while another four are in Morelo state, suggesting an emergence of new clusters of violence in the southern part of the country (BBC, 2014f).[10]

Who is at risk?

Disaggregated statistics on perpetrators and victims of lethal violence—including their age, sex, ethnic origin, and religious affiliation—as well as on the means of killing, motivations, and circumstances of incidents can shed light on the drivers and enablers of violence. Negotiations on the post-2015 development framework have emphasized the need to enhance the quality, coverage, and availability of disaggregated data to monitor the implementation of the future sustainable development goals so as to 'ensure that no one is left behind' (UNGA, 2014, para. 17). In this context, disaggregated statistics can serve to inform and evaluate interventions aimed at

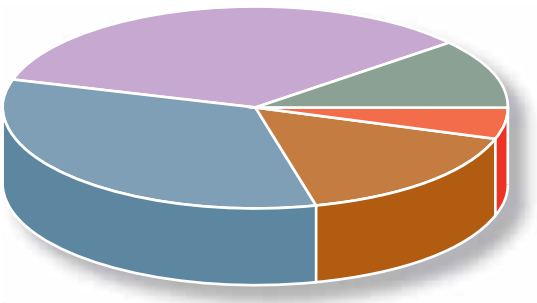
Figure 4.6 Age of homicide victims by sex in England and Wales and Honduras, 2012–13

Male victims in England and Wales



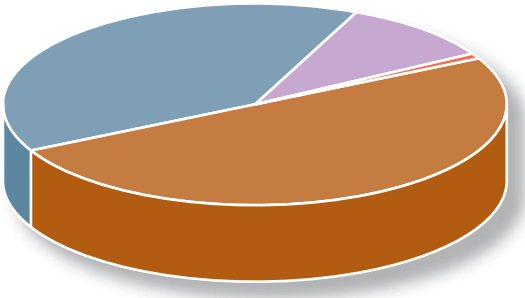
Legend:
≤4 years: 7% 5–15 years: 4% 16–29 years: 28%
30–49 years: 41% ≥50 years: 21%

Female victims in England and Wales



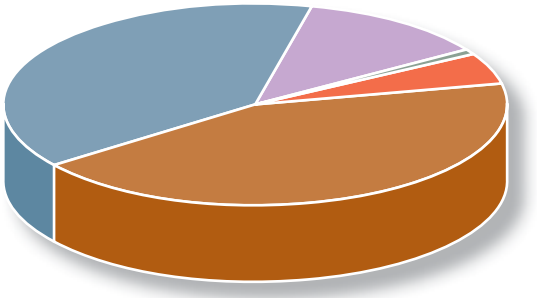
Legend:
≤4 years: 11% 5–15 years: 5% 16–29 years: 16%
30–49 years: 33% ≥50 years: 34%

Male victims in Honduras



Legend:
≤4 years: 0% 5–14 years: 1% 15–29 years: 50%
30–49 years: 39% ≥50 years: 10%

Female victims in Honduras



Legend:
≤4 years: 1% 5–14 years: 5% 15–29 years: 43%
30–49 years: 39% ≥50 years: 12%

Sources: ONS (2014); UNAH–IUDPAS (2013)

reducing and preventing violent acts and to identify individuals and groups that are at risk.

Age and sex

A person's likelihood of being killed varies depending on numerous factors, including age. Almost half of all homicide victims around the world are aged 15–29, with young men most likely to become victims of armed violence (UNODC, 2014, p. 14). In Colombia and the United States, for instance, one-third of all victims of lethal violence are under 24 years of age (FBI, n.d.b; Mancera, 2012, p. 124).[11] In Brazil and Honduras, one in three homicide victims is between 15 and 24 (Waiselfisz, 2013, p. 24; UNAH–IUDPAS, 2013, p. 3).

In contrast, homicide victims tend to be older in European countries, which are home to older populations than the Americas. In Italy, fewer than 12 per cent of victims are under 24, while almost 60 per cent are 25–54 years old—nearly equally distributed in the age groups 25–34 (19 per cent), 35–44 (20 per cent), and 45–54 (19 per cent)—and the remaining 30 per cent are 55 or older (EURES, 2013). In England and Wales, 39 per cent of all homicide victims are 30–49 years of age (ONS, 2014).

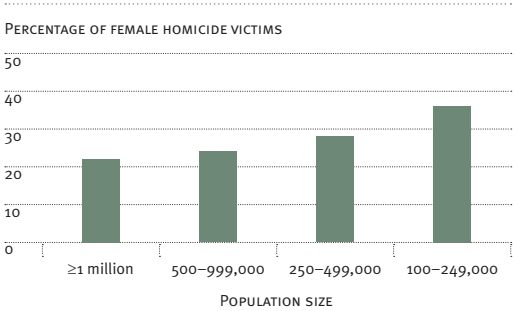
Figure 4.6 compares the age structure of male and female homicide victims in England and Wales, which registered 1 homicide per 100,000 population in 2012, and Honduras, whose rate stood at 73 per 100,000 that year (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014). The comparison reveals that while youths aged 15–29 accounted for nearly 50 per cent of the victims in Honduras, they comprised only about 25 per cent of homicides in England and Wales. Another divergence is evident among victims over 50, who account for about 10 per cent of homicide victims in Honduras but roughly 25 per cent in England and Wales.

The comparison highlights even more marked variations in the victimization rates of women of different ages. In Honduras, the age structure of victims is similar across the sexes, with 15–29-year-old men and women accounting for the largest proportion of victims. Among the women, more than two out of five victims are in that age group. In contrast, women over 30 form the greatest proportion of female homicide victims in England and Wales, with one-third in the 30–49 category and another third being 50 or older. Moreover, while girls under five account for only 1 per cent of homicide victims in Honduras, one out of ten female homicide victims in England and Wales is a young child.

Sex disaggregation of sub-national data

Disaggregated data by sex of victims at the sub-national level can highlight variations in victimization rates of women and girls within a country. In Germany, which exhibits the very low national homicide rate of 0.8 per 100,000 population, about 685 people are killed per year (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014). Figure 4.7 shows what proportion of homicide victims are women

Figure 4.7 Average percentage of female homicide victims in German municipalities, by population size, 2012



Source: Bundeskriminalamt (n.d.)

in German municipalities of varying sizes. It reveals that the smaller the city, the higher the percentage of female victims. While on average, women account for 36 per cent of all homicide victims in small cities, they account for about 22 per cent of homicide victims in cities with more than 1 million inhabitants. This analysis indicates that women may be at greater risk in small cities, raising questions as to what factors may help to mitigate that risk.

Research has found a strong relationship between levels of urbanization and women's risk of experiencing intimate partner violence: the greater the degree of urbanization, the lower the incidence of such violence (Gallup-Black, 2005; Lanier and Maume, 2009). One recent study shows that in the US state of Wisconsin, small towns exhibit the highest rate of intimate partner violence against women. As potential explanations for this relationship, it suggests factors such as geographical and

Box 4.5 African pastoralist communities and armed violence

Pastoralist communities in Africa inhabit regions where their cattle can survive, but whose limits do not necessarily match the administrative borders of any nation. They can be found in the green belts that traverse parts of West Africa and in the Central African Republic, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as farther east, in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda.

They generally lead nomadic lives, migrating seasonally with their cattle. Tensions with other pastoralist groups as well as local residential and farmer communities often result in cattle rustling, robberies, and other forms of physical aggression. If firearms are easily accessible, such clashes can escalate into open conflict (Wepundi and Lynge, 2014).

Even if they last just a few hours, conflicts between pastoralist communities and other groups may be highly lethal. On 8 February 2013 in Jonglei state, South Sudan, a large group of armed men attacked pastoralists who were migrating to a grazing area, killing an estimated 85 people—the majority of whom were women and children—and injuring another 37, while leaving 34 unaccounted for. The subsequent UN investigation revealed that the attack had lasted 6–7 hours (UNMISS, 2013, p. 9). It had come on the heels of a series of other incidents in South Sudan, including clashes that took place near the border between Lakes and Warrap states in 2012, claiming the lives of more than 40 people who had attempted to raid cattle (Mayom, 2012).

In Kenya's Tana region, at least 48 people died in 2012 as a consequence of an escalation of violence over land and resources between the Orma and Pomokos groups (UCDP, 2012). In Nigeria, on a single day in December 2009, a clash between pastoralists and farmers in Nasarawa state left 32 people dead and saw the burning and destruction of several houses and farms (IRIN, 2009).

These types of events are rarely registered by formal recording systems, such that information on the number and the identity of victims is often difficult to obtain (Alvazzi del Frate, 2010). Data on events of this kind tends to be collected and reported by non-governmental and international organizations that are mandated to investigate human rights violations. Fact-finding missions may be deployed by the United Nations or other organizations to document or verify the circumstances of such events, as was the case after the above-mentioned incident in Jonglei state in 2013.

Whether and how a recording system registers these types of clashes and the victims they claim depends partly on the definitions it applies and the criteria that must be met for incidents to qualify as 'conflicts'. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program, for instance, sets intensity thresholds for conflicts, recognizing only the ones that cause at least 25 deaths per year. It would record the above-mentioned events in its database as 'non-state conflicts', as none of the parties involved were the government of a state (UCDP, 2013, p. 2).

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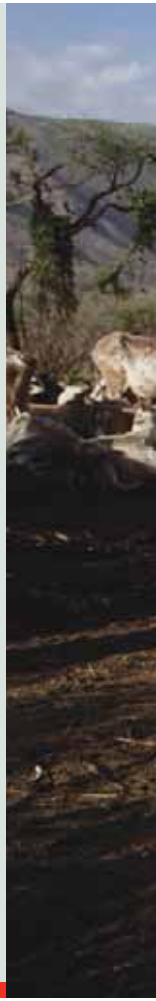

Photo ▶ A Turkana herdsman watches over his cattle along the mountain chain bordering Kenya and Uganda, near Lokichogio, Kenya, July 2010. © Gwenn Dubourthoumieu

social isolation, which can limit access to neighbours, institutions, and resources, including the police, medical facilities, and the legal system (Beyer et al., 2013, p. 286).

Populations without borders

The roots of conflict over borders can be traced to a variety of factors, including ethnic divisions, intolerance, long-standing grievances, and nationalist or secessionist claims. A review of more than 200 armed conflicts that took place between 1946 and 2005 finds that one-quarter of them involved secessionist movements (Wimmer, Cederman, and Min, 2009, p. 327). Another study argues that similar ethnic characteristics on two sides of a border can fuel contagion effects, promoting the spread of armed violence from one state to its neighbour (Buhaug and Gleditsch, 2008, p. 230).

Yet border conflicts can also be linked to the pursuit of resources. For pastoralist communities, such as those in the Horn of Africa, the crossing of borders may be an inevitable aspect of the search for water and pasture for their herds. As a result, disputes may arise with rival tribes, over land tenure, or with regard to the agricultural vs. pastoral use of land (Wepundi and Lynge, 2014). Such disputes can escalate into armed violence and tensions with security providers (see Box 4.5).

In these contexts, the documentation and monitoring of lethal violence is hampered by various factors, including the nomadic lifestyle of the communities, uncertainty regarding the jurisdiction of local authorities, and the remoteness of locations where clashes may take place. As a result, the violent deaths associated with such conflicts are not always captured by national recording systems; the full extent of the burden of armed violence, especially in pastoral communities, thus remains elusive.

Minorities

Disaggregated data on racial or ethnic backgrounds can also shed light on the unequal distribution of risk among communities in non-conflict settings.

Table 4.1 Victims and perpetrators of homicide in the United States, by race, 2012

		Race of perpetrator			
		White	Black	Other	Unknown
Race of victim	White	84%	14%	1%	2%
	Black	7%	91%	0%	1%
	Other	23%	20%	56%	1%
	Unknown	44%	29%	2%	25%

Note: Totals may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Source: FBI (n.d.c)

Data from the United States, for example, highlights that different ethnic groups are exposed to varying rates of victimization. In 2012, blacks and whites each accounted for 49 and 47 per cent of all homicide victims respectively. Yet given that blacks represent only 14 per cent of the US population, the data points to a significant imbalance in terms of risk distribution (CDC, n.d.).

Moreover, the use of firearms in homicides is more common if the victim is a minority. Guns are involved in 80 per cent of cases with black victims vs. 60 per cent of cases with white victims. In fact, the homicide rate among blacks is 18 per 100,000 population, which is six times higher than the rate of 3 per 100,000 among whites. The difference is even greater when it comes to young men: black 15–24-year-olds account for ten times more homicide victims than their white peers, or 70 vs. 7 per 100,000 population, respectively (CDC, n.d.).

Table 4.1 presents US data on victims and perpetrators of homicide by race. It shows that the vast majority of perpetrators kill people of their own race. It shows that 84 per cent of homicides committed by whites have white victims, while more than nine black victims out of ten are killed by another black person (FBI, n.d.c).

Papachristos and Wildeman (2014) examine the factors that influence the likelihood of being killed in high-risk communities. Using police records, they analyse a sample of high-risk individuals in Chicago's black community. As a proxy for the proneness to engage in risky behaviour, the authors restricted the sample to individuals who had previously co-offended (been arrested with someone else). They find that homicide victimization was prevalent among criminal offenders in the community, as 85 per cent of individuals who were killed with firearms had previously been arrested at least once, roughly half of them within the previous five years (Papachristos and

Wildeman, 2014, p. 144). This finding highlights that physical proximity to hot spots is not the only factor affecting the vulnerability of high-risk populations. The relationship between victims and perpetrators and the social context around them also shape patterns of lethal violence.

Conclusion

The provision of detailed information on the patterns and dynamics of lethal violence represents a step towards a more comprehensive understanding of its causes and consequences. Statistics disaggregated by different territorial units, socio-demographic characteristics of victims and perpetrators, instruments used, and circumstances related to lethal events are diagnostic tools that can guide effective policy-making. They help to define priorities for interventions and to identify targets for programmes and assistance at the local level.

In the context of violence reduction programming, urban centres are increasingly relevant as they can represent hubs of criminal activity while simultaneously offering resources and infrastructure. The analysis of lethal violence patterns at the municipal level can shed light on various dynamics at the micro, meso, and macro levels, unpacking drivers that may be concealed at the national level. It also allows for a relatively accurate assessment of the effectiveness of interventions and programmes, not least because the local monitoring institutions that carry out such evaluations tend to have closer ties to stakeholders as well as communities affected by lethal violence.

The availability of reliable quantitative and qualitative data is key to the effective measuring and monitoring of lethal violence as well as to evidence-based violence reduction programming. While the past few years have seen an increase in the availability of local and disaggregated data on lethal violence, that increase is largely limited to settings where institutions have both the mandate and the resources to establish lethal violence monitoring systems. Coverage thus remains patchy and mostly limited to the developed world. Proposals for the post-2015 development agenda call for a global commitment to the gathering and sharing of detailed, quality data to monitor progress towards the sustainable development goals and affiliated targets. Enhanced cross-sectoral coordination—such as among the criminal justice system, public health sector, and violence monitoring systems—along with the promotion of good practices and minimum standards of data quality would help to expand the availability of data to inform violence reduction policies and programmes.

List of abbreviations

GBAV	*Global Burden of Armed Violence*
GIS	Geographic information systems
KWCO	Kingston West Crime Observatory

Endnotes

1 For more information about the unified approach, see Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2011, pp. 44–51).

2 See, for example, ACLED (n.d.), Humanitarian Tracker (n.d.a), Iraq Body Count (n.d.), and UCDP (n.d.); see also Box 1.4.

3 This holds true in countries including Australia (QP, n.d.), Canada (CPS, n.d.; SPS, n.d.), and the United Kingdom (Home Office, n.d.a).

4 Public health statistics on causes of death are generally classified according to the International Classification of Diseases, which is continually revised by the World Health Organization. According to the latest version, intentional lethal violence is classified as 'assault' (codes X85–Y09) and includes homicide and injuries inflicted by another

person with the intent to injure or kill by any means; injuries due to legal interventions and operations of war are excluded. See WHO (n.d.).

5 The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights reported 1,162 fatalities while the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence documented 1,133 deaths, 3,500 injuries, and nearly 120,000 destroyed properties (KNHCR, 2008; CIPEV, 2008, pp. 334, 345–46). Estimates of the number of displaced persons ranged from 260,000 to 350,000 (OHCHR, 2008; KNCHR, 2008, p. 8).

6 Estimates of Karachi's contribution range from 25 to 70 per cent of Pakistan's GDP (Yusuf, 2012, p. 4; ICG, 2014, p. 24i).

7 The National Plan for Public Security increased the rate of municipal guards per capita by 246 per cent (Cerqueira, 2010, p. 52).

8 Between 1997 and 2008, the Brazilian army destroyed nearly 1.9 million weapons, which accounted for an estimated 15 per cent of all civilian-held weapons in Brazil (Instituto Sou Da Paz, 2010, p. 11).

9 The analysis excludes municipalities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants due to a lack of relevant data.

10 The Guerrero municipalities are Acapulco de Juárez (with a homicide rate of 143 per 100,000 population), Zihuatanejo de Azueta (65 per 100,000), Iguala de la Independencia (64 per 100,000), Chilpancingo de los Bravo (44 per 100,000), and Taxco de Alarcón (42 per 100,000). The Morelo municipalities are Cuernavaca (73 per 100,000), Cuautla (50 per 100,000), Temixco (49 per 100,000), and Yautepec (41 per 100,000).

11 In Colombia and the United States, 35 and 33 per cent of homicide victims are under 24, respectively (FBI, n.d.b; Mancera, 2012, p. 124).

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Chapter Five

The Economic Cost of Homicide

Homicide—'injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill, by any means' (WHO, n.d.)—places a heavy economic burden on societies that experience this form of violence.[1] Family and friends suffer when a loved one is killed, but their community and society also pay the price. The impact of homicide is physical, social and psychological, and also economic, and its costs are both direct and indirect.[2] As one journalist put it, '[t]he tab for taxpayers and society starts running as soon as a bullet strikes someone, from detectives on the street and trauma surgeons at the city's public hospital to months of rehab for victims and years of court proceedings for the accused' (Jones and McCormick, 2013). This chapter calculates the direct costs of homicide by estimating the economic loss to society.

Attempts by policy-makers, practitioners, and scholars to establish evidence of the diverse impacts of violence in general, and of homicide in particular, cover a wide range of issues, such as loss of life and health (victims and victimization), the undermining of trust in institutions and security providers (perceptions and attitudes towards the justice system and its institutions), and the direct costs generated by different forms of violence. All of these form part of the social cost of homicide. Estimates of the direct costs of homicide represent the potential material benefits to the wider society of reducing this form of violence.

This chapter focuses on the economic loss to society of homicide and the benefits of reducing it, using two key concepts: 'excess homicide' and average life expectancy. The first refers to an ideal situation in which violence is rare and people can expect to live without the fear of meeting a violent death. Excess homicide is the difference between a 'normal' or 'natural' level of homicide (see Box 5.1)[3] and the incidence of homicide observed in reality. By comparing average life expectancy in 105 countries for which age and sex-disaggregated data is available,[4] with the life expectancy these countries would have had in the absence of excess homicide, it is possible to estimate how many more months on average people would have lived in a context of a 'normal' level of homicide. The economic impact[5] is calculated on the basis of how much more the victims of homicide would have contributed to the economy during those additional months.

Before presenting the main findings it is important to highlight a few points regarding the methodology, data coverage, and calculations used in this chapter. First, since the data required in order to calculate the economic cost of excess homicide needs to be disaggregated by the sex and age of the victims, and the means used to murder them, this chapter does not use the database employed in other chapters in this edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* (GBAV).

Second, since income and economic productivity vary greatly from one country to another, so does

the *absolute* cost of homicide. For example, an increase in the number of homicides in Singapore, where the per capita income in 2012 was USD 54,007, will cost more *in absolute terms* than a similar increase in Afghanistan, where per capita income in 2012 was only USD 688 (World Bank, 2014a). In this sense, the murder of a Singaporean has a higher cost *in absolute terms* than the murder of an Afghan. It is important to underline here that the economic cost in monetary terms has no bearing on the *value* of a human life, merely that in absolute terms the forgone income depends on the country's wealth.

The chapter finds that:

- In 2010 alone, the global cost of homicide was estimated at USD 171 billion, roughly the equivalent of Finland's GDP that year.
- The estimated cost of homicide in absolute terms varies in response to global economic fluctuations. The global cost of homicide was thus USD 160 billion in 2000, USD 201 billion in 2004, and USD 171 billion in 2010.
- Although there has been a decline in excess homicide in recent years, both in absolute and in proportional terms, its *cost* is increasing.
- Excess homicide claimed almost 3 million lives between 2000 and 2010, which is roughly the equivalent of the population of Jamaica.
- If the global homicide rate between 2000 and 2010 had been reduced to 'normal' or 'natural' levels, the estimated savings would have amounted to some USD 1.984 trillion, roughly equivalent to 2.64 per cent of global GDP in 2010.
- The elimination of global excess homicide in 2010 would have extended per capita life expectancy by 7 weeks and added the equivalent of USD 29 to each person's annual income.
- The victim's sex is a more significant determinant than age or income of the economic cost of homicide.
- Although they do not account for the largest number of homicides, upper middle-income and high-income countries (UMICs and HICs)[6] experience the greatest economic costs of homicide *in absolute terms* and therefore stand to reap the largest *absolute* economic gains from reducing it.

Lowering rates, but increasing costs of homicide

This chapter builds on several of the concepts raised in the 2008 edition of the GBAV, in particular in Chapter Five. The study on which that chapter was based looked at several methods and approaches to measuring the cost of homicide. The present chapter, however, uses a single methodology to estimate the global cost of homicide—not only across time but also across sex, age, and income levels.

In focusing principally on the *cost* of homicide, and not its origin, scope, or direction, this chapter complements the overview of global patterns and trends in lethal violence set out in earlier chapters. Though largely stable or in decline since 2000, there has been a spike in the incidence of homicide in certain regions, in particular across Central America, Northern Africa, and the Middle East. Chapter Three looks at global patterns of lethal violence against women and girls. Although there has been a global decline in the incidence of female homicides and femicides since the 2011 edition of the GBAV, the gap between countries with very high and very low lethal violence against women and girls has widened.

As stated earlier, despite the decline in the absolute number of homicides, and in the proportion of homicides relative to population size, the *absolute cost* is increasing in dollar terms. This is because people are living *longer* and more *productive* lives. Thus, the murder of a 25-year-old in a country with an average life expectancy of 75 years has a greater absolute economic impact than in a country where average life expectancy is 50 years because of the greater forgone economic contribution.

This fact becomes especially apparent when comparing the cost of homicides in HICs that experience relatively severe violence, such as the Russian Federation and the United States, and poorer countries in which homicides are less common, such as Bangladesh and Peru. Although the Russian Federation and Peru saw a similar decline in homicides between 2004 and 2010, the absolute cost of excess homicide in the Russian Federation fell from USD 5.56 million per 100,000 inhabitants to USD 3.86 million, whereas, by the same measure, that of Peru fell from USD 1.27 million to USD 809,000 (CERAC, 2014a). The decrease in cost—and the absolute burden—was considerably greater in the case of the more violence-affected country, pointing to larger economic benefits that would be obtained by reducing excess homicides.

This chapter presents a methodology for calculating the cost of excess homicide in non-conflict settings, and therefore excludes the casualties of armed conflict and the enormous economic costs of war.[7] It also excludes the myriad indirect costs of violence (McCollister, French, and Fang, 2010), such as the cost of crime (Cohen, 2000), gunshot- or knife-related injuries (Corso et al., 2007), or investing in security (IEP, 2014). This helps to explain the consistently lower estimated costs of homicide presented in this chapter than in many other studies. Since the chapter is focused on the direct costs of excess homicide related to average life expectancy, the vast array of indirect or intangible costs lies beyond its scope.

The chapter's central finding is that homicide is costly in all country income categories, but that, in absolute (dollar) terms, the cost is not evenly spread across or within countries. Solely in terms of gains in life expectancy and lost product, this chapter finds that the global cost of homicide is unevenly distributed across the criteria of income, sex, and age in four important ways:

- Excess homicide imposes a greater economic cost in absolute terms in richer countries than in poorer ones.
- In absolute terms, excess male homicide represents a much higher economic cost than excess female homicide.
- Fluctuations in homicide levels impose a disproportionately high absolute cost among younger age groups.
- In absolute terms, countries with the highest rates of homicide also experience the highest level of firearm-related lethal violence.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first covers the aggregate cost of homicide and the increase in average life expectancy from reducing excess homicide both globally and by country income category. The second examines the cost of homicide disaggregated by sex and age. The final section looks at the cost of homicide by firearms in some of the world's most violent countries.

Estimating the cost of homicide

There are many ways to estimate the cost of homicide. Some studies include both the direct and indirect costs, such as the administration of

an extensive criminal justice system, health costs, and generous 'back-of-an-envelope' calculations of lost economic productivity. Some of these studies generate far more daunting estimates than those presented in this chapter. Combining the annual costs of investigation, legal defence, incarceration, parole and probation, and forgone economic productivity, one such study estimated the average economic cost of each homicide in the United States to be USD 17.25 million (DeLisi et al., 2010).

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) has published a comprehensive estimate of the economic costs of preventing violence. Applying a dozen categories or cost items—including expenditure on military, private security, and peacekeeping missions—it estimates the annual global cost to be at least USD 9.46 trillion (an estimated 11 per cent of global GDP) (IEP, 2014). Clearly, this estimate is relatively high because it includes and values all of the inputs needed to curtail violence. Many prominent studies focus only on the conflict-related costs of violence, ignoring patterns of lethal violence in non-conflict settings (Skaperdas et al., 2009; Stiglitz and Bilmes, 2008); others calculate the economic costs of merely the *threat* of conflict, even if it never materializes (Garfinkel and Skaperdas, 2007).

This chapter draws on a rich literature that has been addressing the economic cost of violence since the 1980s, but is unique in combining several of these studies in an innovative methodology for mapping the cost of excess homicide. Although some studies have calculated the development costs of armed conflict (Gates et al., 2012), or the economic cost of drug-related violence in a specific country (Robles, Calderón, and Megaloni, 2013), none has comprehensively addressed the global cost of homicide across time, sex, age, and income. The chapter therefore offers new insights into the

Photo ◀ Prisoners learn candlemaking as part of a skills development programme, to earn income during and after their incarceration, Hyderabad, India, October 2011. © Krishnendu Halder/ Reuters

impact of excess homicide between and within country income categories, and identifies which demographic groups suffer the highest economic burden of homicide and which stand to gain the most from its reduction. The chapter also breaks new ground in using the concept of a 'natural rate of homicide' in calculating potential—but precise—gains in average life expectancy from reducing excess homicide to the 'natural' rate.

This methodology draws on the following works on the cost of violence and the reduction of life expectancy. Pollard (1988) and Arriaga (1996) calculated changes in the life expectancy of different age groups based on various causes of death and their associated cost. Aristizábal et al. (2001) built on this method to determine the change in the life expectancy of residents in the Colombian city of Medellín from the top six causes of death in that city.

More recently, scholars have begun to examine the impact of violence in terms of reducing both average life expectancy and economic productivity. Becker, Philipson, and Soares (2005) calculated the impact of all causes of death between 1960 and 2000—including infectious diseases, diabetes, suicide, and homicide—on average life expectancy in 96 countries, concluding that life expectancy worldwide had become more equal. Soares (2006) took this a step further by calculating the cost of violence in 73 countries, concluding that a year of life expectancy lost to violence is equivalent to 3.8 per cent of per capita income over a person's lifetime.

In general, most estimates find that poorer and more violent countries bear a higher economic burden of violence and would need to pay a disproportionately high percentage of their national income in order to reduce it compared to richer countries experiencing the same proportion of homicides in relation to their total population.

Photo ▶ Schoolgirls walk past a school destroyed during conflict in Gaza City, Palestinian Territories, February 2009. © Hatem Moussa/ AP Photo

Córdoba and Ripoll (2013) estimate that in countries with a per capita GDP of around USD 20,000, people were willing to pay roughly 2 per cent per capita GDP for an extra year of life expectancy. This increased to 3 per cent in countries with a per capita GDP of USD 5,000, and to 14 per cent in countries with an even lower per capita GDP.

International organizations have also sought to determine the costs of violence. In 2013, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) examined the costs of crime in its *Regional Human Development Report* for Latin America (UNDP, 2013a). Analysing both the direct and indirect costs of violence—such as hospital bills, increased private security, and the self-imposed restriction of movement and recreation—it found that in 2010 the total cost of crime and violence represented around 3 per cent of GDP in Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay; 8.7 per cent in Paraguay; and 10.6 per cent in Honduras (UNDP, 2013b, p. 6).

Since both consumption and recreation are dramatically limited by insecurity, the UNDP (2013a) report found that many Latin Americans favour heavy-handed measures in response to crime, and that 85–90 per cent also favour harsher responses from their criminal justice systems. In determining the economic costs of violence, the report was also ground-breaking in calculating not only the direct costs of violence, but also the myriad indirect costs[8] associated with anticipating and responding to it.

Similar to the research presented in this chapter, UNDP (2013a) calculated the life expectancy lost to homicide and the per capita gains to GDP from eliminating excess homicide in Latin America in 1990, 2000, and 2009. While in 2009 Latin Americans overall would have gained an extra nine months in average life expectancy in the absence of excess homicide, Colombians, Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and Venezuelans would have gained

more than an extra year. In dollar terms, Latin Americans lost 0.5 per cent per capita GDP to homicide in 2009, or USD 51 per person over their entire lifetime. In El Salvador and Guatemala, this figure jumped to USD 78 and USD 84 respectively—more than 1 per cent of per capita GDP (UNDP, 2013a, p. 105).

The World Bank has examined the cost of violence on economic development. Its 2011 *World Development Report* found that countries which experienced war in the 1980s showed 8 per cent less reduction in poverty than those that had not. Equally, it found that countries that had experienced (civil) war took an average of 14 years of peace to return to pre-war rates of economic growth (World Bank, 2011, pp. 60–63).

This chapter presents research that considers the (direct) economic cost of homicide expressed in terms of reduced average life expectancy and the associated valuation of forgone economic income. Effectively, it calculates the opportunity cost of a life cut short by homicide. This provides a precise estimate of the costs associated with homicide and the potential gains in wellbeing if such violence is reduced. It is the only study to provide a comprehensive valuation of the economic savings that could be obtained by reducing homicides to 'natural' levels, using a method that is grounded in economic data.

This method of valuation depends on three factors. First, the economic value or product a hypothetical individual can be expected to contribute to the national economy over a lifetime. Second, the extent to which homicide affects average life expectancy. Third, the effect on a country's per

Photo ◀ Former professional goalkeeper, Kodjovi Obilale, whose spine was shattered in an attack on the bus transporting Togo's team at the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations, struggles to obtain compensation for his lost livelihood; he is photographed outside a hospital in Lorient, France, September 2010. © David Vincent/AP Photo

capita GDP of a decline in average life expectancy caused by excess homicide. Excess homicide is subtracted from the mortality rate from all causes in order to calculate how much longer people would have lived in the absence of excess homicide. The calculations are adjusted for differences in purchasing power across countries, and take into account patterns of lifetime consumption between country income categories.

With this theoretical average life expectancy, usually measured in months per person, each country's observed GDP per capita is used to estimate how much a hypothetical individual would have contributed to the national economy in these additional months. This chapter refers to this final individual or aggregate figure as the 'economic cost of homicide'. The intangible costs of homicide—which are no doubt legion—are not included in these estimates, although the chapter briefly introduces a valuation of how much an average person in different countries would have been willing to pay to avoid excess homicide. Indirect costs are included in the calculations since they are based on the forgone economic value added.

For the cost of homicide to rise, one of two things must happen: either an increase in the economic value of life relative to the homicide rate, or an increase in the homicide rate relative to the economic value of life (of course, both could rise). Since the global rate of homicide *declined* between 2000 and 2010, its increasing cost must be due to an increase in the per capita capacity to create economic value. In other words, although the global cost of violence is rising, the world overall is becoming more prosperous and less violent (see also Chapters Two and Three for recent trends in lethal violence and specific types of homicide).

Although there is evidence that violence can be reduced, and some countries experience much lower levels of violence than others, it is unlikely that any society has succeeded in entirely eradicating homicide (see Box 5.1). The concept of a 'natural rate of homicide' refers to the difference between a 'normal' or 'natural' rate and observed levels of homicide. The closest parallel in the literature is the 'natural rate of crime', a concept dating from the 1980s (Buck et al., 1983; Friedman, Hakim, and Spiegel, 1989).[9]

Box 5.1 Explaining 'natural' and 'excess' homicide

The 'natural rate of homicide' assumes that certain forms of intentional killing, but not all, will become a thing of the past.

In this sense, 'excess homicide' refers to an aggregate number of murders that exceeds the 'natural rate of homicide.' Calculating this figure relies on what is assumed to be an achievable goal of expected or 'natural' homicide levels. It would be unreasonable to use the lowest rate, because it would set an unachievable violence-reduction goal. Using the average rate tends to give more weighting to high-homicide countries. In order to avoid these extremes, the second quintile average homicide rate is used, providing a reasonable figure, i.e. a relatively low goal that all countries could achieve.

The research (CERAC, 2014b) on which this chapter is based divides the 105 countries for which the disaggregated data was available into quintiles according to average homicide rates per 100,000 population in 2010, from the lowest to the highest. The first quintile includes countries such as Cyprus, Japan, Oman, Portugal, and Switzerland. The second quintile lies between 0.1 and 4.7 and includes countries such as China, India, and Indonesia. The 'natural rate of homicide' is the equivalent of the average homicide rate of the second lowest quintile. This is because more countries are concentrated in the second quintile than the third. The second quintile is assumed to be a country's 'natural rate of homicide', because even in the absence of organized forms of killing, it would be unreasonable to expect the global average rapidly to reach that of, say, Cyprus or Switzerland.

The natural rate of homicide is of 2.8 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2000, 2.7 in 2004, and 2.3 in 2010. This implies a decrease in the natural rate between 2000 and 2010 of nearly 18 per cent (CERAC, 2014b).

The actual observed rate of homicide in the 105 countries under review also fell from 6.9 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2000 to 5.8 in 2010. At this rate, it could plausibly reach 4.9 by 2020 and 2.4 by 2040—leading to significant gains in average life expectancy and economic development (CERAC, 2014a).

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While criminals or repressive states may refrain from using homicide as a means with which to obtain their objectives, there are always some people who do not. Intimate partner and domestic violence, for instance, are notoriously difficult to eradicate (see Box 5.2 and Chapter Three). In a non-conflict context, violence against women is far more likely to be perpetrated by a male acquaintance or intimate partner than a by stranger (CDC, 2014). The 'natural rate of homicide' is in part an attempt to account for the enduring problem of interpersonal violence, which is more 'resistant' to interventions and justice institutions.

Box 5.2 The cost of violence against women

Awareness of the socio-economic impact of violence against women can inform government policies or programmes aimed at tackling it and also make it possible to examine the link between its prevalence and economic growth (Day, McKenna, and Bowlus, 2005, pp. 14–15). Although there is no consensus on how to measure the costs of violence against women, recent studies have tried to evaluate the relative burden of public expenditure and the costs borne by women experiencing such violence (Varcoe et al., 2011, p. 363). The final figure takes account of the direct (tangible costs to the public sector), indirect (intangible costs borne by the victim), and opportunity costs of violence (the heightened socio-economic disadvantages faced by women and girls as a result of victimization) (Buvinic, Morrison, and Shifter, 1999; Day, McKenna, and Bowlus, 2005, pp. 6–7; Intervita, 2013, pp. 30–31).

Calculating the costs of violence against women is complicated by the fact that different studies use different methods of estimation, focus on different types of violence (intimate partner or domestic violence), count various types of costs (to individuals, the state, and employers), and often report total costs for a specific demographic group or social sector (Council of Europe, 2012; Varcoe et al., 2011, p. 363). Although overall *associated* costs to the victim, government, and society are often given, few studies offer a detailed breakdown of the exact costs that can be attributed to violence against women (Varcoe et al., 2011, p. 363). One reason for this is the lack of data, which makes it difficult to measure the effects and costs of violence (Day, McKenna, and Bowlus, 2005, p. 18). A recent exception to this is the 'Quanto costa il silenzio?' report—meaning 'What is the cost of silence?'—published by the Italian NGO Intervita (2013). The Intervita report conceptualizes violence against women as violence experienced both in the home (inflicted by a current or former partner) and outside the home (e.g. in the workplace or perpetrated by strangers). Data for the study was obtained from *La Violenza Contro le Donne* (ISTAT, 2006), a review of violence against women in Italy based on a survey of 25,000 women of between 16 and 70 years of age who have suffered intimate partner and non-partner violence. The survey data was supplemented by nine semi-structured interviews with such women. An innovative aspect of the study is the way indirect and social multiplier costs are estimated. Drawing on the methodology developed for estimating economic compensation for victims of road accidents—which in the Italian context is a ratio of a victim's age and degree of disability as a result of the accident—the study concludes that the overall indirect and social multiplier costs of violence against women in Italy is about EUR 14.3 billion (approximately USD 16.2 billion) (Intervita, 2013, p. 15). When the direct costs to the public sector (EUR 1.8 billion) (USD 2.1 billion) and the economic multiplier costs (EUR 604 million) (USD 6.9 million) are added, the total is estimated at EUR 16.7 billion (USD 19.19 billion). The study also shows that the costs related to the prevention of violence against women would be around EUR 6.3 million (USD 7.2 million) (Intervita, 2013, p. 15).

The direct costs of violence against women include, in descending order of magnitude, health care (26%), judicial proceedings (24%), legal fees (16%), public order (13.3%), psychological counselling (9%), social services (8.7%), medication (2.5%), and anti-violence centres (0.4%) (Intervita, 2013, p. 15).

Author: Jovana Carapic

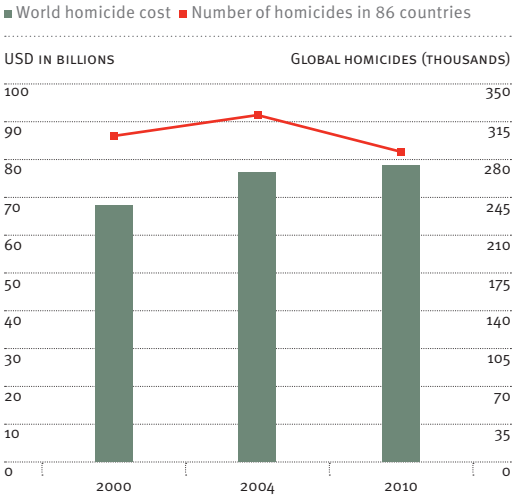
The aggregate cost of homicide and life expectancy gains from reducing it

In order to obtain a more precise estimate of the homicide cost across time and country income categories, one can calculate society's willingness to pay for reducing violence to 'natural' levels (see Box 5.5). While homicide declined by nearly 11 per cent overall between 2004 and 2010, the economic cost of these deaths increased by 2.4 per cent.[10] This is because an increase in average life expectancy and the greater economic value this generates pushes up the cost of violence in absolute terms. For example, between 2000 and 2010, average life expectancy increased by over two years in LMICs and by nearly three years in non-OECD HICs, and each of these groups' GDP per capita grew by 50 per cent over the same period, from USD 3,000 to USD 4,500 in LMICs and from USD 19,400 to USD 29,600 in non-OECD HICs (CERAC, 2014a).[11] The longer, safer, and more productive people's lives become, the higher the aggregate economic cost of homicide (see Figure 5.1).

The absolute increase in the cost of violence between 2000 and 2010 does not relate to population growth (see Figure 5.2). On the contrary, due to large population growth, the per capita cost of homicide fell, from USD 35.9 in 2000 to USD 34.5 in 2010,[12] a decline matched by a decrease in homicides, from 6.9 per 100,000 in 2000 to 5.8 per 100,000 in 2010 for the 105 countries surveyed.[13] If homicides in these countries had halved between 2000 and 2010, an additional 136,000 lives would have been saved (CERAC, 2014a).[14]

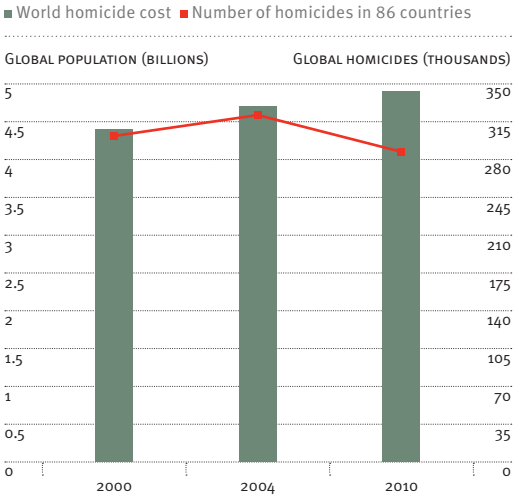
The cost and incidence of homicide varies significantly by country and country income category. Though some poorer countries are more prone to violence (Cramer, 2006; Kennedy et al., 1998), as explained earlier, homicide exacts a greater absolute economic toll in richer countries simply because the population loss is costlier in the monetary valuation of forgone income. High-income countries

Figure 5.1 Incidence and aggregate cost of homicide in 86 countries, 2000–10



Source: CERAC (2014a)

Figure 5.2 Homicides in relation to global population, 2000–10



Source: Author's calculations

that have high homicide rates, such as the United States, clearly face higher associated costs than less violence-affected countries in the same income bracket, such as Canada.

Colombia is a good case in point. Compared with the period 1950–1980, its average annual growth fell by 2 percentage points between 1980 and 2005 because of armed conflict (Cárdenas, 2007). Recent estimates show that GDP would have doubled twice as quickly in the absence of conflict-related violence, assuming that criminal violence remained static. This implies that Colombians' per capita GDP would have increased from the 2013 rate of USD 11,200 to USD 16,700 (Villa, Moscoso, and Restrepo, 2013).

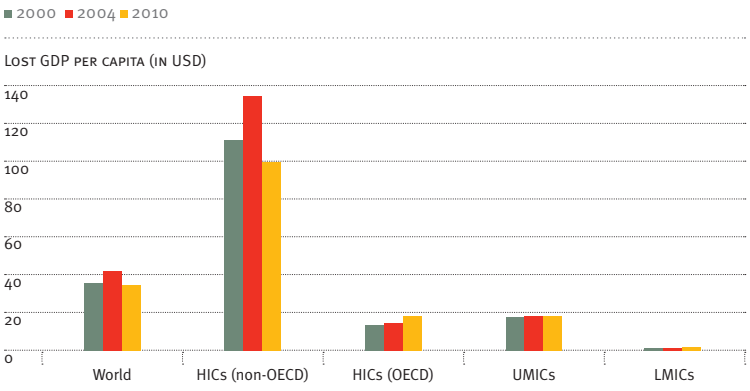
To better understand the cost of homicide in relation to a country's economy, the 105 countries included in the sample are grouped by income rather than by geographical, political, linguistic, or cultural factors. Income-based categories do not, however, always accurately pinpoint global trends in violence and development. For instance, some of the most violence-affected countries in the Americas (e.g. Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela) are defined as UMICs[15] along with some of the least affected countries in East Asia (e.g. China). Similarly, LMICs[16] include countries that are relatively free of violence (e.g. India, Egypt—before the Arab Spring—and Morocco) with countries that experience severe levels of homicide and lethal violence (e.g. El Salvador and Guatemala). The high-income OECD countries[17] are largely characterized by low levels of violence and high economic development, although the significantly higher homicide rates in the United States skew the OECD averages. The same holds for the Russian Federation among non-OECD HICs.

Figure 5.3 shows the cost of excess homicide expressed as the lost per capita GDP in each country income category between 2000 and 2010. Non-OECD HICs that experience an above-average number of homicides show disproportionately high associated costs since they also have high average life expectancy as well as high average income. Thus, although non-OECD HICs comprised only 3 per cent of the total global population in 2010, they accounted for 14 per cent of all global homicides in that year, with associated costs four times greater than the global average (CERAC, 2014a).

Second, the sharp increase in the per capita GDP loss due to excess homicide in 2004 was caused not only by rising life expectancy in many countries and increasing economic activity (which entails growing per capita GDP) worldwide, but also by the sharp spike in homicide rates (CERAC, 2014a).

While the global cost of homicide increased by 18 per cent between 2000 and 2004, in UMICs and OECD countries it rose by 4 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. In contrast, homicide-related costs in non-OECD HICs rose by 21 per cent, despite the fact that their share of global homicides *declined* over the same period.

Figure 5.3 Per capita GDP lost to excess homicide by country income category, 2000, 2004, and 2010



Source: CERAC (2014a)

The variation in costs between country income categories is due to variations in life expectancy and huge wealth disparities. Life expectancy and per capita GDP increased more rapidly in non-OECD HICs between 2000 and 2004 than did the fall in the number of homicides, hence pushing up the absolute cost.

In 2010, fluctuations in the cost of violence in non-OECD HICs were significant enough to bring down global average costs, with the effect that the cost of excess homicide fell by 26 per cent, reducing the global average cost of homicide by 17 per cent, despite the fact that the cost of violence increased in the three remaining country income categories between 2000 and 2010 (CERAC, 2014a). Figure 5.4 depicts the cost of homicide as a percentage of per capita GDP. As in previous findings, it varies significantly: homicide has a relatively low economic impact on LICs, MICs, and OECD countries, but a much more considerable one on LMICs and UMICs and non-OECD HICs.

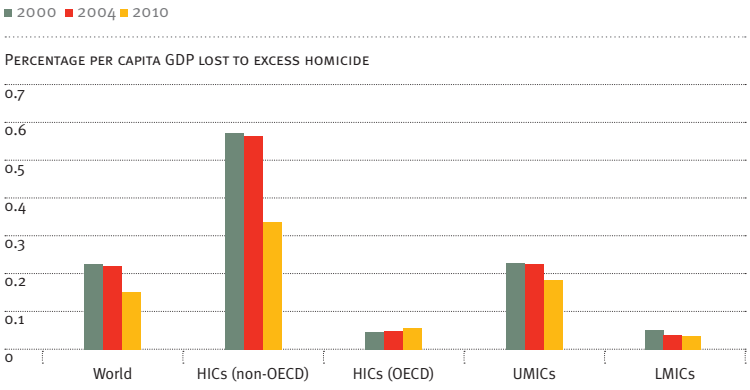
The cost of excess homicide in LMICs and OECD countries in 2000 was around USD 64 million and USD 1.54 billion respectively, in UMICs it was USD 2.18 billion, and in non-OECD HICs it was USD 433 million. As a percentage of per capita GDP, homicide was highest in non-OECD HICs; in absolute terms, however, it was highest in UMICs—the income category with the world's highest levels of violence and representing nearly half of the global total homicide-related costs that year (CERAC, 2014a).[18]

Although there were no significant cost variations in 2004, there were significant declines in both UMICs and non-OECD HICs in 2010. This is because homicides in UMICs fell from 195,172 in 2004 to 167,542 in 2010 and from 41,258 to 27,382 in non-OECD HICs, while life expectancy rose by more than six months in the former and by nearly three years in the latter (CERAC, 2014a).

Several conclusions can be drawn from the above findings. First, the economic cost of life lost due to homicides in non-OECD HICs and UMICs appears to be much higher than was previously thought. Countries with a relatively large, rich economy and a high homicide rate would reap the largest benefits in absolute (dollar) terms from reducing this form of violence. Second, since non-OECD HICs experienced the greatest increase in per capita GDP over the period studied, any variation in their homicide rate—whether up or down—is likely to have a disproportionate effect on the associated cost. In practice, the sharp increase in per capita GDP combined with a sharp fall in homicide rates meant that the economic costs in absolute terms also fell. In OECD countries, where per capita GDP increased while homicide rates remained stable, the per capita cost of homicide rose.

Overall, a reduction of homicide in OECD and non-OECD HICs will automatically make a significant impact on reducing the global economic burden of homicide in absolute terms—while a failure to reduce homicide will weigh heavily on the associated global costs. As the economies of LMICs and UMICs develop, the financial burden of homicides

Figure 5.4 Percentage of per capita GDP lost to excess homicide, 2000, 2004, and 2010



Source: CERAC (2014a)

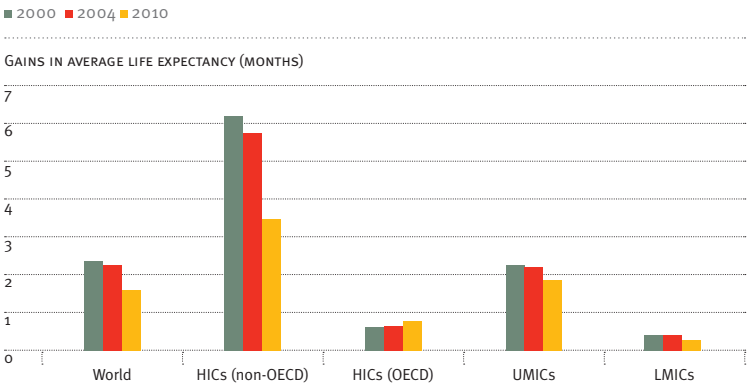
Photo ▶ Mourners grieve the killing of a relative in a car bomb attack that occurred during a religious festival in Najaf, Iraq, December 2013. © Alaa Al-Marjani/Reuters

will increase, and such forms of violence will hamper their development.

The calculation of the cost of homicide is intimately tied to average life expectancy. When a greater number of deaths are caused, for instance, by car accidents and heart disease, resulting in a decline in overall life expectancy, the (relative) cost of homicides falls. No less significant than the decrease in global homicides was the increase in life expectancy experienced between 2000 and 2010 in all country income categories, from an extra six months in UMICs to nearly three extra years in non-OECD HICs. Although increased life expectancy was largely due to a rapid decline in mortality from infectious diseases and malnutrition and the improved survival of young children (Boseley, 2012), the overall decline in the number of homicides certainly contributed.

If excess homicide were still further reduced, life expectancy gains would be correspondingly higher—from an extra two months in UMICs to just over six extra months in non-OECD HICs (CERAC, 2014a) (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Gains in life expectancy in the absence of excess homicide (in months), 2000–10



Source: CERAC (2014a)

The gains in average life expectancy from reducing excess homicide are overwhelmingly in the middle range of UMICs and non-OECD HICs rather than in country income categories at either extreme (LMICs and OECD countries). This is partly because LMICs and OECD countries have lower homicide rates to begin with, which means that reducing their number has a smaller effect on life expectancy than, say, reducing heart disease, car accidents, or diabetes. On the other hand, LMICs have a measurably lower average life expectancy to begin with. Since premature death in LMICs is overwhelmingly of non-violent causes, a reduction in homicide rates is bound to have less of an impact on

overall mortality rates and life expectancy than in countries with higher levels of violence.

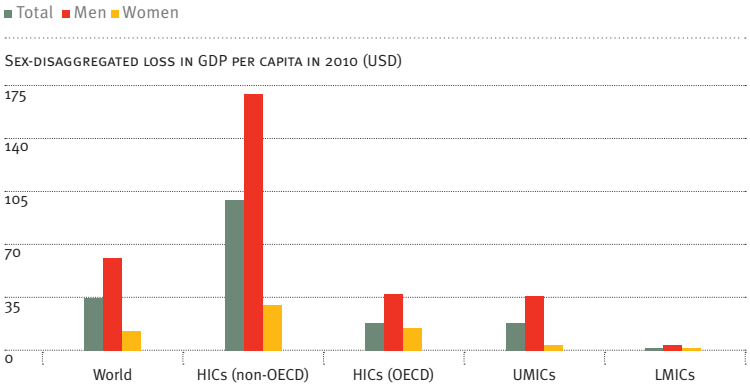
From an aggregate perspective, several developments stand out. First, the period from 2000 to 2010 saw a significant decline in the incidence of homicide in conjunction with significantly increased life expectancy in all country income categories. These two factors drove up the absolute homicide-related costs worldwide: excess homicide becomes more 'expensive' in terms of life expectancy and has a more serious impact in absolute (dollar) terms. Second, the fact that the world became a safer, more prosperous place depressed the theoretical savings from reducing excess homicide. Otherwise stated, the absence of excess homicide in 2000 would have brought greater economic gains than in 2010 in every country income category except the OECD countries.

Costs of excess homicide by demographic group

As already shown, the cost of homicide varies significantly across country income categories, since *in absolute terms* poorer countries with low life expectancy and low homicide rates have the lowest costs associated with excess homicide, while richer, more violence-affected countries have the highest. Of course, since they are based on aggregates, country income categories mask a number of important realities, including potentially huge cost disparities within these categories and also within individual countries, just as other simple demographic indicators may do.

For instance, a victim's sex is an important determinant of the excess cost of homicide. Since men are overwhelmingly the victims of homicide, they also represent a considerably higher cost as a demographic group (see Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6 Sex-disaggregated per capita GDP lost to excess homicide in 2010



Source: CERAC (2014a)

Figure 5.6 shows that men are far more often the victims (and indeed the perpetrators) of homicide than women,[19] although it masks the indirect and intangible costs disproportionately suffered by women—in addition to the fact that 60,000 women were killed each year between 2007 and 2012, representing 16 per cent of all homicides (see Chapter Three; Radford and Russell, 1992; Sagot and Carcedo, 2000). In addition, women are significantly more affected than men for non-lethal intimate partner and domestic violence and often suffer higher indirect costs (Box 5.2; Arias and Corso, 2005). While men are far more likely than women to be attacked by someone unknown to them, women are overwhelmingly the victims of violence perpetrated by an intimate partner or acquaintance (Agüero, 2013). In times of conflict, women are frequently the victims of sexual violence committed by unknown men, but they are also the primary victims of intimate partner violence and are by definition the sole victims of femicide (Chapter Three; Stöckl, et al., 2013). Moreover, when male breadwinners are murdered, they leave economic dependants—most often women and children—stranded (Day, McKenna, and Bowlus, 2005). Box 5.3 takes a closer look at the impact of excess homicide on male and female life expectancy, bearing in mind the fact that women tend to outlive men.

In relation to age, young people—particularly from birth to the age of 29 years—are far more often the victims of homicide than are older people. This both affects the economic costs of such homicides and significantly reduces average life expectancy.

There is a broad literature on youth and violence—most of which is beyond the scope of this chapter—but several factors regarding the dynamics between age and susceptibility to homicide are worth mentioning. First is the question of vulnerability: the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 53,000 children worldwide were intentionally killed in 2002 (WHO, 2006)[20]—with twice as many in LICs than in HICs.[21] Children from birth to four years of age were especially vulnerable (WHO, 2006). Second, of an estimated 187,000 conflict-related deaths in 2008, WHO estimates that 47 per cent of victims were aged from birth to 29 years of age, 73 per cent of whom were of men aged between 15 and 29 years (WHO, 2006).

Third, research shows that 'youth bulges'—or sudden demographic increases in younger populations—tend to be associated with increased political violence (Urdal, 2006). When economic decline is combined with greater levels of education, societies are unable to provide appropriate employment to absorb such a large number of new graduates. This can in turn lead to intergenerational violence, one of the more common explanations for unrest in the Arab world since early 2011 that resulted in a disproportionately high casualty rate of younger men (Schwartz, 2011; Hoffman and Jamal, 2012).

The methodology used in this chapter suggests that young people, men in particular, incur considerably higher costs of excess homicide than do older adults. Indeed, the largest hypothetical gains in life expectancy from eliminating excess homicide are among people of between 15 and 24 years of age. Since young people have longer to live, there is a disproportionate benefit in reducing excess homicide in this age group.

More specifically, young people in LMICs and UMICs gain the most in life expectancy from a reduction in excess homicide, in particular those in UMICs who are aged between 15 and 19 years. In 2000 alone, homicide cut short this age group's life expectancy by 6.8 months. High-income countries stood to gain the least, probably because murder rates are much lower in OECD countries and so have much less of an impact on overall

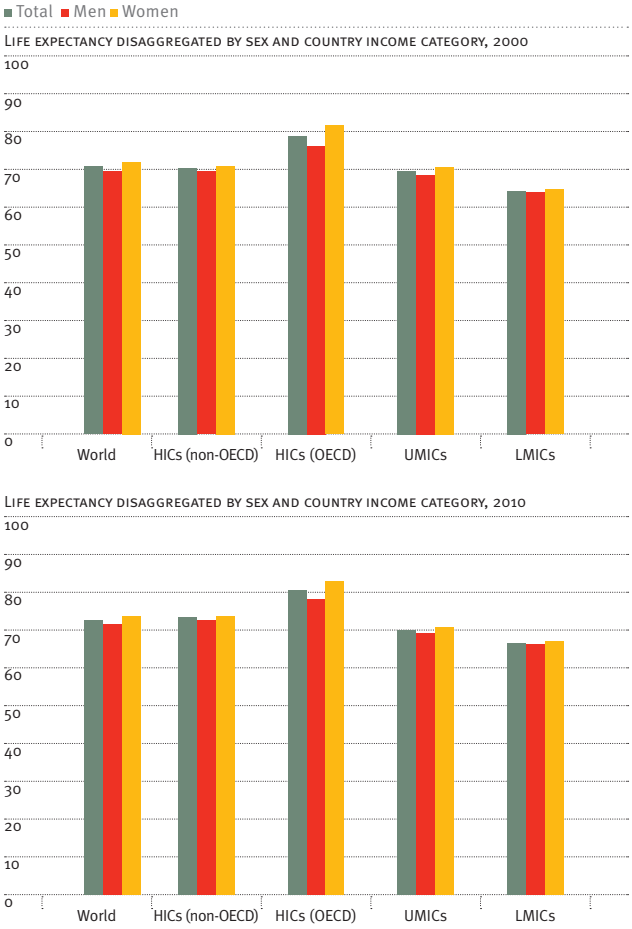
Box 5.3 Homicide and life expectancy disaggregated by sex

Figures 5.7 and 5.8 present sex-disaggregated life expectancy across country income categories in 2000 and 2010. They show little difference between the world average and that of UMICs and non-OECD HICs, which suggests that the former is largely determined by countries in the middle of the economic spectrum. LMICs and OECD countries occupy the lower and upper extremes of life expectancy, which suggests that life expectancy is highly contingent on country income level. Both figures show that on average women outlive men —by almost five years in OECD countries in 2000.

As shown in Figure 5.8, men lose roughly four times more months of life expectancy than women to homicide. This is true both of the world average, and of UMICs and non-OECD HICs. In OECD countries, men lose twice as much as women to homicide. Only in LMICs, where homicide rates are considerably lower than the global average[22] does homicide have an equal effect on the life expectancy of men and women.[23]

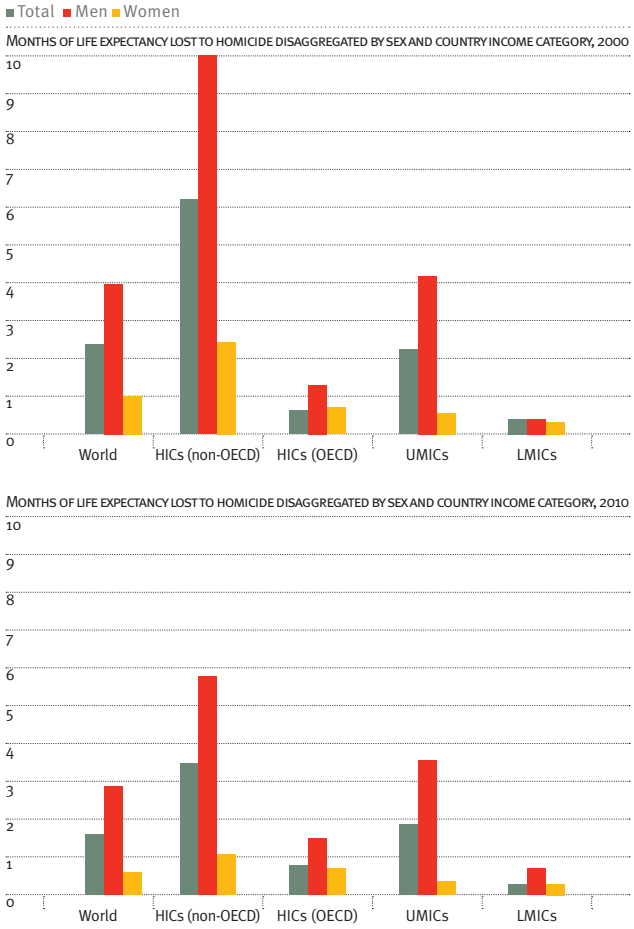
Author: Nicolás Ronderos

Figure 5.7 Life expectancy disaggregated by sex and country income category, 2000 and 2010



Source: CERAC (2014a)

Figure 5.8 Months of life expectancy lost to homicide disaggregated by sex and country income category, 2000 and 2010

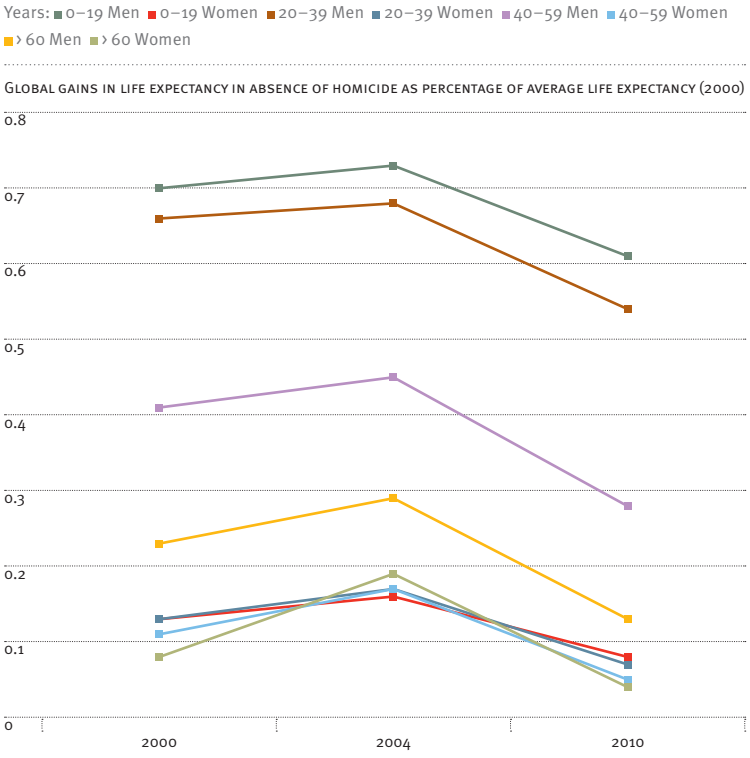


Source: CERAC (2014a)

life expectancy than, say, heart disease or liver failure. In 2010, for example, people aged between 15 and 19 years in OECD and non-OECD HICs would have gained 0.09 per cent and 0.36 per cent of per capita life expectancy in the absence of excess homicide, whereas those of the same age group in LMICs and UMICs would have gained 0.67 per cent and 0.50 per cent respectively. The global average is 0.38 per cent (CERAC, 2014a).

Moreover, in 2000, in OECD countries people aged between 75 and 79 years saw higher gains in life expectancy from a reduction in excess homicide (0.19 per cent) than did 15–19 year-olds (0.12 per cent). In other words, income is a more important factor than age in determining gains to

FIGURE 5.9 Global gains to life expectancy by age group in the absence of excess homicide, 2000–10



SOURCE: CERAC (2014a)

Box 5.4 Global gains to life expectancy

In absolute terms, certain demographic groups are at a disproportionately high risk of homicide affecting lost life expectancy and per capita GDP: the young, the rich, and men. In the case of young people, it is because they have more to contribute to the national economy over their lifetime than those who have already been in the workforce for years. In other cases, it is because a particular demographic group (e.g. men) is far more often the victim of homicide. Hence the (theoretical) reduction of excess homicide rates increases their overall economic contribution.

Moreover, while one can calculate the gross cost of several very important factors in people's quality of life—how long they live and how much they can contribute to their respective economies—it does not and cannot measure the countless indirect costs of homicide, whether psychological, moral, social, or political (Skaperdas et al., 2009).

Figure 5.9 displays the gains accruing to each age group and sex in the absence of excess homicide as a percentage of the global average life expectancy in 2000. Several issues stand out. First, regardless of sex, every age group shows substantial increased life expectancy between 2000 and 2004 when subtracting for excess homicide, a reflection of the increase in global homicides for the 105 countries surveyed. Second, gains for every age group and both sexes decline between 2004 and 2010, a reflection of a fall in excess homicides over that period. Third, there is an immense discrepancy in gains in life expectancy between women and men *regardless* of age.

Indeed, this is one of the most significant findings: sex is a consistently and significantly more important factor than age or income in determining how much a person's life will be cut short by homicide. Since men are overwhelmingly the victims of homicide worldwide, even those of over 60 years of age have more to gain in absolute life expectancy from reductions in excess homicide than do girls and women from birth to the age of 19 or between the ages of 20 and 39 years (CERAC, 2014a).

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life expectancy from reducing excess homicide, since young people in rich countries (e.g. 15-year old Belgians) gain less from hypothetical reductions of homicide than do older people in lower country income categories (e.g. Argentinean retirees). In a world where young people are considerably more likely to be the victims of homicide, this is a significant finding (CERAC, 2014a).

The cost of firearm-related homicides

It is estimated that between 2007 and 2012, approximately 46.3 per cent of all homicides were committed with firearms. Moreover, three of the world's four most violent regions—Central America, the Caribbean, and South America—also experienced highest incidence of homicides committed with firearms, 69 per cent, 65 per cent, and 52.7 per cent respectively (Chapter Two). Indeed, the Americas have consistently seen increasing levels of excess homicide matched by increasing lethal firearm use (Gilgen, 2012).

There is considerable debate on how firearms affect overall homicide rates in much of the world (see Chapter Two), yet there is no standard way to measure the precise cost of gun-related murder. The methodology used in this chapter takes into account the economic value lost due to each person who is killed by whatever means, including with a firearm. It does not attempt to include the indirect or intangible costs of homicides committed with firearms, nor the considerable costs borne by those who survive being shot (Alvazzi del Frate and De Martino, 2013). In 2007, in the United States alone there were more than three times as many victims who survived gunshot injuries (44,500) as there were fatal shootings (13,000) (Hemenway, 2011).

The estimated cost of firearm-related violence varies substantially in different studies. In 2013, for example, the University of Chicago estimated that shootings cost the city USD 2.5 billion per year, or USD 2,500 *per household* (University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2009, p. 5). Since the combined cost of ambulance journeys and trauma-care bills amount to at least USD 250,000 per shooting, gun violence cost the United States USD 100 billion a year, the equivalent of 2 million police officers' salaries (Jones and McCormick, 2013). In Canada, on the other hand, the Justice Department estimated the cost of firearms violence in 2008 at CAD 3.1 billion (USD 2.5 billion), or CAD 93 (USD 78) *per person*. Calculated by combining information from courts and insurance companies, CAD 2.5 billion (USD 2.1 billion) of this was attributed to intangible costs such as pain, suffering, and loss of life,[24] and the remainder to criminal justice, personal and health expenses, and third-party costs (Beeby, 2012).

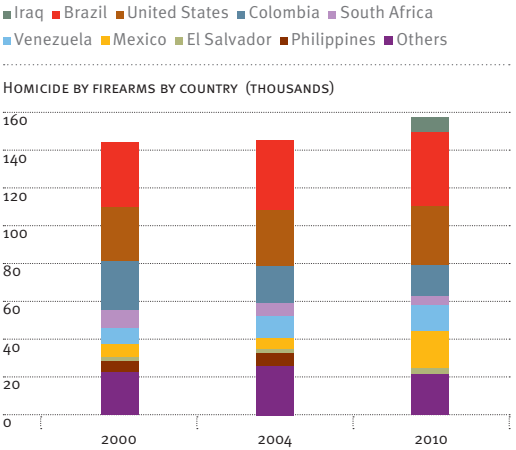
Since the countries most affected by homicide also tend to be in the middle to upper middle-income brackets, the corresponding cost of firearms is enormous—and rising. Of 89 countries studied, four of the five with the most to gain in life expectancy and per capita GDP from reducing homicide (Brazil, Colombia, South Africa, and Venezuela) also suffered the greatest cost of firearms violence in terms of life expectancy and lost GDP. One recent study found that Colombia would have increased its GDP by 1.6 per cent in the absence of excess homicide by firearms in 2000 alone—a year in which the country had a homicide rate of 66.5 per 100,000 totalling 26,540 victims (UNODC, 2014).

Unfortunately, relevant data on firearm-related lethal violence was available only in 89 of 105 countries with detailed homicide information—covering a third of the total world population. Detailed information on how many people—

disaggregated by age and sex—were killed by firearms was not available for China, India, Indonesia, and the Russian Federation, among others.[25] While this necessarily limits the scope of the conclusions that can be drawn, it still offers crucial insights into the role that firearms play in the world's most violent countries, practically all of which are included in the sample.

As stated above, four of the five countries with the most to gain in life expectancy and per capita GDP from the absence of excess homicide were also the most affected by firearm-related violence: Brazil, Colombia, South Africa, and Venezuela. The fifth is the United States, which in 2012 had a relatively low excess homicide rate—4.8 per 100,000 inhabitants (FBI, 2013)—

Figure 5.10 Contribution to total deaths by firearms in countries where data is available, 2000–10



Source: CERAC (2014a)

Photo ▼ In the presence of local police, a shop owner squats in front of his business, which was looted during a wave of violent attacks on foreign nationals and foreign-owned shops in Johannesburg, South Africa, January 2015. © Stefan Heunis/AFP/Getty Images

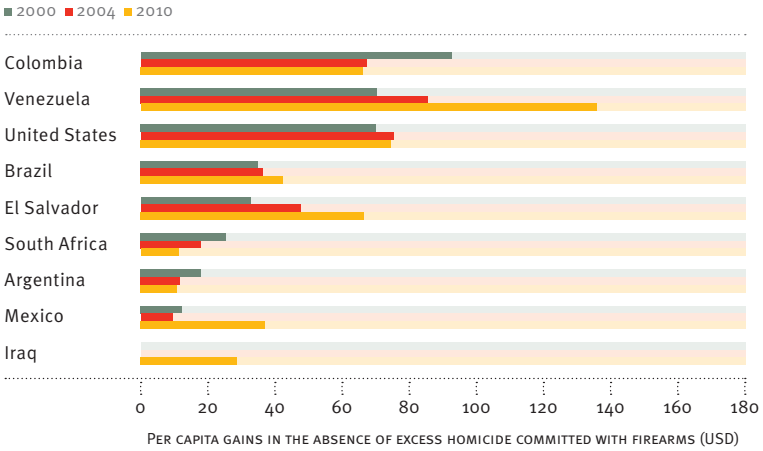
but a much higher proportion of firearm-related homicide (according to the FBI, 68 per cent of intentional homicides in 2011 were committed with firearms) (FBI, 2012).[26] Add to this list El Salvador, Iraq, and Mexico, and these eight countries account for 87 per cent of deaths caused by firearms in the 89 countries for which such data was available (see Figure 5.10) (CERAC, 2014a).

How much do firearm-related homicides cost the worst affected countries per year? Even excluding indirect (medical, policing, incarceration, counselling, unemployment, disability) or intangible (psychological damage, guilt, fear, depression) costs, the burden is high. As Figure 5.11 demonstrates, in per capita terms homicide committed by firearms cost Venezuelans nearly USD 140 in 2010 alone, a total of USD 4 billion for a population of roughly 29 million. Although this estimate is significantly lower than studies that include indirect or intangible costs, the cost of firearm-related homicide is high and is often rising in countries that already suffer high levels of violence: between 2000 and 2010, of the eight most violence-affected countries only Colombia and South Africa showed a decline in firearm-related homicides.

In countries with rapidly growing economies the cost of firearm-related homicide is overshadowed by GDP growth. As Figures 5.11 and 5.12 demonstrate, although the absolute cost of firearm-related homicides in a country such as Brazil increased between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of GDP lost fell over that same period. The rate of economic and demographic growth either kept pace with or outstripped that of firearm-related homicides. Although between 2000 and 2010, the number of firearm-related homicides in Brazil rose by 12 per cent, as did its population (World Bank, 2014c), its economy grew from USD 645 billion in 2000 to USD 2.14 trillion in 2010, more than a 300 per cent nominal increase (World Bank, 2014b). This may explain why the cost of homicides committed by firearms is not regarded as a significant problem in such countries.

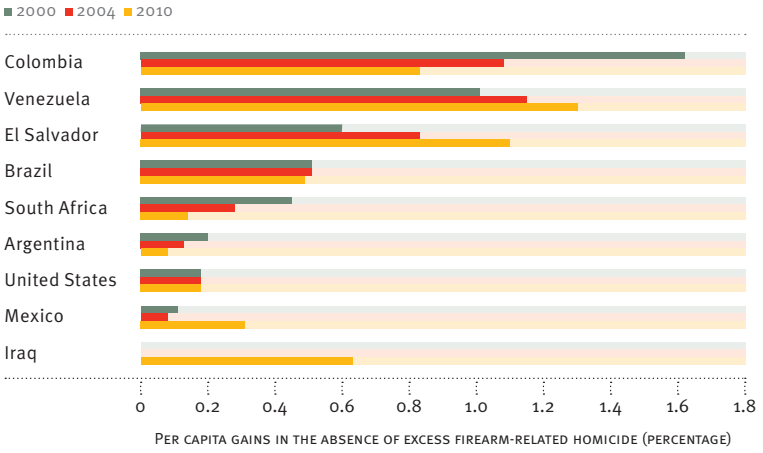
As this chapter has shown, gains in life expectancy from reducing excess homicide often coincide with an increase in per capita GDP. Of course, the

FIGURE 5.11 Per capita GDP gains in the absence of firearm-related homicide, 2000–10



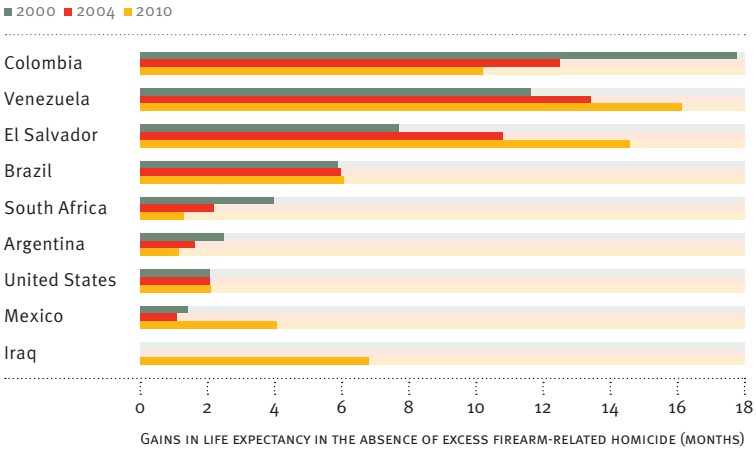
SOURCE: CERAC (2014a)

FIGURE 5.12 GDP gains in the absence of firearm-related homicide as percentage of total GDP, 2000–10



SOURCE: CERAC (2014a)

Figure 5.13 Gains in life expectancy in the absence of firearm-related homicide expressed in months, 2000–10



Source: CERAC (2014a)

richer the country, the higher the absolute economic gains from extending life expectancy—and reducing the rate of gun-related homicides is no different. The theoretical gains in life expectancy are, however, seldom adequately appreciated when expressed solely in monetary terms. The fact that each Venezuelan stood to gain USD 140 from reducing firearm-related homicides in 2010 is one thing; that each person would, on average, have lived nearly 16 months longer in the absence of gun violence is quite another.

Hence, although estimating the monetary benefits of eliminating excess homicide is crucial to understanding the cost of violence, it does not tell the full story. Figure 5.13 shows the gains in life expectancy in countries most affected by gun violence.

Box 5.5 How much would people pay for protection from lethal violence?

Given the chance to eliminate major risks to their wellbeing, most people will take it, even at considerable cost. It can be assumed that *everyone* is risk-averse to certain things, especially injury and death. Is it possible to determine the premium that the average person places on physical security? How much would an individual be willing to spend to remove the threat of excess homicide or lethal violence? Economists refer to this as the marginal willingness to pay.

Three factors determine a person's willingness to pay for protection from lethal violence. Since one can assume those with less of a stake in the future are, in strict monetary terms, likely to value it less, the first factor is life expectancy. A 25-year old who can reasonably expect to live another 60 years, is more likely to be willing to spend more to eliminate the threat of lethal violence than is a person who can reasonably expect to live only for another 20 years. The second factor is a country's standard of living, measured by per capita consumption. It may be assumed that people with better standard of living conditions would, in strict monetary terms, place a greater value on removing the threat of violence.

Take the example of Venezuela, which has the world's highest marginal willingness to pay. In 2010, its per capita GDP was USD 10,400 and its marginal willingness to pay was around 9 per cent of this, or USD 936.

There are interesting differences between countries, however. Venezuelans and Colombians would be willing to pay more than ten times more to reduce lethal violence than would Uruguayans, although all three countries have similar average life expectancy and incomes. But since homicide is a greater risk in Venezuela and Colombia than in Uruguay, residents of the former two would place a greater premium on reducing violence. But what of people living in equally or even more violent countries, such as El Salvador or Honduras? Honduras has a lower per capita GDP than Venezuela or Colombia, which means that Hondurans are not in a material position to place such a high theoretical premium on reducing violence. Ultimately, the marginal willingness to pay is highest in countries with high per capita GDP, life expectancy, and levels of violence.

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Conclusion

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, it is unrealistic to imagine that any society will succeed in completely eradicating homicide. While there are grounds for guarded optimism regarding reductions in both the observed and the natural rate of homicide, the day that Central American countries, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, and South Africa reach Japan's very low incidence of homicide seems a long way off. While Japan had a rate of 0.3 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2011 (442 homicides), Venezuela's was 65.6 (19,360), South Africa's 30.0 (15,609), Colombia's 35.1 (16,544), and Brazil's 26.5 (52,198) (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2014).

Nonetheless, the overall trend is positive. In three of the four country income categories studied, and also worldwide, homicide rates substantially declined between 2000 and 2010 in the 105 countries reviewed. Although stagnant in most OECD countries, homicide rates have plummeted in UMICs, non-OECD HICs, and most the of world's most violent regions. If the global rate of homicide continues to decline as rapidly between 2010 and 2020 as it did between 2004 and 2010, 63,250 lives will be spared. Calculated by per capita GDP in 2010, this is the equivalent of USD 850 million, the entire GDP of Guinea-Bissau that year (CERAC, 2014a).

The economic benefits of reducing homicide accrue disproportionately to the rich. In many ways, this makes sense. The per capita cost of homicide is highest where the average citizen is valued more in 'market' terms; any increase in average life expectancy in rich countries increases their 'market value'. This is why policy-makers in rich countries should take the reduction of homicide as seriously as their counterparts in poorer countries do.

Since men are far more likely than women to be the victims of homicide, they stand to gain more in average life expectancy and per capita GDP when there are fewer murders. In addition, a person's sex is a more important factor than income in determining the per capita cost of lethal violence. Age is also important, as children and young adults are disproportionately the victims of homicide in every country in the sample, and reducing its incidence generates far greater gains in life expectancy for those aged from birth to 39 years than for people of 40 years of age and above. Overall, however, income is a stronger determinant of life expectancy than age: in UMICs, the life expectancy of older people is more affected by their country's homicide rates and per capita GDP than it is for the most vulnerable younger people living in OECD countries.

List of abbreviations

GBAV	*Global Burden of Armed Violence*
HIC	High-income country
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
LMIC	Lower middle-income country
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UMIC	Upper middle-income country
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Endnotes

1 Due to the lack of available data for many countries, most of which are in sub-Saharan Africa, the sample used in this chapter covers only 105 countries, which together account for about 71 per cent of the total global population. Unless otherwise stated, the terms 'global cost' or 'global population' refer to this proportion of the total global population for which there is reliable data on homicide rates, life expectancy, and per capita GDP between 2000 and 2010.

For this reason, some figures for homicide rates and population differ from the data cited in the other chapters, because they employ a different sample size. See the methodological annexe for a complete list of the countries included in this survey.

2 Direct costs are the actual or potential economic value lost due to homicide, usually using income or economic value of production as the basis of calculation. Indirect costs refer to a subjective valuation of the impact of violence on society, for example of the fear engendered by homicide, which is difficult to express in monetary terms, but has an impact on the affected family and community; similarly, the stress a pregnant woman experiences if her baby is endangered by violence, which can be estimated precisely, is difficult to value (see Camacho, 2008). Another way to approach indirect costs is to calculate the costs of containing violence, which have been estimated by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) at USD 9.46 trillion a year (IEP, 2014), although this figure tends to double count elements of security and justice provision.

3 'Estimating the cost of homicide' discusses the 'natural' homicide rate in more depth.

4 See Endnote 1.

5 For the methodological details on how the monetary value of lives lost and reduced life expectancy are calculated see CERAC (2014b).

6 The 105 countries are broken down into four categories according to national income levels. Lower middle-income countries (LMICs) are with a per capita GDP between USD 976 and USD 3,855 (16 countries); upper middle-income countries (UMICs), with a per capita GDP between USD 3,855 and USD 11,905 (37 countries); high-income countries (HICs) that are OECD members, with a per capita GDP above USD 11,905 (29 countries); and non-OECD HICs (23 countries). The categories do not correspond to geographical regions: there are countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America in almost every different income level.

7 Conflict-related costs are generally not included in homicide statistics. Although conflicts have a major economic impact, the majority of casualties tend to be in low- and middle-income countries (LICs and MICs). For more information on the costs of conflict, see Collier and Hoeffler (2002); Hoeffler and Reynal-Querol (2003); and Villa, Moscoso, and Restrepo (2014).

8 These include medical care, deterioration of health, material damages, public and private security expenditure, lost productivity, deterioration of investment and consumption, crime-prevention programmes, lower quality of life, and other intangible costs such as emotional and psychological damage and a general sense of fear that prevents people from participating in certain recreational activities, staying out beyond a certain hour, etc.

9 For a more expansive discussion on the 'natural rate of crime', see Narayan, Nielsen, and Smyth (2010).

10 A 10.6 per cent drop in the homicide rate between 2004 and 2010 was followed by a 3.13 per cent increase in the related economic costs over the same period. In dollar terms, costs rose from USD 76.5 billion in 2004 to USD 78.3 billion in 2010, compared to USD 67.9 billion in 2000.

11 The exact figures are 2.3 years' increased life expectancy and a 49.6 per cent increase in GDP in LMICs, and 2.9 years' increased life expectancy and a 52.6 per cent increase in GDP in non-OECD HICs (CERAC, 2014a).

12 This is notwithstanding a temporary increase in the per capita cost of homicide to USD 42.3 in 2004.

13 Per capita GDP in Peru rose from USD 4,625 in 2000 to USD 7,983 in 2010, from USD 2,889 to USD 3,820 in Indonesia, from USD 8,673 to USD 15,062 in the Russian Federation, and from USD 5,715 to USD 7,888 in South Africa (CERAC, 2014a).

14 The exact figure is 135,917. This is the difference between the actual number of homicides in the 105 countries surveyed in 2010 (286,220) and the number there would have been (150,926) if homicides in 2000 (308,012) had also declined by 51 per cent (CERAC, 2014a).

15 With 28.6 per cent of the global population in 2010, the UMIC bracket includes countries such as Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Iraq, Jordan, Mexico, Peru, Romania, South Africa, and Venezuela.

16 With 25.4 per cent of the global population in 2010, LMICs include countries in Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North Africa such as Armenia, Egypt, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Moldova, Morocco, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Philippines, and Ukraine.

17 With around 15 per cent of the global population, the OECD includes most EU member states, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Korea, and the United States.

18 UMICs recorded 186,176 homicides of a world total of 308,012 that year (CERAC, 2014a).

19 The figure for female homicides is based on the total world population and not the roughly 74 per cent generally used in this chapter. In terms of geographical regions, the world's most affected regions for female homicide are in Central America and the Caribbean (see Chapter Three).

20 This was calculated using limited country-level data (WHO, 2006).

21 This means 2.58 and 1.21 children per 100,000 inhabitants were killed respectively.

22 While the LMICs examined had lower homicide rates than other country income categories, this is not necessarily true beyond the sample group of 105 countries or worldwide. This is because many LMICs with high rates of homicide

lack sufficient demographic data and so were excluded from the sample.

23 Although LMICs accounted for nearly one third of the total population included in the survey in 2000, they accounted for less than 12 per cent of total homicides in that year (CERAC, 2014a).

24 Other intangible costs include grief, intimidation, fear, guilt, and trauma.

25 Note that in comparison to the data presented in Chapter Two, this calculation depends upon fully disaggregated data on the age, gender, and means used in committing homicide. There are fewer countries with this information than those listed in Chapter Two, which presents aggregate data on firearms at the national level.

26 In 2011, there were 8,583 intentional homicides committed by firearms of a total of 12,664 homicides (FBI, 2012).

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