

Data UNODC - Metadata Information



Intentional Homicide

The tables on intentional homicide include figures on victims of intentional homicide at city, national, regional, and global levels, and figures on persons arrested/suspected or convicted for intentional homicide. National data are submitted by Member States to UNODC through the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS) or other means. Regional and global estimates are produced by UNODC based on national data.

Dataset characteristics

Access link: <https://dataunodc.un.org/dp-intentional-homicide-victims>

Last update: 06/06/2022

Base period: Calendar Year

Data source(s): National data on offences and victims collected through the UN-CTS, World Population Prospects 2020 data from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Please see below for National data collection sources.

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Statistical concepts and definitions

The [International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes \(ICCS\)](#) is the source of the definition of intentional homicide. The definitions of the disaggregations of victims of intentional homicide included in these tables (by situational context, by relationship to perpetrator and by mechanisms) are also from the ICCS. The ICCS includes more information on what is included and excluded in these offences.

Intentional homicide (ICCS 0101): Unlawful death inflicted upon a person with the intent to cause death or serious injury.

The statistical definition contains three elements that characterize the killing of a person as “intentional homicide”:

1. The killing of a person by another person (objective element).
2. The intent of the perpetrator to kill or seriously injure the victim (subjective element).
3. The unlawfulness of the killing (legal element).

For recording purposes, all killings that meet the criteria listed above are to be considered intentional homicides, irrespective of definitions provided by national legislations or practices. Killings as a result of terrorist activities are also to be classified as a form of intentional homicide.

Intentional homicide by situational context

Interpersonal homicide: Homicide perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member, which includes homicide perpetrated by an (ex-) partner/(ex-)spouse, a family member other than a partner/spouse, infanticide and parricide; Homicide perpetrated on persons other than intimate partners or family members as a means of resolving a conflict and/or punishing the victim where the homicide is not instrumental to the accomplishment of a secondary goal. This includes, for example,

homicide related to neighbour disputes, revenge-related interpersonal killing, or random and seemingly unprovoked acts of killing but excludes homicides committed for economic gain, homicide committed in the act of another felony crime, gang-related killing or killing as a result of terrorist activities.

Organized criminal groups or gangs: Victim or perpetrator was a member of an organized criminal group/gang, or homicide occurs in a fashion related to organized criminal groups/gangs.

Other criminal activities: Homicide may be perpetrated in order to accomplish the original crime and/or avoid detection. Homicide does not represent the primary goal of the criminal act. This includes homicide related to robbery, and homicide perpetrated during the commission of another criminal offence, but does not include homicide related to organized criminal groups or gangs.

Socio-political: Homicide related to social prejudice (means discrimination due to the victim's sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, ethnic origin, disability, race, religious beliefs and/or economic and social views, including hate crime); Homicide related to political agendas (means killings by terrorist groups with a political agenda, political assassination, and targeted killing of journalists for political reasons); Homicide related to civil unrest (where civil unrest refers to a situation of collective violent hostilities between two or more parties within a country that do not amount to an internal armed conflict); Homicide related to other socio-political agendas (e.g. through mob violence and vigilantism, unlawful killings by the police, excessive use of force by law enforcement officers and extrajudicial killings).

Socio-political – terrorist offences: Any act established in accordance with the universal legal instruments against terrorism, or otherwise intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities of a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act; (United Nations General Assembly. International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. 1999. E/RES/54/109, Article 2[1b]).

Intentional homicide by relationship to perpetrator

Intimate partner: Current or former spouse or intimate partner (cohabitating or non-cohabitating partner or boyfriend/girlfriend).

Family member: Blood relatives, relatives by marriage or adoption, and persons living in the same household as the victim.

Other perpetrator known to the victim: Friend/acquaintance, colleague/business or work relationship, authority/care relationship (doctor/nurse/teacher/police/public official, clergy, etc.) or any other perpetrator known to the victim.

Intentional homicide by mechanisms

Firearm: Handgun discharge, rifle, shotgun and larger firearm discharge, as well as other and unspecified firearm discharge.

Another weapon: Sharp object, blunt object or any other object used as a weapon (including deliberately hitting or running over with a motor vehicle).

Without a weapon/other mechanism: Hanging, strangulation or suffocation, drowning or submersion, pushing from a high place, pushing or placing victim before moving object, bodily force (including sexual assault), assault with drugs and chemical substances, and any other specified means.



Criminal justice process

Persons arrested/suspected: Persons suspected, or arrested, or cautioned, for a criminal offence.

Persons convicted: Persons found guilty by any legal body authorized to pronounce a conviction under national criminal law, whether or not the conviction was later upheld. Persons receiving a sentence after plea-bargaining, or in an abbreviated court procedure, should be counted as persons convicted.

Indicator definitions, statistical and measurement units

Victims of intentional homicide:

The counting unit is the individual victim. Certain countries may use other counted units.

Persons arrested/suspected for intentional homicide:

The counting unit is the individual person. The focus is on the total number of persons at a given stage of the criminal justice process. Each person is counted once, irrespective of the number of crimes committed.

Persons convicted for intentional homicide:

The counting unit is the person in reference to an offence. The focus is on the flow of persons through the criminal justice process in reference to intentional homicide. Each person is counted separately in reference to crime occurrence.

Male and female rates are calculated based on the male or female populations while the total rate is based on the total population (both sexes).

$$Rate_{total} = 100,000 * \frac{Victims_{total}}{Population_{total}}$$

Regional and global estimates:

The method used for estimating the number of intentional homicides at the global and regional level aims to make the best possible use of available data. For each regional aggregate, the number of intentional homicides should correspond to the sum of all national data of such killings in the region, in each year. However, for many countries, data on intentional homicides are not available, or data are available only for some years (see table 'Victims of intentional homicide'). As a result, the sample of countries with available data is different for each year. If left unaddressed, this issue would result in inconsistencies, as regional aggregates would be drawn from a different set of countries each year.

Imputations for intentional homicides are performed on the country-level rate of intentional homicide per 100,000 population. If a country has just one available data point since the year 2000, all missing values are set equal to this single available data point. This approach therefore accounts for population growth over time and does not mean that the series is constant in absolute terms. If a country has two to eight available data points, the missing values between two data points are estimated by linear interpolation, and if there are missing values that are temporally before (or after) the earliest (or latest) available data point, the values at the beginning (or end) of the series are filled with the earliest (or latest) available data point. If a country has more than eight available data points in the respective time series, the missing values between two data points are estimated by linear interpolation, and if there are missing values that are temporally before (or after) the earliest (or latest) available data point, the values at the end of the time series are imputed using an

exponential smoothing approach (for more information, see https://afit-r.github.io/ts_exp_smoothing/).

Once the series have been imputed at the national level, they are aggregated at the regional level. Regional homicide totals are calculated for each year by multiplying the regional homicide rate per 100,000 population with the total population of the respective region (divided by 100,000).¹ The regions are the ones from the United Nations “[Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use](#)”. Each country or area is included in one region only. Finally, regional estimates are aggregated to compute the global number of intentional homicides.

Use and interpretation of data

Multiple factors such as the functioning of the criminal justice system, the state in the investigation during which the data are recorded (e.g., when it is reported or after investigation) and the adoption of international statistical definition at the national level may have an impact on these data. Nonetheless, unlike other criminal offences, intentional homicides are more likely to be reported to or identified by the police or other law enforcement agencies. For this reason, the number of intentional homicides recorded by the criminal justice system can be considered both a proxy for violent crime as well as a comparable indicator of the level of security in countries.

Data sources and method of collection

National data on victims

The data are sourced from either criminal justice or public health systems. In the former, data are generated by law enforcement or criminal justice authorities in the process of recording and investigating a crime event, whereas in the latter, data are produced by health authorities certifying the cause of death of an individual. Ideally, a complete forensic investigation by law enforcement authorities will take all three basic criteria explained above.

These data are collected from national authorities with the annual United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (UN-CTS). National focal points working in national agencies responsible for statistics on crime and the criminal justice system and nominated by the Permanent Mission to UNODC are responsible for compiling the data from the other relevant agencies before transmitting the UN-CTS to UNODC. Following the submission, UNODC checks for consistency and coherence with other data sources. Member States which are also part of the European Union or the European Free Trade Association, or candidate or potential candidate to the European Union are sending their response to the UN-CTS to Eurostat for validation.

Data submitted by Member States through other means or taken from other sources are added to the dataset after review by Member States.

The population data is sourced from the World Population Prospect, Population Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

¹ For countries without any data points since the year 2000, this means that the regional homicide rate is applied. To better reflect the diversity of homicide levels across African countries, a different approach was used to calculate the regional homicide estimate for Africa, which rests on the classification of countries into three groups according to levels of insecurity. For more information, see Methodological Annex to The Global Study on Homicide 2019, p.viii



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