



**DATA 4  
MATTERS**

09/2022

# Monitoring SDG 16 A gender perspective

Intentional homicide  
Perception of safety  
Human trafficking  
Unsentenced detention  
Firearms trafficking  
Corruption



## Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the Data Development and Dissemination Section of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

### **General coordination and content overview:**

Angela Me (Chief, Research and Trend Analysis Branch)

Enrico Bisogno

Sonya Yee

### **Analysis and drafting:**

Maurice Dunaiski

Camelia Abdelgelil

### **Data and estimates production:**

Hernan Epstein

Natalia Ivanova

David Rausis

Fabrizio Sarrica

Giulia Serio

Fatma Usheva

### **Cover, design and production:**

Julia Janicki

Suzanne Kunnen

Kristina Kuttnig

### **Comments:**

For helpful comments we thank our colleagues Philipp Meissner and Jee Aei Lee (UNODC Justice Section).

### **Disclaimers:**

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

**Contact:** UNODC, DDDS: [unodc-ddds@un.org](mailto:unodc-ddds@un.org)

**Cover picture:** Haidy Darwish

Copyright © 2022, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

# MONITORING SDG 16: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE



More than five years into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the progress made by Member States shows mixed results for different targets under Goal 16, pertaining to violence, trafficking, criminal justice, and corruption. While there is some global progress in reducing criminal violence, the current pace is not sufficient to achieve the target by 2030, and while some regions are progressing, others are experiencing setbacks. There is no detectable global progress in improving perceptions of safety among the population and improving access to justice, with the share of prisoners that are held without a trial remaining constant at around 30% of the global prison population over the last two decades.

Women and men are differently affected by Member States' progress towards Goal 16. Certain types of violence, trafficking, and access to justice issues affect women more than men, which risks leaving women behind when it comes to overall achievements under Goal 16. While men are significantly more likely to become victims of lethal violence, go through the criminal justice process, or engage in corruption, women are disproportionately affected by killings in the home, perpetrated by intimate partners and family members. Women are also more likely than men to feel unsafe in their community and they make up the majority of victims of trafficking in persons detected globally. While there are fewer women than men held in prison globally, the percentage of women who are held without a sentence is higher than for men, and once women are investigated for trafficking in persons, they are more likely than men to be prosecuted and convicted. Monitoring gender-specific progress on several Goal 16 targets such as those related to bribery or firearms trafficking remains a challenge due to limited sex-disaggregated and comparable data.

Target 16.1

# TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE VIOLENCE

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

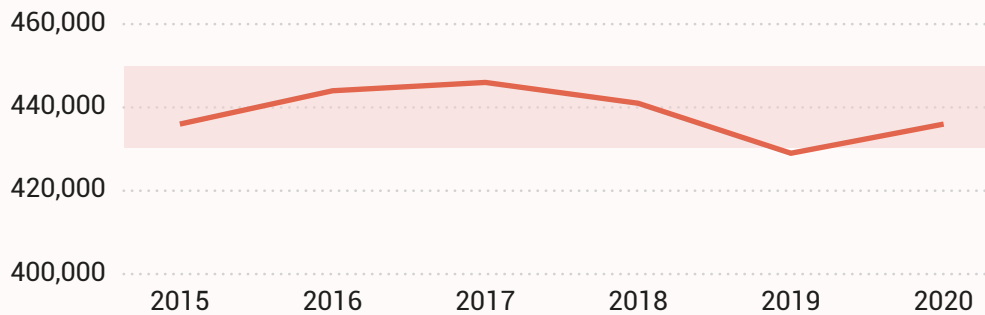
### Key findings

- Every year since 2015, there were 430 to 450 thousand homicide victims globally.
- With the world's population growing, this means that the global homicide rate declined from 5.9 homicides to 5.6 homicides per 100,000 population between 2015 and 2020.
- Homicide has important gender dimensions: in 2020, 8 out of 10 of all homicide victims were men.
- Women are disproportionately affected by violence in the home: 58% of all female victims, but only 10% of all male victims were killed by intimate partners or family members

## Intentional Homicide

### Total homicide victims

2015 - 2020



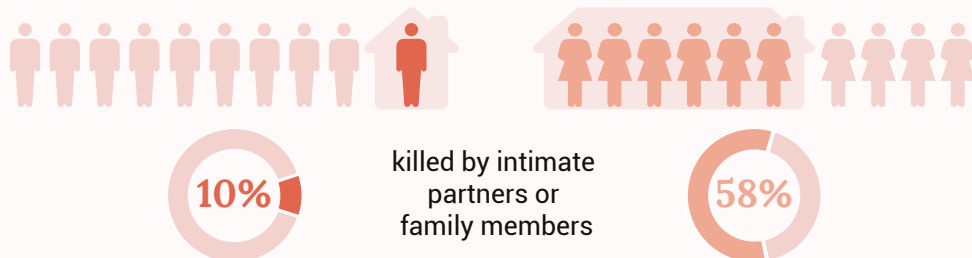
### Male and female share of homicide victims

2020



### Share of male and female homicide victims killed by intimate partners/family members

2020



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

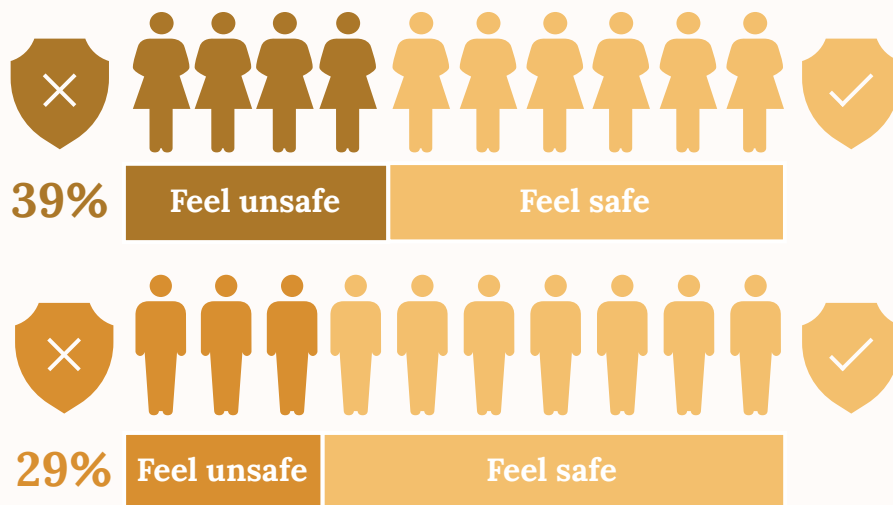
**Key findings**

- Perceptions of safety have remained stable at the global level over the last 6 years.
- Women feel significantly less safe compared to men when walking alone around the area they live.
- The gender gap in perception of safety is found in all regions, but is more pronounced in Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia, as well as Western Asia and Northern Africa.

## Perception of Safety

Proportion of population who feel unsafe walking alone around the area they live at night

Survey data: 106 countries, 2019-2021



Targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2

# TO ELIMINATE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

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

## Key findings

- For every 10 trafficking victims detected globally in 2020, approximately four were adult women and two were girls.
- In 2020, the majority of persons investigated (72%), prosecuted (64%) and convicted (59%) for trafficking were male.
- Women who are investigated for trafficking are more likely to be prosecuted and convicted compared to men.

## Human trafficking

### Gender and age status of detected trafficking victims

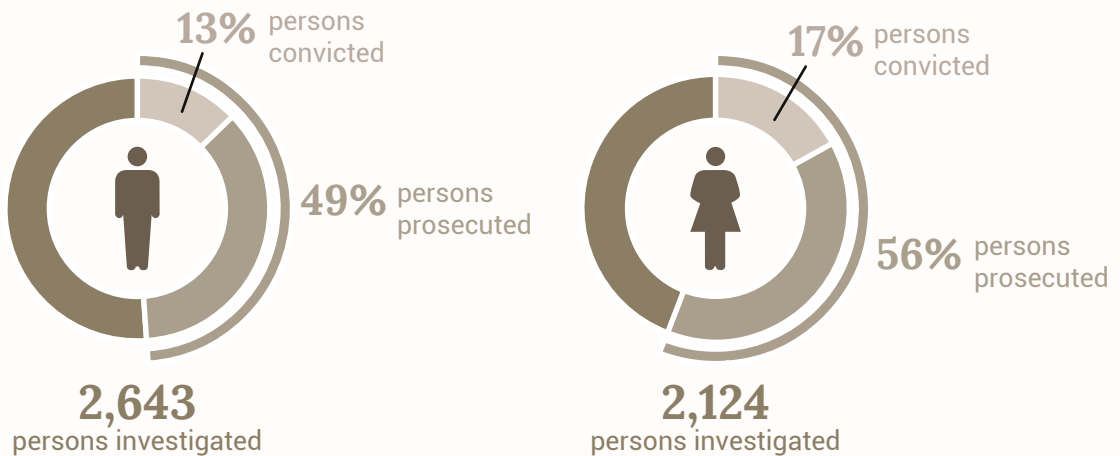
2020

for every **10** detected victims



### When investigated for trafficking in persons, women are more likely than men to be prosecuted and convicted

26 countries, 2017-2020



Target 16.3

# TO PROMOTE THE RULE OF LAW AND ENSURE EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL

**Indicator 16.3.2:** Unsented detainees as a proportion of the overall prison population

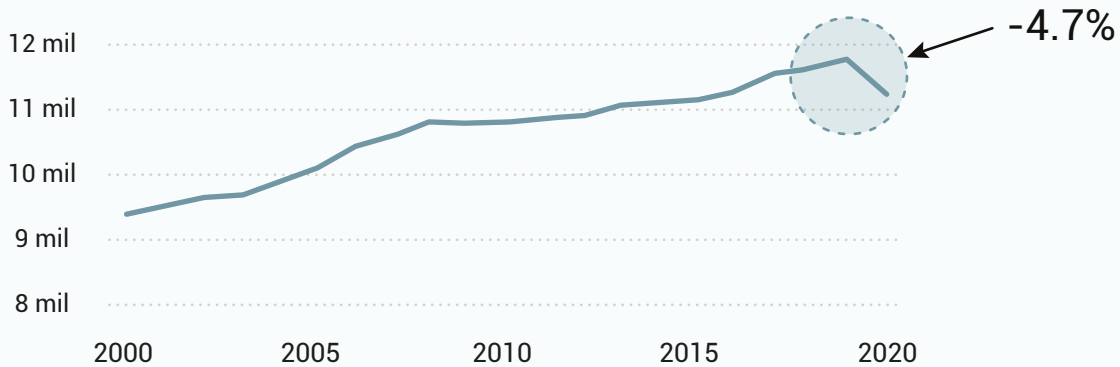
## Key findings

- After a continued increase over the last 20 years, the global number of persons held in prison decreased for the first time in 2020 (-4.7%), in part due to Covid-19 emergency releases and reduced admissions of new detainees.
- In relative terms, the 2020 reduction benefitted women (-10.3%) more than men (-4.2%) even if in absolute terms, the reduction was larger for men (-466,000) compared to women (-81,000).
- The unsented share of the global prison population has remained stable at 30% over the past two decades and was unaffected by the 2020 drop in prisoner numbers.
- The share of unsented detainees is higher among female prisoners (36%) compared to male prisoners (30%).

## Unsented detention

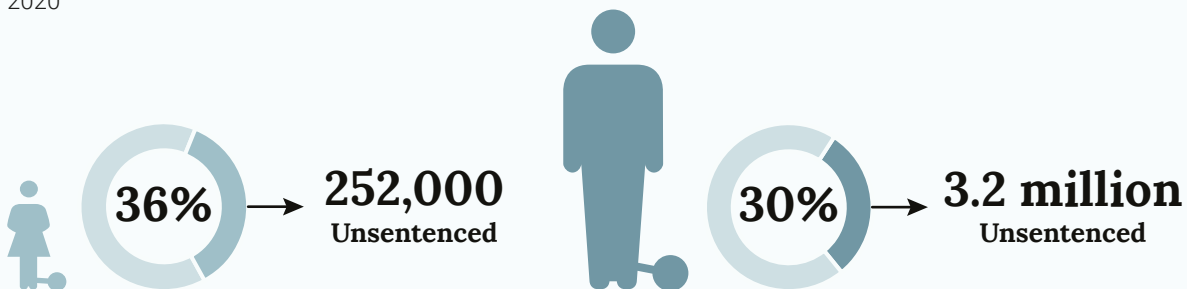
### Trend in the global prison population

2000-2020



### Percent and number of unsented detainees, by sex

2020





Target 16.4

# TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE ARMS FLOWS

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

## Key findings

- Based on data from 20 countries for the years 2016-2020, only 28% of seized weapons were successfully traced to the point of diversion into the illicit market.
- Data from 16 countries show that women account for a small share (5%) of all persons brought into formal contact with the criminal justice system for firearms trafficking.

## Firearms trafficking

Persons brought into formal contact with the criminal justice system for arms trafficking

16 countries, 2016-2020



Tracing success

20 countries, 2016-2020



Successful tracing means that the point at which the firearm went from legitimate to illegal market could be established.



Target 16.5

# TO SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE CORRUPTION

**Indicator 16.5.1:** The proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months

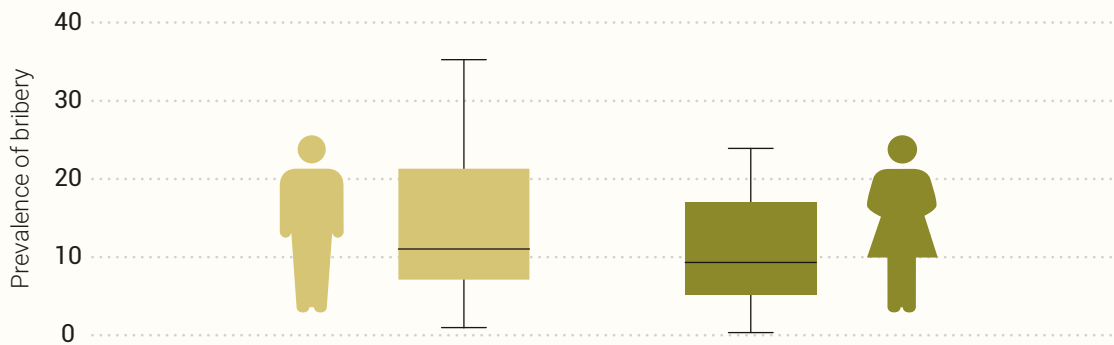
## Key findings

- Survey data from 18 countries show that men are more likely than women to engage in corrupt practices when interacting with public officials.
- Survey data from 10 countries show that the gender gap in bribery is driven by interactions in a few – typically male-dominated – sectors such as the police, customs or the land registry.

## Bribery

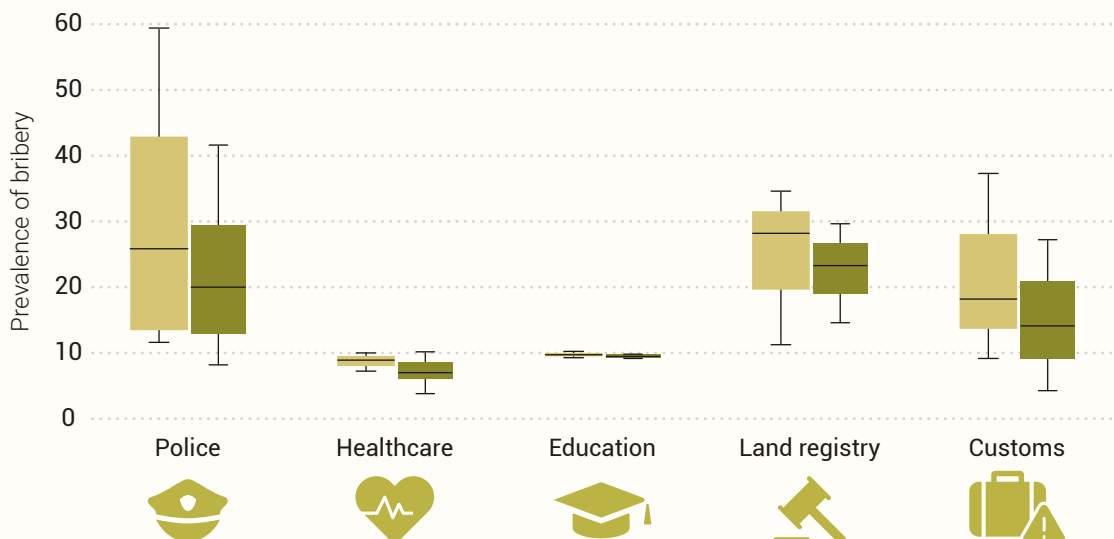
### Men are more likely than women to engage in bribery

Survey data: 18 countries



### The gender gap in bribery differs by sector

Survey data: 10 countries





## Introduction

# MONITORING SDG 16: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

## Why monitor Sustainable Development Goal 16?

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by all United Nations (UN) Member States in 2015, provides a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet.<sup>1</sup> At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all Member States and the international community at large. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is responsible for tracking global progress on several SDG indicators that fall under Goal 16, which commits Member States to work towards building peaceful societies based on good governance and access to justice for all.<sup>2</sup> Every year, UNODC contributes to the *UN Sustainable Development Goals Report*, which provides a global overview of progress on the implementation of the SDGs.<sup>3</sup> This research brief expands on the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022*, by presenting new, sex-disaggregated data and trends pertaining to several SDG 16 indicators. The SDG indicators covered in this research brief pertain to intentional homicide, perceptions of safety, trafficking in persons, unsentenced detention, firearms trafficking and bribery. While several other SDG indicators also fall under the responsibility of UNODC - such as those related to wildlife trafficking or illicit financial flows - this research brief focuses only on those indicators where new, sex-disaggregated data can be presented.

## Why provide a gender perspective?

As part of the UN system, UNODC ensures that a gender perspective is actively and visibly mainstreamed in all its work, including in its research outputs.<sup>4</sup> While gender sensitive research typically aims to uncover the social norms and root causes that perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination, a first crucial step in gender sensitive research is to collect and present sex-disaggregated data.<sup>5</sup> The lack of sex-disaggregated data is one of the major barriers to the accurate assessment of Member States' progress in promoting gender equality. Furthermore, sex-disaggregated data can bring to the surface gender concerns that may have previously been invisible.<sup>6</sup> In this spirit, this research brief focuses on presenting new, sex-disaggregated data and trends on several SDG 16 indicators in order to shed light on the gender dimensions of global progress in promoting peace, justice and strong institutions. A first gender-sensitive assessment is possible by using people-centred indicators under SDG 16 - such as the homicide rate or the share of unsentenced detainees - as they can be used to track the degree to which women and men have benefited differently from any progress achieved by Member States.<sup>7</sup> In the case of indicators that focus on institutions or events rather than people - such the one on illicit arms flows - a gender perspective can also be used to highlight the different involvement of and impact on men and women.<sup>8</sup>

1 <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

2 SDG 16 calls on Member States to "to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

3 An alternative global assessment of progress on the SDGs is provided by Sachs et al. (2021). *The Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals: Sustainable Development Report 2021*. Cambridge University Press.

4 UNODC. 2013. *Gender mainstreaming in the work of UNODC*. Vienna, 2013.

5 Sex refers to male and female biological differences, while gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female, among other groups.

6 UNODC. 2013. *Gender mainstreaming in the work of UNODC*. Vienna, 2013.

7 Anne Marie Goetz & Rob Jenkins (2016) *Gender, security, and governance: the case of Sustainable Development Goal 16*, *Gender & Development*, 24:1, 127-137.

8 See e.g. UN Women and UN DESA (2021) *Progress on the sustainable development goals: the gender snapshot 2021*.

Target 16.1

# TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE VIOLENCE

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

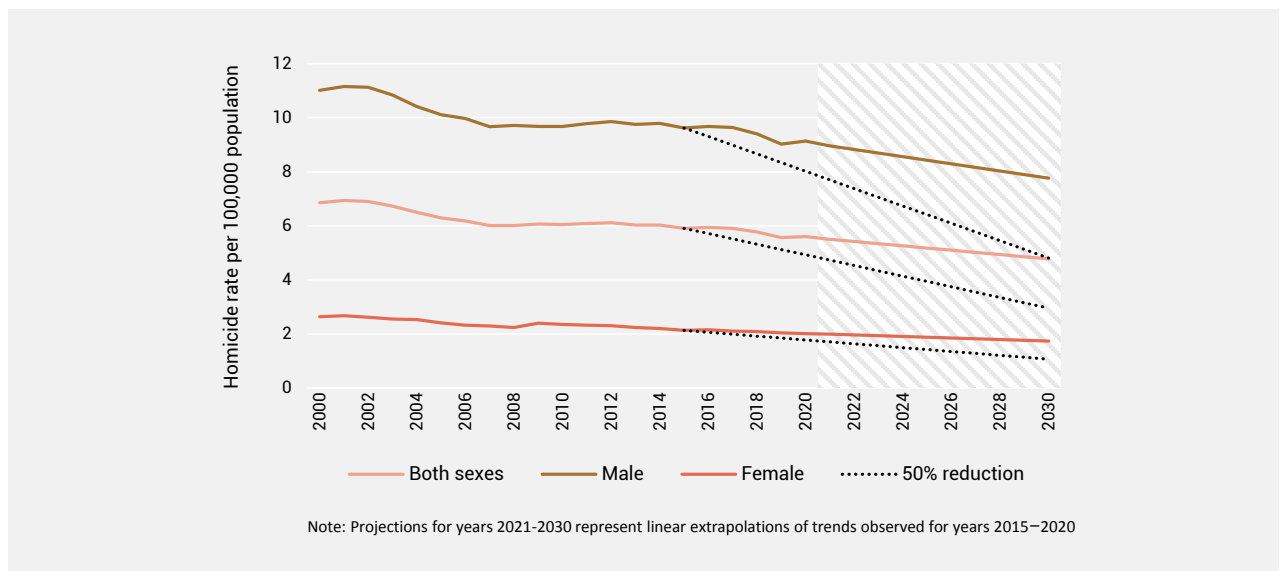
Target 16.1 calls on Member States to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. Reducing the number of intentional homicides – that is, unlawful deaths inflicted upon persons with the intent to cause death or serious injury – is crucial to meet this target. This is because homicidal violence is responsible for many more deaths worldwide than armed conflict and terrorism combined.<sup>9</sup> Intentional homicide can be considered the ultimate crime, which not only blights the lives of the victim’s family and community, but also creates a violent environment that negatively impacts on society, the economy and government institutions.<sup>10</sup>

In 2020, there were approximately 437 thousand homicide victims globally. This means that every hour, on average, 50 individuals were killed intentionally. Between 2015 and 2020, the absolute number of homicide victims remained relatively constant: it is estimated that every year between 430 and 450 thousand persons were killed intentionally. This is equivalent to more than 2.5 million being killed during the period from 2015 to 2020, or the entire popula-

tion of a large city such as Accra, Bandung, Fortaleza, Kyiv or Greater Vancouver. Intentional homicides are perpetrated in very different contexts and for diverse reasons. From a gender perspective, sex-disaggregated homicide data can highlight the gender dimensions of this ultimate form of criminal violence.

The overwhelming majority of homicides worldwide are committed against men and boys (82%), while women and girls account for a much smaller share of all homicide victims (18%). When considering the number of intentional homicides in relation to the population, the global homicide rate declined by 5.2% between 2015 and 2020 (from 5.9 homicides to 5.6 homicides per 100,000 population) largely due to rather constant number of homicides and a growing global population.<sup>11</sup> The decline in the homicide rate was slightly more pronounced for women (-5.7%) compared to men (-5.1%). Projecting trends in the homicide rate for 2015–2020 to future years up to 2030, suggests that if the current patterns of violence persist, the global rate of homicides per 100,000 pop-

**Figure 1:** Trends and projections of the global homicide rate (per 100,000 population) by sex, 2000-2030



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

9 UNODC. Global Study on Homicide 2019. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/global-study-on-homicide.html>  
10 Ibid.

11 Between 2015 and 2020 the global population increased from 7.4 to 7.8 billion, representing an increase of 5.6%. See <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

ulation could stand at around 4.8 in 2030, resulting in an overall decrease limited to 19% (Figure 1). This projected decrease in homicidal violence would fall short of the target to “significantly” reduce violence - translated as a decrease in the homicide rate of at least 50% by 2030 (dotted line in Figure 1). Projections of sex-specific trends indicate that both sexes could have very similar decreases in homicide rates and that they could fall short of the target of a 50% reduction by 2030 if homicide rates continue to decrease at the same pace recorded during 2015–2020.

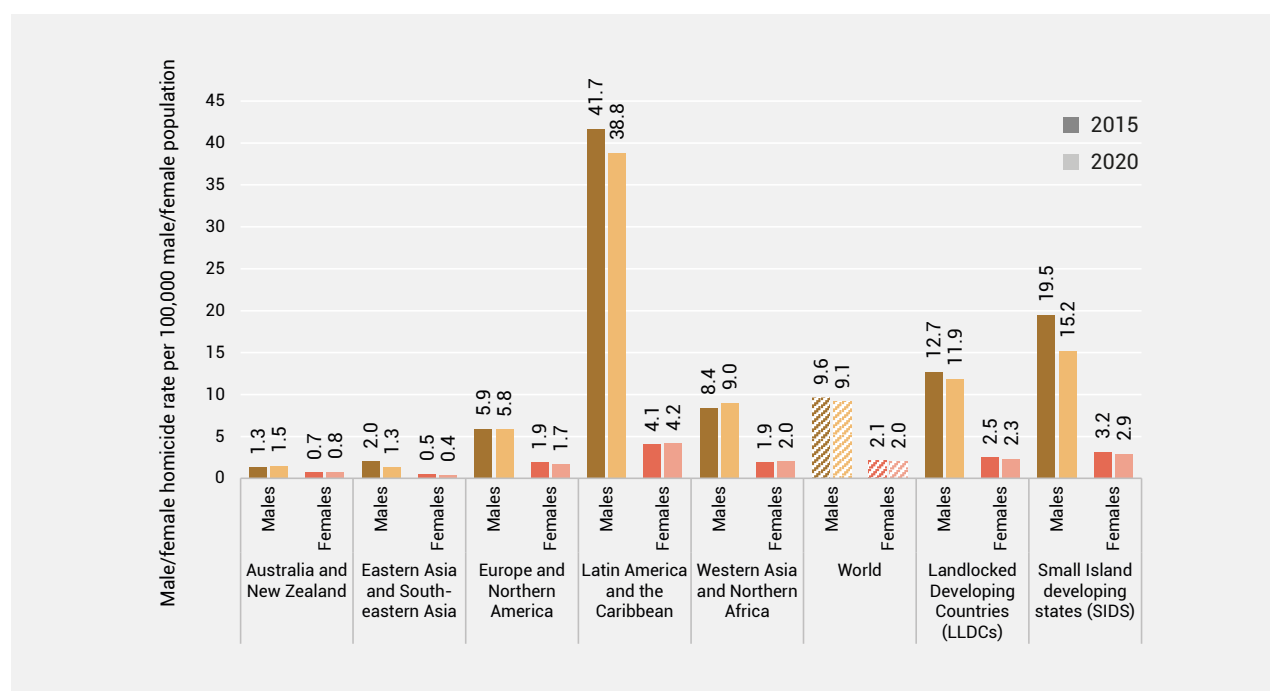
Differences between men and women are particularly evident at the regional level (Figure 2). In Latin America and the Caribbean – the region with the highest male and female homicide rates - the male homicide rate declined between 2015 and 2020 by around 7% to 38.8 victims per 100,000 male population, while the female homicide rate *increased* over the same period by 3% to 4.2 victims per 100,000 female population. Nonetheless, the ratio between male and female homicides remains exceptionally high in Latin America and the Caribbean: there were approximately 10 male homicide victims for every female homicide victim in 2020. In contrast, in Europe and Northern America – a region with relatively low homicide rates overall – the female homicide rate recorded a more pronounced decline (-11%) than the male homicide rate (-2%). In this region, the gender gap in homicide victimisation is

also significantly smaller compared to Latin America and the Caribbean: there were approximately 3 male homicide victims for every female homicide victim in 2020.

In general, the available data suggest that trends in male and female homicide rates tend to move in the same direction, with the noticeable exception of Latin America and the Caribbean (Figure 2). While most regions recorded declining or stagnating homicide rates overall (i.e. for both sexes) since 2015, the two regions of Western Asia and Northern Africa, and Australia and New Zealand represent outliers in this regard, with increases of 7% and 15% respectively, albeit at very different levels: in 2020, Western Asia and Northern Africa recorded an overall homicide rate (i.e. for both sexes) of 5.6 victims per 100,000 population, while Australia and New Zealand recorded a relatively low level of homicidal violence at 1.1 homicides per 100,000 population.

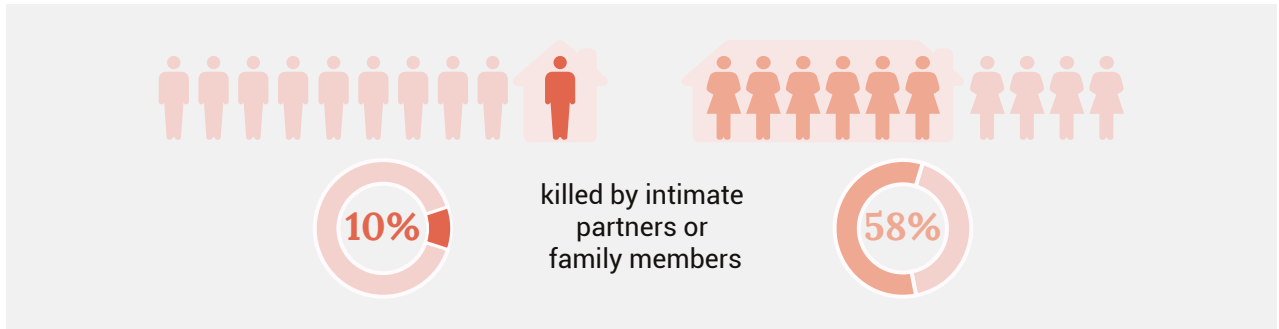
Differences between men and women reveal themselves not only along geographical lines, but also when looking at the context in which male and female homicides are committed. Figure 3 shows that, as of 2020, women and girls are disproportionately affected by homicidal violence in the home (perpetrated by intimate partners or other family members), while men and boys are disproportionately affected by homicidal violence *outside* the home.

**Figure 2:** Regional homicide rates (per 100,000 population) by sex, 2015 and 2020



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset. Note: Due to limited data availability, estimates by sex are not provided for the regions of Central Asia and Southern Asia, Oceania, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

**Figure 3:** Share of male and female homicide victims killed by intimate partners/family members

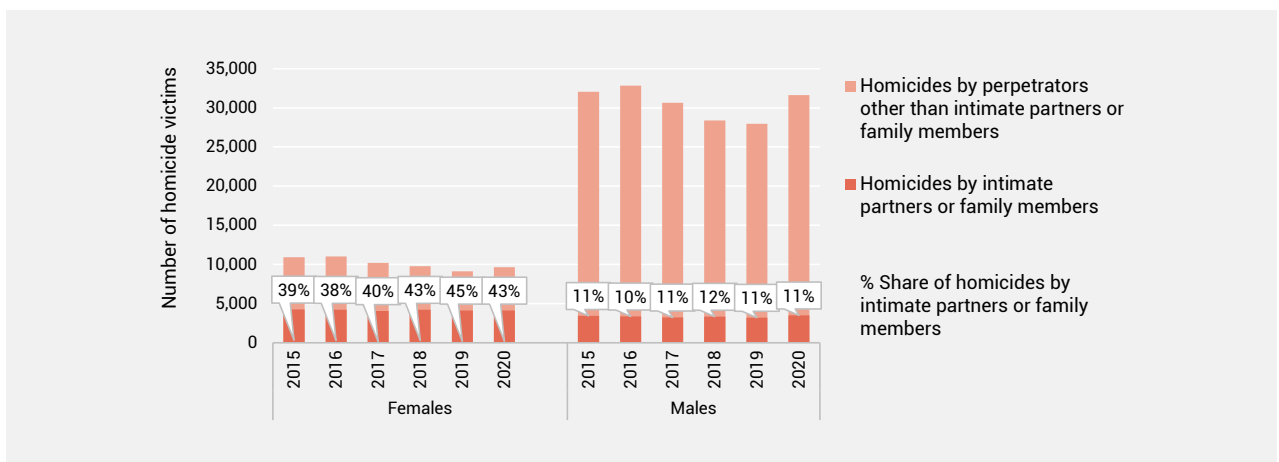


Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset.

That women are disproportionately affected by homicidal violence in the home is a pattern observed in all world regions.<sup>12</sup> Europe and Northern America are no exception in this regard, with 11% of all male homicides and 43% of all female homicides perpetrated by intimate partners or family members. Europe and Northern America currently represent the only region where data availability allows for the estimation of over-time trends in female and male homicides perpetrated by intimate partners or family members. Between 2015 and 2020, the yearly number of female homicides perpetrated by intimate partners or family members decreased only slightly by around -3% in Europe and Northern America (**Figure 4**). In contrast,

there was a much more significant change over the same period in the yearly number of female homicides committed by perpetrators *outside* of the domestic sphere (-17%) (**Figure 4**). For men, there was significant volatility in the number of homicides committed outside the home, while the number of men killed by partners or other family members remained relatively stable (**Figure 4**). These trends from Europe and Northern America suggest that contextual developments or policy interventions that can have an impact on lethal violence in the public sphere may not influence to the same extent levels of killings within the family.

**Figure 4:** Number of homicide victims by sex and type of perpetrator, Europe and Northern America, 2015-2020



Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset. Limited data availability does not allow for sex-disaggregated trend estimates in other SDG regions.

<sup>12</sup> See UNODC. 2021. Data Matters 3. Killings of women and girls by their intimate partner or other family members - Global estimates 2020; and UNODC. 2019 Global Study on Homicide, Booklet 5: Gender-related killing of women and girls.

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

While a reduction of violence and related deaths is at the heart of Target 16.1, evidence on violence and death rates can only provide part of the picture of how people experience insecurity in their everyday lives. By providing a perception-based measure of insecurity, Indicator 16.1.4 gives a more holistic picture of people's experiences of safety, crime, and violence. This is important because people's perceptions of safety may be shaped by various factors, some independent from their actual experiences of violence.<sup>13</sup> While personal experience of crime is undoubtedly influencing perceptions, other factors such as media coverage and public discourse on crime also affect perceptions of safety.<sup>14</sup> Importantly, feeling unsafe in public can negatively influence well-being and lead, for example, to fewer contacts with others, reduce trust and engagement in the community, and therefore represent an important obstacle to development.

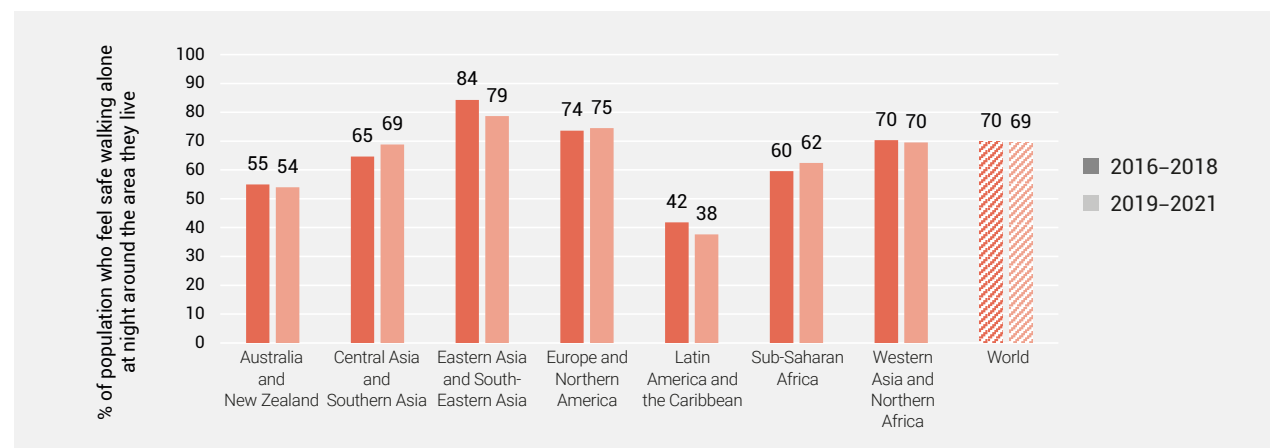
Based on available survey data from 114 countries across all world regions, on average, approximately 69% of the population report feeling safe or very safe walking alone around the area they live after dark.<sup>15</sup> This global average

has remained stable over time in the period 2016–2021 for which data are available (**Figure 5**). Stark differences in perceptions of safety are observable across regions. On average, Australia and New Zealand,<sup>16</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are the regions where respondents feel least safe. In Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia, Europe and Northern America, and Western Asia and Northern Africa respondents feel comparatively safer.

Perceptions of safety differ markedly between women and men. At the global level, based on available sex-disaggregated data from 106 countries for the period 2019–2021,<sup>17</sup> the proportion of women who report feeling safe walking alone around the area they live was on average 10 percentage points lower (at 61%) compared to men (71%) (**Figure 6**). This pattern is observable across all world regions, but it is particularly pronounced in Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia, as well as Western Asia and Northern Africa (**Figure 6**).

To help understand what determines people's perceptions of safety, it is useful to investigate whether actual

**Figure 5:** Proportion of the population that feel safe walking alone at night around the area they live, by region, 2016–21 (114 countries)



Source: National data collected via the United Nations Crime Trends Survey and the Gallup World Poll. Note: Regional aggregates refer to 3-year averages weighted by countries' population size. Most surveys include the qualifications "after dark" or "at night" in the question wording. Data coverage: Australia and New Zealand (2), Central Asia and Southern Asia (12), Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia (13), Europe and Northern America (25), Latin America and the Caribbean (13), Sub-Saharan Africa (33), Western Asia and Northern Africa (16). No data are available for Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

13 Gray E, Jackson J, Farrall S. Reassessing the Fear of Crime. *European Journal of Criminology*. 2008;5(3):363–380

14 For a review of the literature on fear of crime, see Rader. 2017. *Fear of Crime*. Oxford Research Encyclopaedia, Criminology and Criminal Justice. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.10>

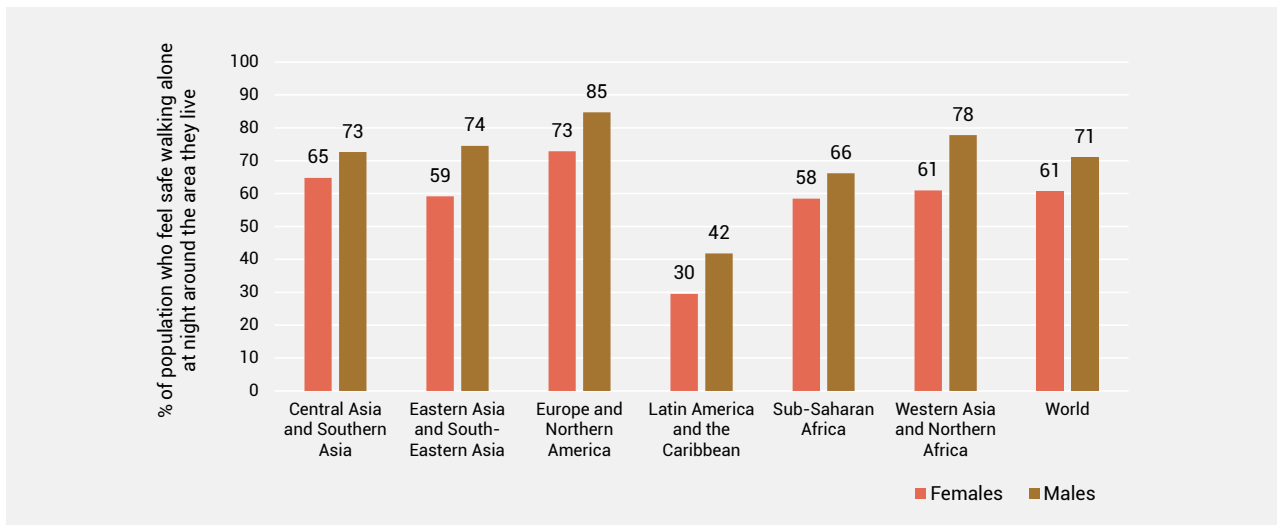
15 Most surveys include the qualifications "after dark" or "at night" in the question wording.

16 Data for Australia are from the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing, and for New Zealand from the Gallup World Poll. The question wordings are standard and comparable across countries. This suggests that the relatively low reported perception of safety in the two countries is unlikely due to measurement error.

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



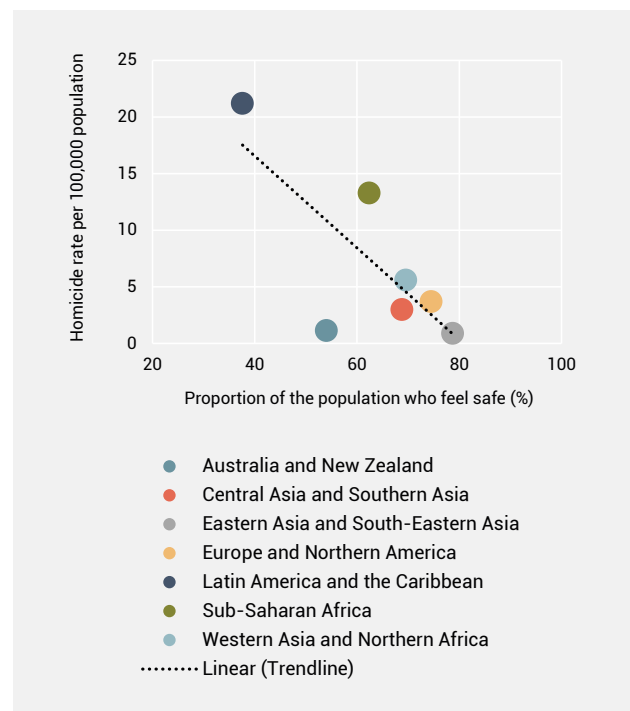
**Figure 6:** Proportion of the population that feel safe walking alone at night around the area they live, by sex, 2019–2021 average (106 countries)



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

occurrences of criminal violence influence people's perceptions of safety, for example, by considering possible associations between homicide rates and average perceptions of safety in the population.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, when looking at homicide rates and safety perceptions at the regional (and country) level, the data reveal an association between homicide rates and perception of safety: in regions (and countries) with higher homicide rates, both men and women tend to feel less safe (Figure 7). Women feel less safe than men across all world regions, even if they are less likely to become victims of homicide compared to men. This indicates that women consistently feel more vulnerable than men, irrespectively of the level of homicidal violence in their surroundings.<sup>19</sup> While these data do not offer explanations as to why there is this difference, they indicate that levels of non-lethal violence as well as socio-cultural factors may also play a role in shaping women's perception of safety.

**Figure 7:** Regional homicide rates (2020) and perceptions of safety (2019–2021)



Source: National data from 116 countries collected via the United Nations Crime Trends Survey and the Gallup World Poll. Note: Regional homicide rates refer to the year 2020. Perception of safety aggregates refer to 3-year averages for the years 2019–2021 weighted by countries' population size. No perception of safety data are available for Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

18 Because of its lethal outcome, homicides tends to have greater definitional specificity than other types of crime. Furthermore, homicides can be considered a reasonable proxy for violent crime as well as a robust indicator of overall levels of violence within countries.

19 It is also important to note that the regional averages hide significant differences between countries within each region and that the association shown in Figure 6 may not necessarily hold true at smaller levels of geographical aggregation.

Targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2

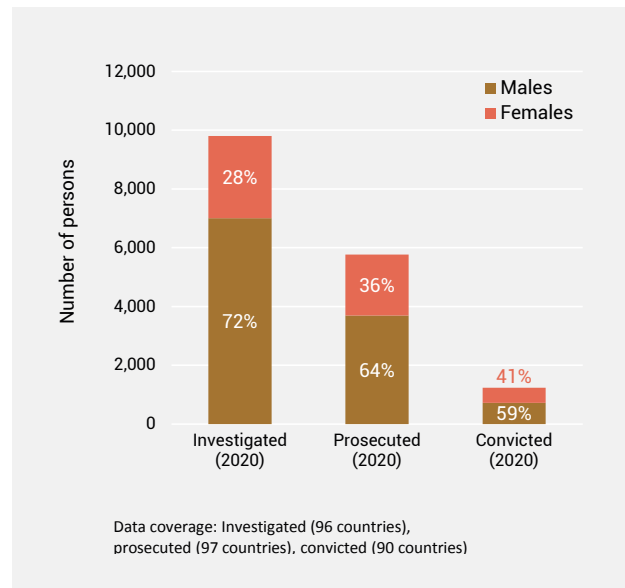
# TO ELIMINATE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

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

Target 16.2 calls on Member States to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. In addition, SDG Targets 5.2 and 8.7 also commit Member States to eliminate trafficking in persons.<sup>20</sup> Although trafficking in persons is found in every country and every world region, it largely remains a hidden crime, with many perpetrators operating in the dark corners of the internet and the global economy entrapping victims for sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and other forms of exploitation.<sup>21</sup> Women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by trafficking in persons, even if men and boys have been increasingly detected in recent years. Based on 2020 data to be presented in the forthcoming *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022*, for every 10 trafficking victims detected worldwide, about four are adult women and two are girls. Adult men account for approximately 2 out of every 10 detected trafficking victims, while around 2 in every 10 detected victims are boys.<sup>22</sup>

While the detected victims of trafficking are predominantly female, the perpetrators apprehended tend to be men. 9,803 investigations in 96 countries in all regions indicate that, as of 2020, around 70% of all persons investigated for human trafficking by law enforcement authorities were men. However, when looking at the subsequent stages in the criminal justice process, the share of men prosecuted and convicted for trafficking in persons and related offences becomes smaller. Of 5,765 prosecutions in 97 countries, as of 2020, approximately 64% of all persons prosecuted for trafficking were men. In the same year, 59% of all the offenders convicted were men (**Figure 8**). The difference in the share of women investigated and convicted at the distinctive stages of the criminal justice procedure may indicate different dynamics. One relates to the nature of the data, as different sets of countries

**Figure 8:** Persons investigated, prosecuted and convicted for trafficking in persons, by sex (2020 or most recent)



Source: UNODC estimates based on national data.

have been considered at each stage of the criminal justice process and data on investigations, prosecutions and convictions in single years are likely to reflect different cases. Others may indicate practices in national criminal justice systems that treat male and female perpetrators of human trafficking differently. Sex-disaggregated data on trafficking perpetrators from 26 countries for the period 2017 to 2020 show that the rate of persons prosecuted and convicted compared to persons investigated is higher for women than men (**Figure 9**). This suggests that women may be more likely to be prosecuted and convicted once they are investigated compared to men. Various factors may explain this discrepancy, including more targeted investigations for women and limited access to justice for female suspects of human trafficking, among others that have yet to be uncovered.<sup>23</sup>

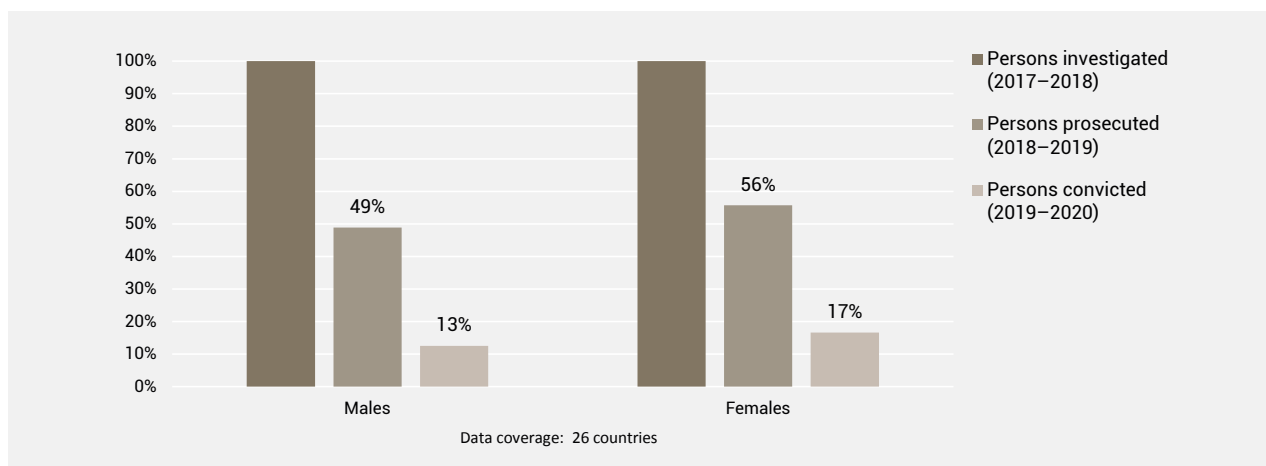
<sup>20</sup> Target 5.2: "Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation"; Target 8.7: "Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its form."

<sup>21</sup> UNODC. 2020. The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/glotip.html>

<sup>22</sup> Preliminary estimates from the forthcoming UNODC 2022 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed analysis, see UNODC. Forthcoming. Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022.

**Figure 9:** Ratio of persons prosecuted and convicted on persons investigated in 26 countries, by sex, between 2017 and 2020



Source: Based on national data from 26 countries reporting on 2,643 men and 2,124 women investigated in 2017 and 2018; 1,295 men and 1,184 women prosecuted in 2018 and 2019; 330 men and 352 women convicted in 2019 and 2020.

Target 16.3

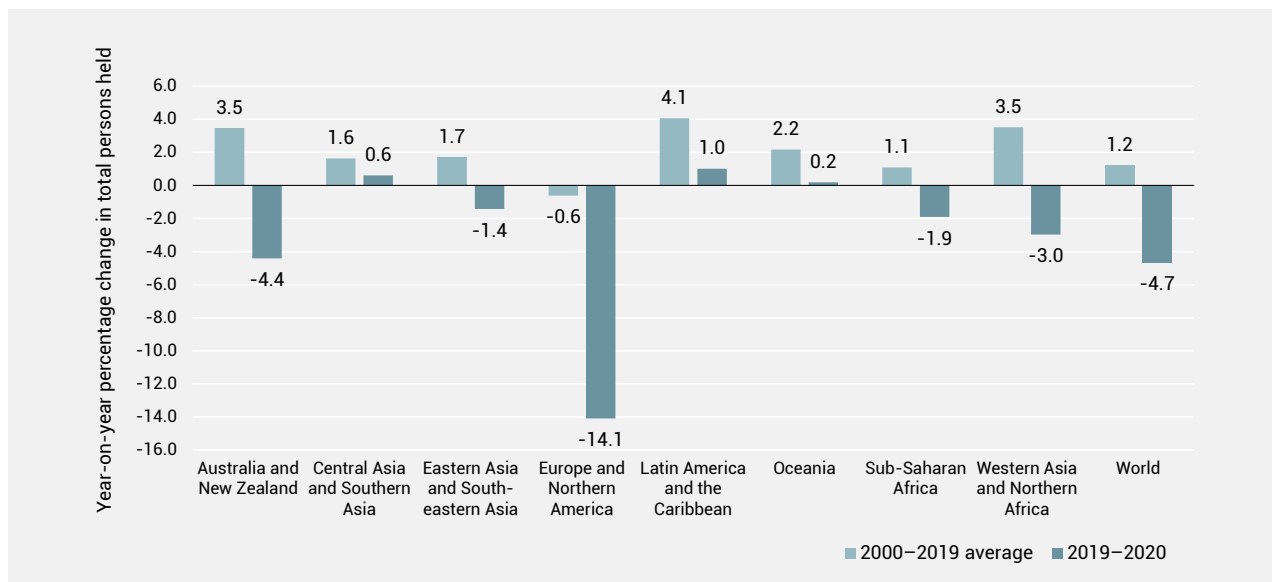
# TO PROMOTE THE RULE OF LAW AND ENSURE EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL

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

Target 16.3 calls on Member States to promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all. While there is no single definition of access to justice, it is broadly concerned with the ability of people to defend and enforce their rights and obtain just resolution of their legal problems.<sup>24</sup> There is no single indicator that can precisely measure the complex and multifaceted nature of rule of law and access to justice, but the percentage of pre-trial (“unsentenced”) detainees within the prison population can serve as a proxy indicator for measuring the efficiency of the criminal justice system and can capture one of the dimensions of access to justice.<sup>25</sup> It signifies overall respect for the principle that persons awaiting trial shall not be detained in custody unnecessarily, which, in turn, is premised on aspects of the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of 2020, there were significantly fewer persons held behind bars worldwide compared to the previous year: between 2019 and the end of 2020, the global prison population declined by around 4.7%, from just under 11.8 million to 11.2 million (Figure 10).<sup>27</sup> This represents a historical event, as the global prison population had grown steadily in the last two decades, from 9.4 million in 2000 to 11.8 million in 2019, with an annual increase of 1.2% on average (roughly in line with global population growth).<sup>28</sup> In relative terms, the global reduction in the prison population in 2020 was more pronounced for women (-10.3%) than for men (-4.2%). However, in absolute terms, the global reduction in male prisoners (-466,000) was larger than the reduction in female prisoners (-81,000). The global picture hides substantial differences between regions. While Europe and Northern America (-14.1%), Australia and New Zealand (-4.4%), and Western Asia and Northern Africa (-3.0%), Australia and New Zealand (-4.4%), Latin America and the Caribbean (-4.1%), Oceania (-2.2%), Sub-Saharan Africa (-1.9%), and World (-4.7%) saw a decrease, Central Asia and Southern Asia (1.6%), Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia (1.7%), Europe and Northern America (4.1%), Latin America and the Caribbean (1.0%), and Oceania (0.2%) saw an increase.

Figure 10: Year-on-year change (%) in total persons held in detention, by region



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

24 See Praia Handbook on Governance Statistics. 2020. p.100.

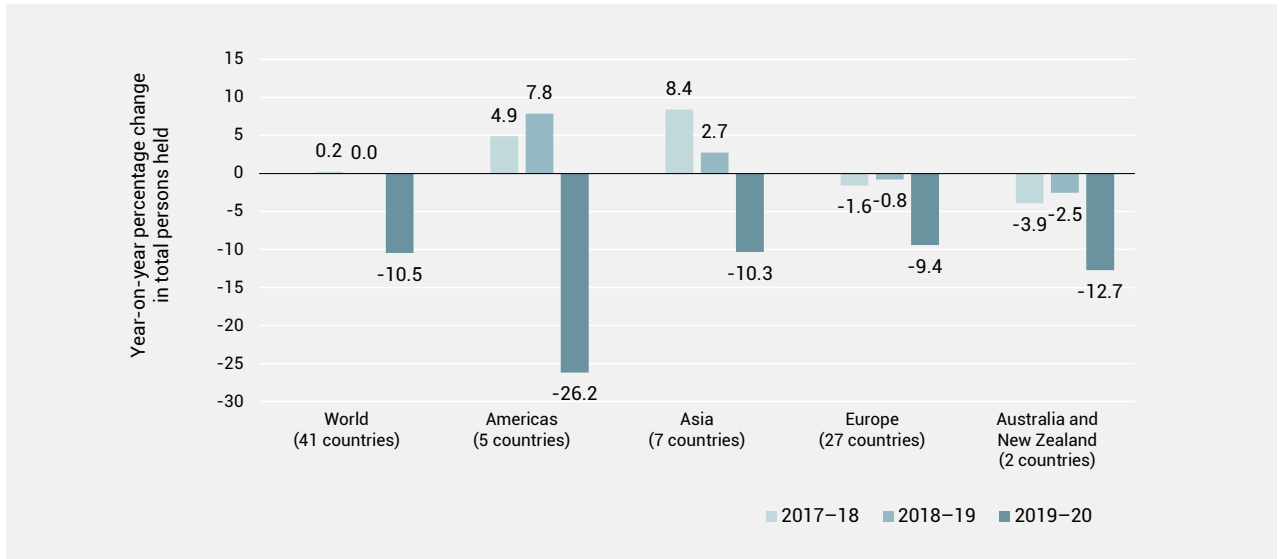
25 United Nations System Common Position on Incarceration, p.3.

26 See United Nations Standards Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules), rule 6.1.

27 Due to an improvement in the coverage of national data, the 2019 estimate of 11.77 million is slightly higher than the 2019 estimate of 11.75 million published by UNODC in July 2021: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/DataMatters1\\_prison.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/DataMatters1_prison.pdf)

28 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW>

**Figure 11:** Year-on-year change (%) in total persons convicted, by region



Source: Based on national data from 41 countries that reported on the total number of persons convicted every year between 2017 and 2020 via the United Nations Crime Trends Survey. Countries included are Chile, Grenada, Mexico, El Salvador, United States of America, Azerbaijan, China Hong Kong SAR, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Czechia, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Australia, and New Zealand.

Zealand (-4.4%), Western Asia and Northern Africa (-3%) recorded a significant decline between 2019 and the end of 2020 in the number of persons held in detention, other regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean (+1%), Central Asia and Southern Asia (+0.6), and Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand (+0.2) recorded fluctuations that were not very different from the year-on-year changes observed in previous years (Figure 10).

The global reduction in the number of prisoners between 2019 and the end of 2020 can be attributed to various reasons, including the emergency release of prisoners, which were implemented by many countries in the months following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic,<sup>29</sup> reduced admissions of new detainees due to court delays or as a Covid-19 measure, as well as reduced crime and law enforcement activities during the lockdown measures. Cross-national evidence on the specific drivers of the dramatic decline in the global prison population in 2020 remains limited. Available data from 41 countries (mostly in Europe) that reported on the yearly number of persons

convicted of a crime for the period 2017–2020, suggest that a general slowing down of the criminal justice process during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic may have contributed to the reduction in the number of persons held in detention between 2019 and 2020, with the important caveat that not all convictions lead to a prison sentence. While the total number of convictions in the 41 countries that reported data changed very little between 2017 and 2018 (by 0.2%), and between 2018 and 2019 (by 0.0%), convictions dropped significantly (by -10.5%) between 2019 and the end of 2020. This trend is observable across different world regions, although trend data on convictions remain limited outside of Europe (Figure 11).

Despite the dramatic reduction in the global prison population recorded during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, the share of prisoners who are held in detention without being sentenced for a crime (the share of “unsentenced detainees”) has remained relatively unchanged at the global level. Based on an analysis of the emergency release mechanisms adopted by many Member States to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, it appears that the focus was primarily on convicted persons rather than on pre-trial detainees.<sup>30</sup> This is likely because instruments that were commonly used to release prisoners were pre-existing constitutional or executive powers (e.g.

29 From March 2020 to February 2021, UNODC collected data on emergency release mechanisms adopted by Member States in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings and recommendations of this exercise can be found at [https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarules/Guidance\\_Note\\_ER.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarules/Guidance_Note_ER.pdf). The compilation of data collected from publicly available sources revealed that “at least 700,000 persons around the globe ... have been authorized or considered eligible for release through emergency release mechanisms adopted by 119 Member States”. It is important to note that not all announcements of release materialized into practice and that some release mechanisms were temporary in nature.

30 [https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarules/Guidance\\_Note\\_ER.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarules/Guidance_Note_ER.pdf)

**Figure 12:** Unsented detainees as a proportion of the prison population at the global level, by sex (SDG Indicator 16.3.2)

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

presidential or royal pardons), which typically are applied to convicted prisoners.<sup>31</sup> At the end of 2020, roughly 1 in every 3 prisoners worldwide was held in detention without having been sentenced for a crime, which is about the same level as it has been throughout the last two decades (**Figure 12**). Gender-disaggregated data suggest that the share of unsentenced detainees was slightly higher in the female prison population (36% as of 2020) compared to the male prison population (30%). In absolute terms, however, the global number of male unsentenced detainees (3.2 million) outweighs the number of female unsentenced detainees (252 thousand). The slight increase in the unsentenced share of the female prison population between 2019 and the end of 2020 (from 33% to 36%, see **Figure 12**) appears to be driven primarily by a drop in the total number of sentenced female detainees (by -14% between 2019 and the end of 2020) rather than a significant change in the number of *unsentenced* female detainees (-2%). This is likely because Covid-related emergency releases in many countries focused on sentenced detainees (rather than pre-trial detainees) and several countries included gender-specific release criteria, such as pregnancy, breastfeeding and/or being mothers of infants or young children in or outside of prison.<sup>32</sup> Overall, the figures on unsentenced detainees highlight that, despite significant reductions in the global prison numbers brought

about by the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been very limited progress in improving access to trial within a reasonably short period of time, for both male and female prisoners, despite the international legal obligation “that it shall not be the general rule that persons awaiting trial be detained in custody.”<sup>33</sup>

31 [https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarules/Guidance\\_Note\\_ER.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarules/Guidance_Note_ER.pdf)

32 The countries that explicitly included gender-specific criteria in their emergency release mechanisms included Bolivia, Brazil, the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe. See [https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarules/Guidance\\_Note\\_ER.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarules/Guidance_Note_ER.pdf)

33 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9 Section 3.

Target 16.4

# TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE ARMS FLOWS

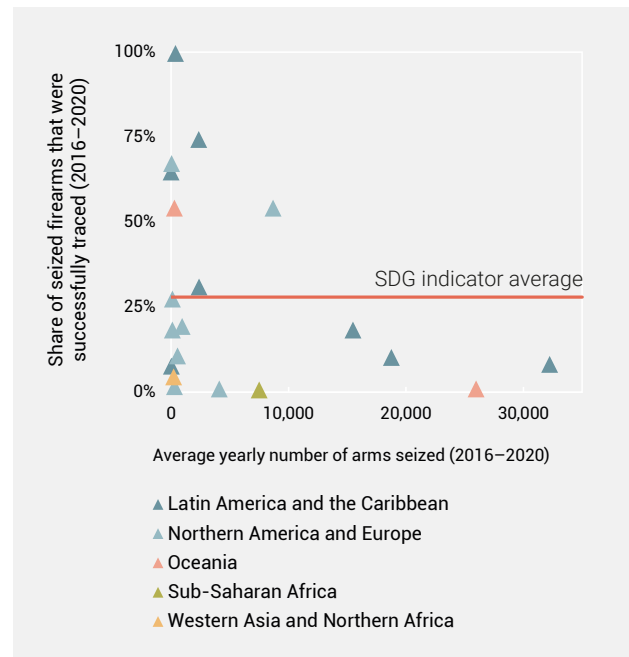
**Indicator 16.4.2:** Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments

Target 16.4 calls on Member States to significantly reduce illicit arms flows and combat all forms of organised crime. The establishment of the illicit nature of weapons seized, found and surrendered in the context of crime or armed conflict constitutes a key step towards this target. Proper investigations to identify the point of diversion of seized firearms into the illicit market (the so-called ‘tracing’ of seized weapons) is an important step to dismantle organised criminal groups and the illicit flows they manage. SDG Indicator 16.4.2 (“Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments”) monitors the efficiency of tracing efforts undertaken by countries.<sup>34</sup>

Between 2016 and 2020, on average, countries with available data<sup>35</sup> successfully traced 28% of seized weapons that were potentially traceable<sup>36</sup> (Figure 13). Successful tracing varies widely between and within regions and is associated with the overall volume of arms seized. In countries where the yearly average number of firearm seizures exceeds 10,000 – the majority of which are in Latin America and the Caribbean – the share of arms that are successfully traced falls below the global average, possibly highlighting the challenge of establishing the illicit origin of seized arms due to the sheer volume of seizures in these countries. By contrast, countries with low overall levels of arms seized exhibit greater variability in the proportion of their successful tracing. In Northern America and Europe, a relatively low<sup>37</sup> success rate of firearms tracing was reported for six out of eight countries. However, some countries like Peru (74%) and Spain (54%) were able to trace the majority of seized firearms (Figure 13).

Available data on the perpetrators of illicit firearms trafficking reveal that they are mostly men. Sex-disaggregated data from 16 countries in the Americas, Asia and Europe for the period 2016–2020 suggest that the pro-

**Figure 13:** Tracing success (SDG Indicator 16.4.2) versus number of arms seized (2016–2020)



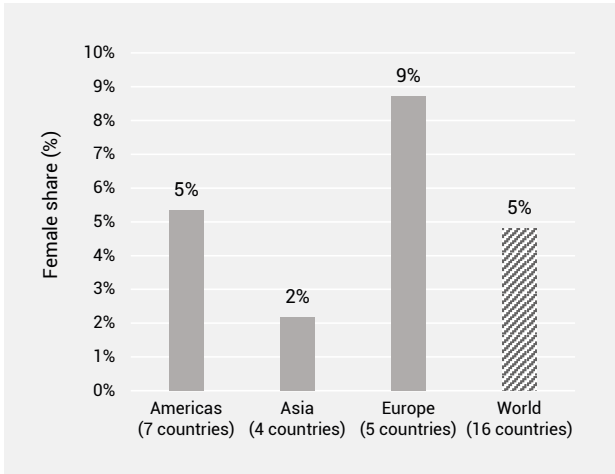
Source: Based on national data from 20 countries submitted through the United Nations Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire. Countries included are Albania, Argentina, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Australia, Brazil, Bahamas, Bulgaria, Colombia, El Salvador, France, Great Britain, Grenada, Kenya, Lithuania, Morocco, Peru, Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Spain.

portion of women out of all persons brought into formal contact, prosecuted or convicted for firearms trafficking is relatively low, at 5% on average (Figure 14). At the country level, the share of women ranged between 1% and 10%, with only a few countries recording a share of women that was higher than 10%. At the regional level, the highest average female share was found in Europe (9%), while the lowest was recorded in Asia (2%). In the Americas, the female share was on average 5%, and it is worth noting that countries in the Americas tend to record the highest (absolute) numbers of people brought into formal contact, prosecuted or convicted for firearms trafficking (on average more than 11,350 persons per country in the period 2016–2020, while this number was significantly lower in European (360) and Asian countries (4,700) with available data.

34 <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-16-04-02.pdf>  
 35 Based on simple average on data from 20 Member States between 2016 and 2020 reported through the Illicit Arms Flow Questionnaire (UN-IAFQ).  
 36 Potentially traceable firearms exclude firearms seized from their legitimate owners or without unique marking. Firearms whose marking status was not recorded are also included and considered as “unsuccessful” instances of the efforts to identify the illicit origin.  
 37 Below the average of 28%.



**Figure 14:** Female share (%) of persons brought into formal contact, prosecuted or convicted for firearms trafficking in the Americas, Asia and Europe (weighted averages, 2016–2020)



Source: Based on national data from 16 countries submitted through the United Nations Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire. Coverage: Americas (El Salvador, Peru, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Canada, Uruguay), Asia (Armenia, Uzbekistan, Türkiye, Kazakhstan), Europe (Romania, Greece, Spain, Netherlands, Sweden).

Target 16.5

# TO SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE CORRUPTION

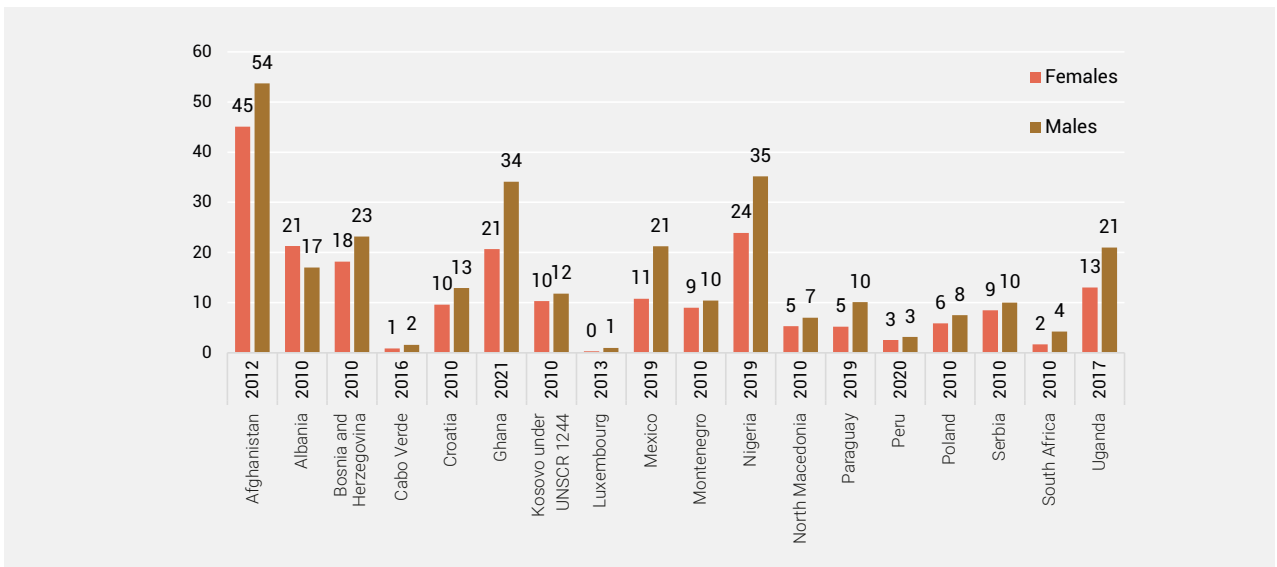
**Indicator 16.5.1:** The proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies corruption as a key impediment to sustainable development and calls on Member States to “substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms” (Target 16.5).<sup>38</sup> Survey data on bribery experiences from more than 120 countries show that people living in low-income countries are those who suffer most from bribery: the average prevalence rate of bribery in low-income countries is 37.6%, while high-income countries have a significantly lower average prevalence rate of 7.2%.<sup>39</sup>

From a gender perspective, cross-national studies have shown that, on average, men are more often the target of bribery requests than women when in contact with public

officials.<sup>40</sup> This general pattern is confirmed by available sex-disaggregated data on the prevalence of bribery from 18 countries in various world regions (**Figure 15**). While overall bribery prevalence (for both sexes) varies widely within the sample of 18 countries (from less than 1% in Luxembourg to more than 45% in Afghanistan), women are generally less likely than men (by 5 percentage points on average) to engage in bribery when in contact with a public official.<sup>41</sup> There are, however, important differences between countries in the sample. In Ghana, Mexico and Nigeria, for example, the prevalence of bribery is more than 10 percentage points lower amongst women than men, while in Albania an opposite pattern can be observed: 21% of women who had contact with a public

**Figure 15:** Prevalence of bribery by sex, in countries with available data since 2010



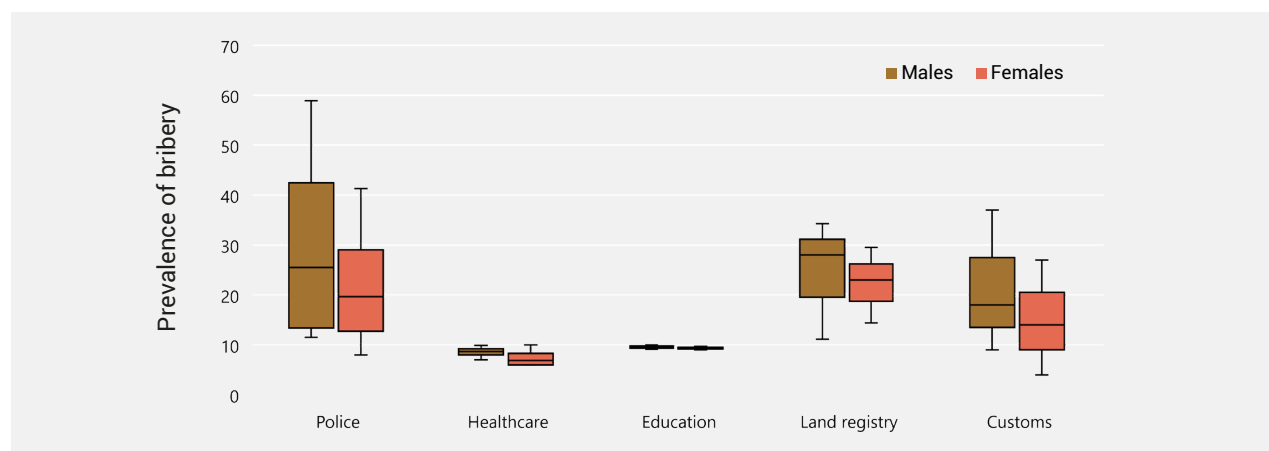
Source: Based on national sex-disaggregated survey data from 18 countries collected via the United Nations Crime Trends Survey. The prevalence of bribery is calculated as the number of adults who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official, on at least one occasion in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adults who had at least one contact with a public official.

<sup>38</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

<sup>39</sup> See UNODC. Data Matters 2: Monitoring SDG 16 – Key figures and trends. October 2021. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/data-matters.html>

<sup>40</sup> Naci Mocan (2008) What determines corruption? International evidence from microdata, *Economic Inquiry*, Vol. 4, No. 46.

<sup>41</sup> This refers to the weighted average difference in bribery prevalence between men and women across the sample of 18 countries.

**Figure 16:** Prevalence of bribery by sex of bribe-payer and type of public official, 10 selected countries

Source: Based on national sex-disaggregated survey data from 10 countries: Ghana (2021), Nigeria (2019), Iraq (2011), and seven Western Balkan countries (2010): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and North Macedonia. Note: The whiskers show the maximum range of bribery prevalence across the sample and the boxes show the middle half of the data (interquartile range). In Iraq, estimates for Education and Customs were not available. In the Western Balkan countries, estimates for Education and Land registry were not available.

official report having paid a bribe, compared with a slightly lower 17% of men (**Figure 15**).

The different levels of bribery prevalence among men and women may be at least partly attributable to varying levels of bribery across sectors of the public administration and the different exposure of men and women in dealing with officials in these sectors. These dynamics are highlighted by survey data from 10 countries in various world regions,<sup>42</sup> which show that the gender gap in bribery can differ markedly depending on the sector of the public administration. **Figure 16** shows that the gender gap in bribery experiences differs across sectors, with sectors that are typically male dominated displaying higher levels of bribery overall and larger gender gaps. Various factors can explain these differences, such as the sex composition of personnel in the different sectors or the different attitudes of civil servants in dealing with male or female citizens.<sup>43</sup> Further research is necessary to understand the gender dynamics of bribery, including the socioeconomic, organisational, and cultural factors that shape gender-specific bribery practices in different countries.

42 Ghana (2021), Nigeria (2019), Iraq (2011), and seven Western Balkan countries (2010): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and North Macedonia. Country reports are available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/population-surveys.html>

43 For country-specific gender analyses of bribery experiences, see UNODC, 2020. Gender and corruption in Nigeria; and UNODC, 2022. Corruption in Ghana – People's Experiences and Views.



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Vienna International Centre, PO Box 500, 1400 Vienna, Austria  
Tel: +(43) (1) 26060-0, Fax: +(43) (1) 26060-5866, [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)