



**Eleventh
United Nations Congress
on Crime Prevention and
Criminal Justice**

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Item 1 of the provisional agenda*

Opening of the Congress

The state of crime and criminal justice worldwide

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 59/151 of 20 December 2004, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare an overview of the state of crime and criminal justice worldwide for presentation at the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in accordance with past practice. The present report contains a description of crime trends and developments since the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Vienna from 10 to 17 April 2000. Preliminary findings from the Eighth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems are presented, as well as information from the global programmes of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and from the International Crime Victim Survey.

* A/CONF.203/1.



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I. Introduction

1. Since 2000, when the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders was held, there have been dramatic changes in the global “crime picture”. Since the terrorist attacks that took place on 11 September 2001, security has become a major concern, as many people have begun to perceive the threat of terrorism not only as an international issue but also as a domestic one. The fight against international terrorism has moved to the centre of public attention and has been placed high on the political agenda in a number of countries that are influential in defining the crime paradigm.
2. The priorities of international crime prevention have also shifted, in the world as a whole as well as in several countries and regions, from traditional crime concerns to terrorism, transnational organized crime, corruption, trafficking in human beings and money-laundering. Accordingly, the General Assembly adopted two major conventions on such matters: the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I), together with its three Protocols;¹ and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (Assembly resolution 58/4, annex). In addition, the Assembly has adopted a number of binding resolutions against terrorism.
3. Surveys show that in several countries people feel more anxious and less safe than in the past.² It may be assumed that the general feeling of insecurity in some countries is related to the fear of terrorism. The actual frequency of crime may have little to do with feelings of safety, which are likely to be influenced by general social concerns (such as health, unemployment or cost of living) and media reports of major crime stories. It appears that levels of anxiety are increasing also in countries where crime levels have recently decreased noticeably.³
4. An analysis of the relationship between crime and development suggests that developing countries may be more vulnerable than others to corruption, trafficking in persons and organized crime. Trafficking in persons and smuggling in migrants originate mostly in poorer countries, in particular those affected by ethnic strife, armed conflict, violence or instability. The vicious circle is completed by the fact that such countries not only are vulnerable to crime, but also have limited capacity to respond to crime problems effectively.
5. Changes over the last five years also point to a major reconceptualization of the approach to crime prevention, which has usually been limited to urban or conventional crime. Awareness of the dimensions of crime is the basis for the development of any crime prevention strategy. The availability of crime data varies from country to country and depends on the type of crime. In certain parts of the world, such as Africa, the paucity of data has so far prevented in-depth analysis and more profound understanding of the dimensions and characteristics of crime problems, thus preventing the development of appropriate knowledge-based solutions.
6. While some information is available on “conventional” crime, collecting data on the extent of organized crime, corruption, trafficking in human beings and money-laundering continues to be a pioneering exercise.

II. What is known

7. In order to build a solid base of information on crime in all its forms, more attention should be paid to methods of collecting information, including the promotion of victim surveys in developing countries, and the improvement of crime statistics. In an effort to build capacity in this area, the Statistics Division of the Secretariat has recently published the *Manual for the Development of a System of Criminal Justice Statistics*.⁴ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) jointly organized a meeting on crime statistics in Geneva from 3 to 5 November 2004, with the objective of identifying priorities in crime statistics.⁵ Particular attention was devoted to developing recommendations and priorities to advance work on the measurement of crime in surveys and to putting together an agenda for future work in developing standards and guidelines for use by official statisticians.

8. Through the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems,⁶ UNODC collects data on the incidence of reported crime and the operations of criminal justice systems with a view to improving the analysis and dissemination of that information worldwide. The survey has been repeated eight times. The sixth, seventh and eighth surveys were carried out at two-year intervals. Their results provide an overview of the trends and interrelationships of various parts of the criminal justice system to promote informed decision-making, at the national and international levels. Unfortunately, the irregular pattern of responses to the survey results in many gaps that do not allow for extensive analysis, especially in developing countries.

9. Victim surveys are widely accepted as being an accurate reflection of the public perception of crime from the viewpoint of victims of crime and those in fear of becoming victims. The International Crime Victim Survey,⁷ carried out by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, is aimed at enhancing public and political awareness and public participation in all aspects of crime prevention and in facilitating access to justice by promoting the systematic collection of information. The Victim Survey has so far been conducted in more than 70 participating countries. In those countries, information on citizens' experience with crime and crime prevention is collected and analysed. While victim surveys may help to overcome the problem of the scarcity of data in developing countries, their implementation is subject to the availability of funding.⁸

10. On the basis of these two main sources of data, further work is currently being done on the development of indicators and indexes that may help in the measurement of crime phenomena and in identifying conditions that may be either conducive to crime or likely to prevent crime.

11. The data sets of both the United Nations Survey and the Victim Survey are posted on United Nations websites⁹ and used extensively by researchers, practitioners and policy makers throughout the world, who are attracted by the possibility of analysing global crime trends, as the United Nations data are regarded as one of the main sources of information in that area.

12. Results from the United Nations Survey have been presented regularly at the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice¹⁰ and in the *Global Report on Crime and Justice*,¹¹ which also included data from the Victim

Survey. Analysis of the Sixth Survey data for Europe and North America has been carried out by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations.¹² Further analysis of the results of the Sixth Survey and the Seventh Survey, as well as of the Victim Survey, were presented in articles published in the *Forum on Crime and Society*.¹³

13. UNODC and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute have jointly prepared a report on trends in crime and justice that is to be released on the occasion of the Eleventh Congress. In future, UNODC intends to publish on a regular basis, in cooperation with the Interregional Institute, a world crime report.

14. The overall crime picture shows that crime affects all parts of the world, though the intensity levels and trends differ. The concept of crime may be too broad to reflect the complexity of the illegal behaviours and criminal phenomena that affect the world, ranging from the most threatening types of transnational crime to the day-to-day incidents that many people have experienced personally. It is therefore extremely difficult to quantify crime phenomena at the global level.

15. Measuring crime may become a more feasible proposition once crime categories have been examined and attempts have been made to establish standard definitions that may be used at the international level. Crime measurement may be much more feasible when dealing with “conventional” categories of crime, or “volume” crime, the most serious of which is homicide. Crimes such as theft, robbery and assault are generally defined in similar ways and recorded by the police in most countries. Most of those crimes are recorded by the police only as a consequence of reports received from victims and other citizens. Comparisons involving crime statistics encounter enormous difficulties because of differences in judicial systems, definitions, criminal codes and procedures, the translation of concepts into different languages and the efficiency of the system in responding to reports or complaints from citizens. Furthermore, there are social and cultural differences in the propensity of victims to report incidents to the authorities.

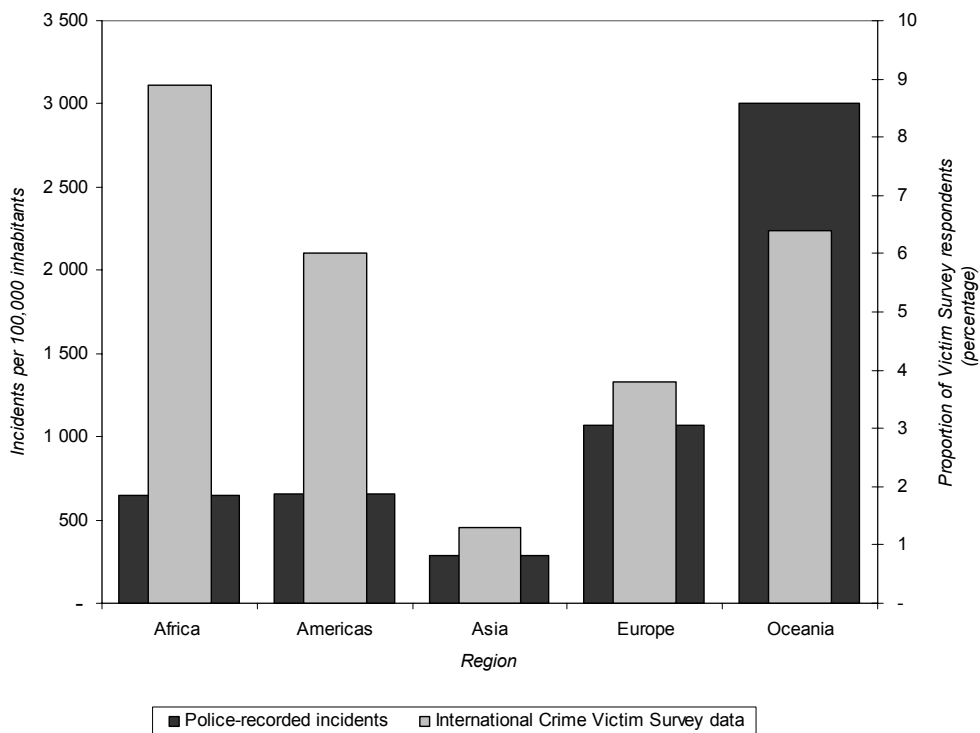
16. Figure I¹⁴ shows that the highest rate of property crime recorded by the police (namely, house burglary and automobile theft) was noted in Oceania (around 3,000 incidents recorded per 100,000 inhabitants). However, the Victim Survey shows that Africa is the most seriously affected region. As for contact crime (violent crime involving direct contact between the victim and the offender), both police statistics from the United Nations Survey and the Victim Survey data show the highest rates in Africa, Oceania and the Americas (see figure II). The distribution across the various regions was more even for contact crime than for property crime, and a correlation was found between rates provided by the two data sources (the United Nations Survey and the Victim Survey). Asia was the region in which the lowest rate for both types of crime were reported, either in police statistics or in victim surveys.

17. According to the Victim Survey, crimes are more frequently reported to the police in Europe, North America and Oceania than in other regions. It appears that in some regions where more crime occurs (Africa and part of the Americas), the police know less about it. Apart from automobile theft, which is almost universally reported, the reporting rate varies depending on the type of crime. The Victim Survey showed that, in 2000, burglary was reported to the police by 84 per cent of victims in Oceania, 72 per cent in Europe, 59 per cent in the Americas, 55 per cent

in Africa and 40 per cent in Asia. Therefore, police statistics are likely to contain more incidents in the regions where victims report them more frequently.

18. At the level of the individual, there are several different reasons for non-reporting, including those related to the victim profile, the difficulty of reporting, the distance of the police station or the presence of alternative mechanisms for dispute resolution, such as traditional leaders. Recent studies have shown a correlation between reporting and income, thus suggesting that the reporting level may vary not only across countries and cultures, but also over time because of changes in the economic situation of a given society.^{15, 16}

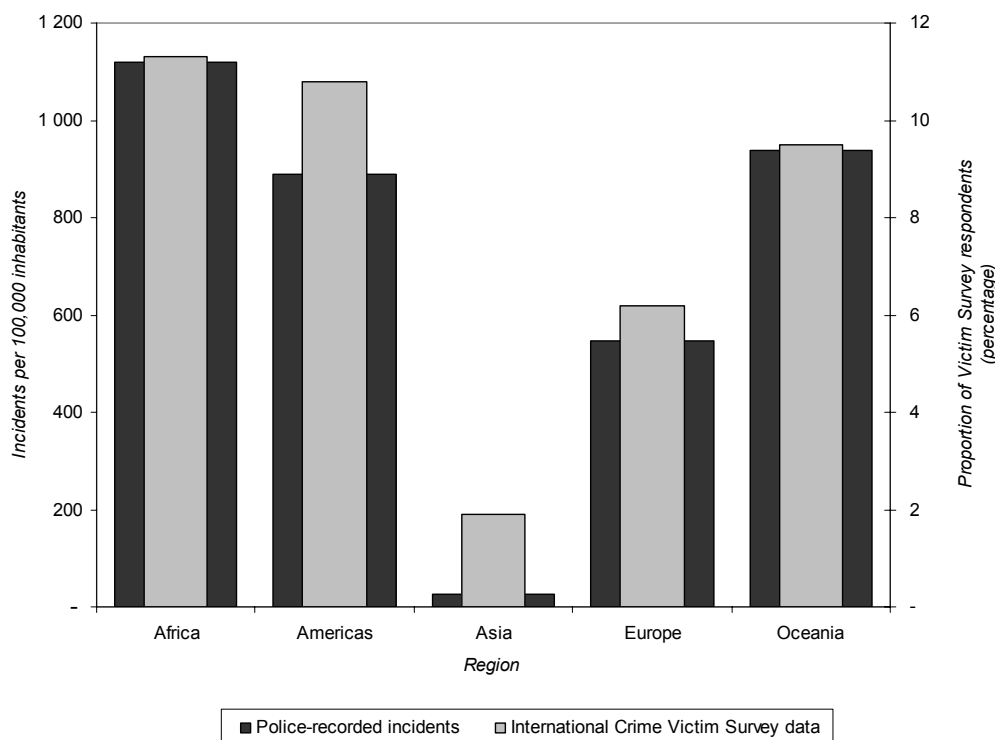
Figure I
Property crime,^a by region



Sources: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002 or the latest available year, and from the International Crime Victim Survey, for 2000.

^a“Property crime” (violent crime involving direct contact between the victim and the offender) includes reported incidents of burglary and automobile theft (based on data from both the United Nations Survey and the Victim Survey).

Figure II
Contact crime,^a by region



Sources: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002 or the latest available year, and from the International Crime Victim Survey, for 2000.

^a“Contact crime” includes reported incidents of robbery, major assault and rape (based on data from the United Nations Survey) and robbery, assault with force and sexual assault (based on data from the Victim Survey).

19. Because of the above-mentioned considerations, care should be taken in reading data from different countries and caution should be exercised in using traditional crime statistics for interpreting complex crime phenomena. There is consensus that official statistics of reported crime are not sufficient to provide an accurate “crime picture”. The promotion of integrated data sources (such as official statistics, victim surveys and self-report studies) is already taking place in several countries.

20. Furthermore, a number of other issues have recently appeared in the crime monitoring process:

(a) Concern over a general “crime problem”, composed of a mixture of old and new forms of crime;

(b) A shifting of attention from the offender to the victim and the circumstances in which crime occurs (in order to put in place “situational” crime prevention);

(c) Implementation of crime prevention initiatives and desire to measure their effectiveness, including monitoring of the performance of related agencies;

(d) Moving away from the national level to the transnational (international, regional) level and to the local level (problems of large urban agglomerations or specific social contexts).

21. Attempts in some countries to address some of the above-mentioned issues have recently resulted in the generation of new sets of data, which may not lend themselves to comparison with data available in the past or at the international level.¹⁷

22. Problems of measurement become even more difficult when dealing with non-conventional crime, such as organized crime, trafficking in human beings and corruption. Beyond the complexity of the phenomenon, a transnational component is often present in such crime, thus making the assessment of its dimensions more difficult.

23. The entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (on 29 September 2003) may at least assist in overcoming issues concerning definition. In its decision 1/2, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime at its first session, held in Vienna from 28 June to 8 July 2004, requested the Secretariat to collect information from States parties and signatories to the Convention using a questionnaire to be developed in accordance with the guidance provided by the Conference (CTOC/COP/2005/6, chap. I). The responses to the questionnaire will offer a unique opportunity for building a knowledge base on transnational organized crime and its various manifestations, as well as on national and international responses.

24. Regarding trafficking in persons, the attempt by many international, regional and national agencies to estimate the overall number of women and children trafficked worldwide each year across international borders has so far generated concern about the reliability of the estimate figure (between 700,000 and several million). It appears that several agencies have started developing databases containing a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, which are likely to yield valuable information, especially if specific regions can be focused on.¹⁸

25. As regards organized crime, international research has so far concentrated mostly on qualitative studies of the structure, characteristics and modus operandi of criminal groups rather than on calculating the extent and diverse manifestations of the phenomenon.¹⁹

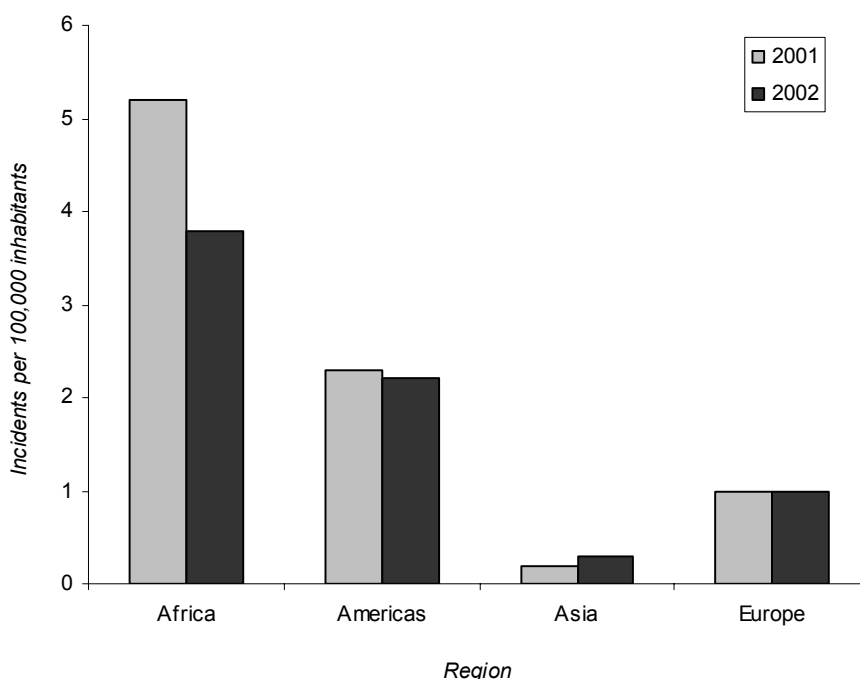
26. The Fourth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, launched in 1993, included a supplement aimed at extending data collection to include transnational crime; a report on the results of the Fourth Survey was submitted to the Ninth Congress (A/CONF.169/15 and Add.1). It has been suggested that a repetition of the organized crime supplement, with the necessary updates, might provide valuable information on the current status of the problem. Assessment studies on the extent and characteristics of organized crime at the regional level have started in West Africa and Central Asia.²⁰

27. Several countries have adopted methods to measure organized crime that are based on local definitions. Measurement is aimed at assessing the threat posed by

organized crime to society and legal economic sectors (risk assessment),²¹ and various methodologies exist in different countries, such as Australia, Belgium, Canada and Germany.²² The relationship between organized crime and conventional crime may depend on a number of variables, including changes in law enforcement. Further analysis may involve looking at “proxy” indicators of conventional crime measured by police statistics and correlating them to other indicators.²³ Among the “proxy” indicators, it is possible to examine numerous types of conventional crime, including fraud, armed robbery, motor vehicle theft and theft of antiques and jewellery.

28. Kidnapping, extortion, child pornography, environmental crime, illegal gambling and money-laundering are certainly part of the activities of organized criminal groups. Information on those types of crime is not readily available, although several countries have adopted legislation specifically addressing such crime and are collecting statistics on it. As a surge in such crime was perceived in several regions, the Eighth United Nations Survey included the crime of kidnapping.²⁴ Furthermore, some statistics on kidnapping were available through a survey conducted by UNODC in 2003 (see figure III).²⁵

Figure III
Kidnapping, by region, 2001 and 2002

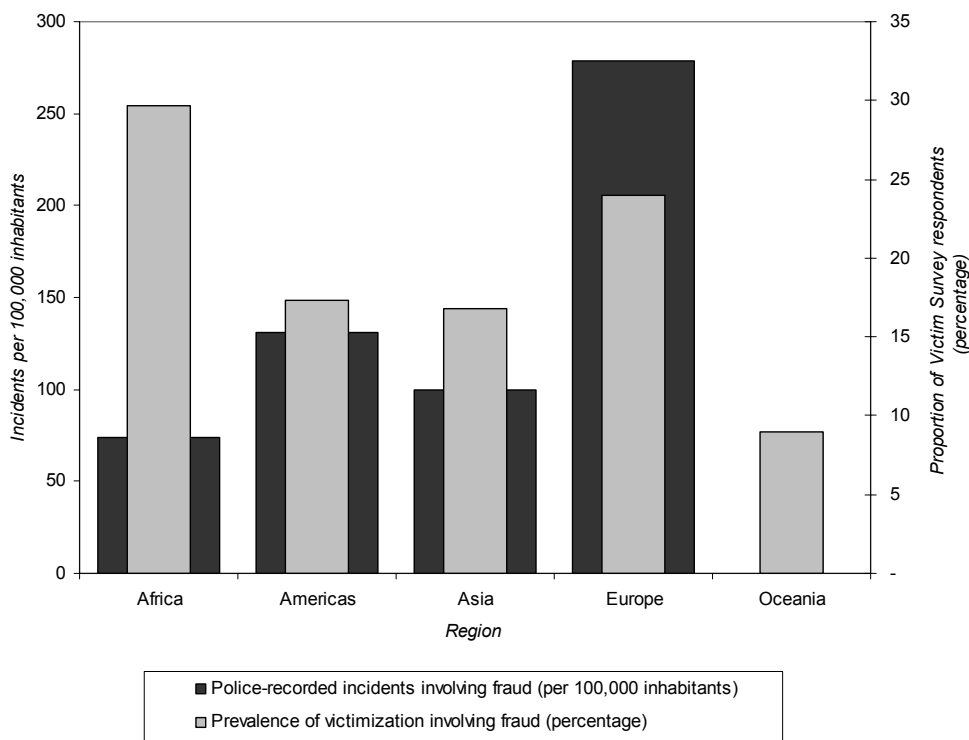


Sources: Data from the Eighth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems; and report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in the prevention, combating and elimination of kidnapping and in providing assistance to victims (E/CN.15/2003/7 and Add.1).

29. In the Eighth United Nations Survey, 35 States reported on kidnapping, thus increasing the national statistics available on the subject. The highest regional rate was recorded for Africa, followed by the Americas, Europe and Asia.

30. Estimates of the extent of extortion may be obtained through surveys. According to the International Crime Business Survey, conducted by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute in the capital cities of nine countries in Central and Eastern Europe²⁶ in 2000, 15 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that intimidation and extortion²⁷ were very common or fairly common in their line of business, while on average 9 per cent had directly experienced such crime. One third of the victims believed that local organized criminal groups were involved in intimidation.

31. Comparing information on fraud from the various data sources is difficult because of the existence of different definitions used to describe the offence. The United Nations Survey defines fraud as the acquisition of another person's property by deception, while the definition used in the Victim Survey is somewhat different (see figure IV).



Sources: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002 or the latest available year, and from the International Crime Victim Survey, for 2000.

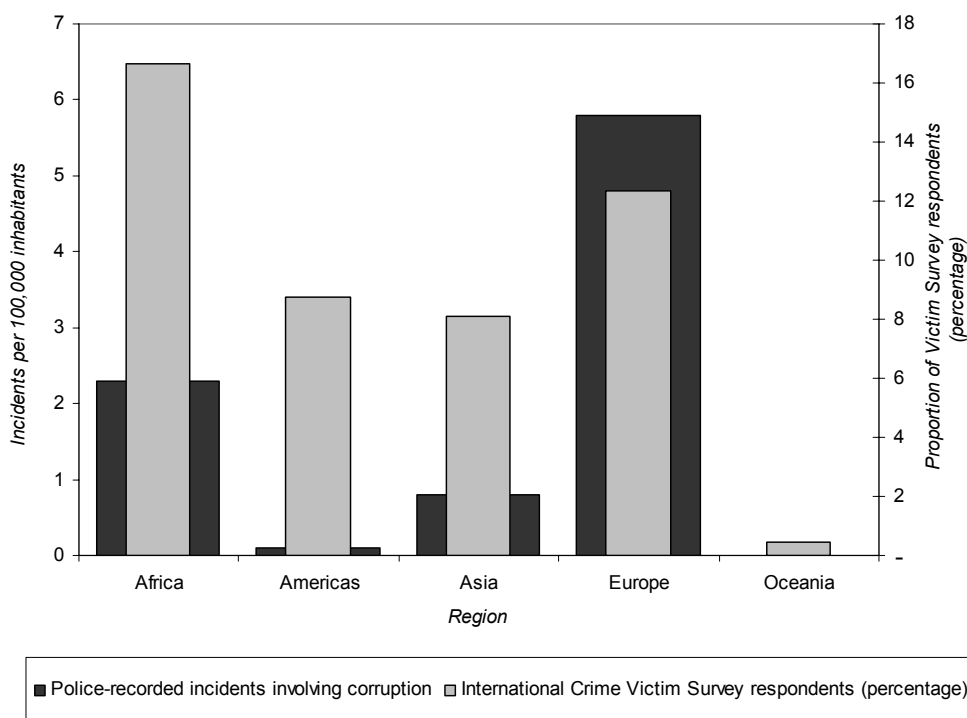
^aNo comparable data available on police-recorded incidents involving fraud in Oceania.

32. Police-recorded fraud is highest in Europe, the Americas and Asia. However, the Victim Survey results show that the percentage of people victimized by

consumer fraud is highest in Africa; the information gap between police records and citizens' experiences is particularly visible in that region.

33. The measurement of corruption also requires the development of specific methodologies. Because information on the subject is scarce, corruption is often measured by surveys. Of the surveys that measure corruption, the Victim Survey offers the advantage of measuring direct experiences of having to pay bribes to public officials. The Victim Survey results show that corruption is a widespread phenomenon in all regions except Oceania. Only a small amount of bribery cases end up reported to the police, as data from the United Nations Survey show. On average, 6 corruption cases per 100,000 inhabitants were reported in Europe, while in all other regions the rate was equal to or below 2 cases per 100,000 inhabitants (see figure V). As is the case with fraud, there is a major discrepancy between citizens' experiences and the official figures for corruption in Africa, the Americas and Asia.

Figure V
Corruption, by region



Sources: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002 or the latest available year, and from the International Crime Victim Survey, for 2000.

^a No comparable data are available on police-recorded incidents involving corruption in Oceania.

34. The accurate measurement of corruption presents special challenges, but it is regarded as a pressing need by practitioners and policy makers alike throughout the world. Such measurement is critical to building the crucial knowledge that is

necessary to put in place effective prosecution measures and to carry out a credible analysis of trends and patterns. Such risk assessment is an irreplaceable tool that enables law enforcement and other criminal justice practitioners to carry out often complex investigations and to be successful in prosecutions and asset recovery. The accurate measurement of corruption is directly dependent on the development of agreed indicators and a conceptualization of the phenomenon that will not become entangled in a debate over definitions. The descriptive approach to the complex issue of definitions, which was adopted in the United Nations Convention against Corruption, offers a rational and pragmatic way forward. The development of the appropriate methodology is crucial to gathering scientifically sound data that will, in turn, permit a credible, in-depth analysis, thereby reducing reliance on perception surveys whose methodology could be the subject of criticism, coupled with scepticism about whether the intention might be less to offer a basis for policy-making than to attract continuing media attention.

III. Overall trends

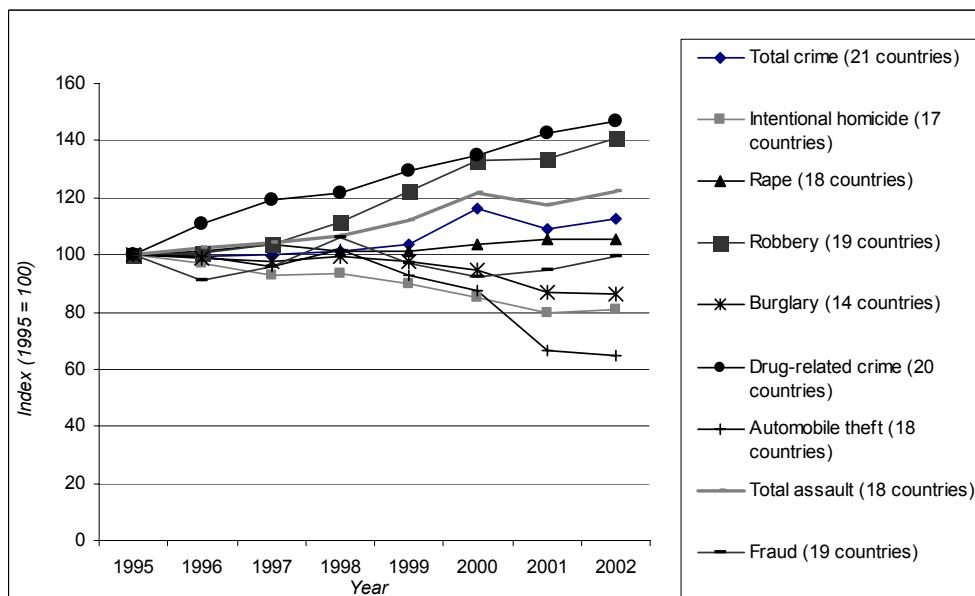
35. At the time of writing, responses to the Eighth Survey had been received from 57 out of 191 countries (30 per cent). The highest response rate was observed in Europe (55 per cent), followed by the Americas (23 per cent).

36. For a number of countries with a regular reporting pattern, it is possible to observe crime trends over time. The present analysis refers to the period 1995-2002, thus covering the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of criminal justice systems. The overall trend shows that recorded crime increased only slightly during the period (on average, total recorded crime increased by only 12 per cent). Assault increased by 22 per cent, while a sharper increase was observed for drug-related offences (47 per cent) and robbery (41 per cent). Burglary, intentional homicide and automobile theft decreased (by 14 per cent, 19 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively). Stable rates were observed for rape and fraud (see figure VI).

37. It should be noted, however, that different patterns of reporting crime in the United Nations Survey at the regional and national levels might have an influence in determining the above-mentioned trends. For example, of the 21 countries for which data on total recorded crime are available for the entire period 1995-2002, 15 are in Europe, 1 is in Africa, 3 are in the Americas, 2 are in Asia and none is in Oceania. That may suggest that any generalizations about trends in crime at the global level should be made with extreme caution.

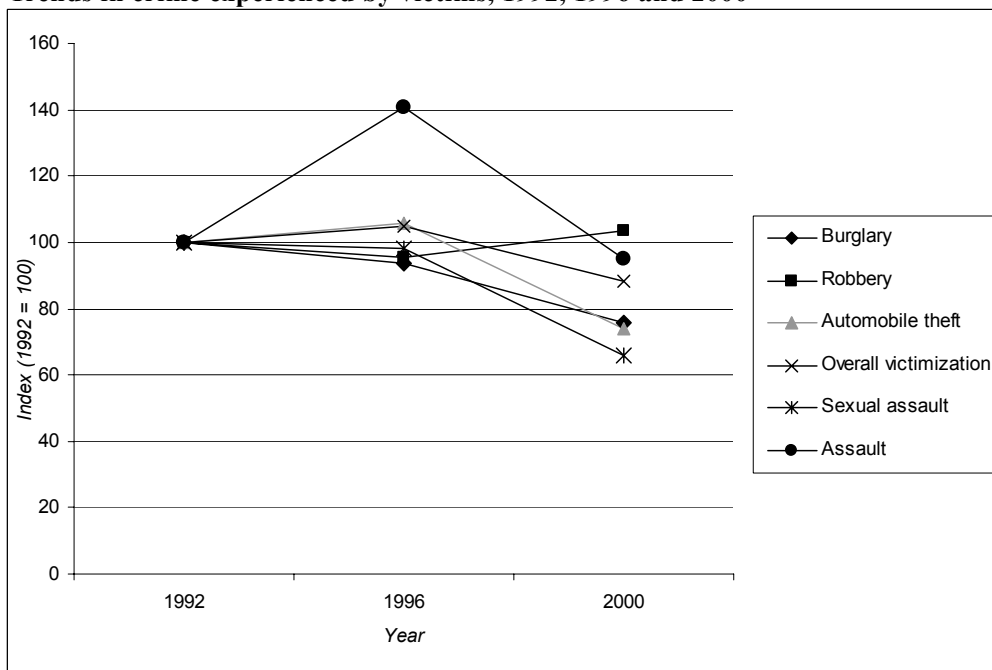
38. Victim surveys showed that between 1992 and 2000 most types of crime decreased. Only robbery showed a steady increase during that period, while assault, after having increased between 1992 and 1996, decreased in 2000 (see figure VII).²⁸ Those trends were consistent with trends observed in police-recorded crime.

Figure VI
Trends in police-recorded crime, 1995-2002



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

Figure VII
Trends in crime experienced by victims, 1992, 1996 and 2000



Source: Data from 15 countries participating in the International Crime Victim Survey.

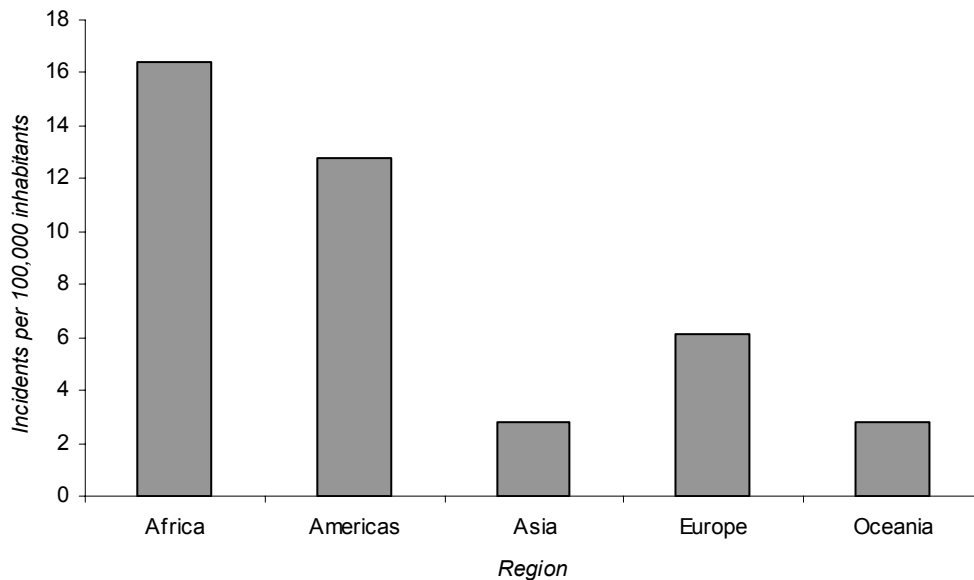
IV. Specific types of crime: most recent data, by region

A. Homicide

39. Intentional homicide represents one of the types of crime for which data are likely to be available at the international level. That is due to the relatively consistent definitions, on the basis of which many countries are able to provide information. The homicide rates were highest in Africa, followed by the Americas, while other regions showed much lower rates (see figure VIII). The high homicide rates observed in Africa and the Americas were accompanied by a high level of robberies, assaults and sexual assaults. For obvious reasons, data on homicide are not available through victim surveys; in some African countries, however, surveys have started collecting information on murders that occurred in families and/or interviewing persons who witnessed murders.²⁹

Figure VIII

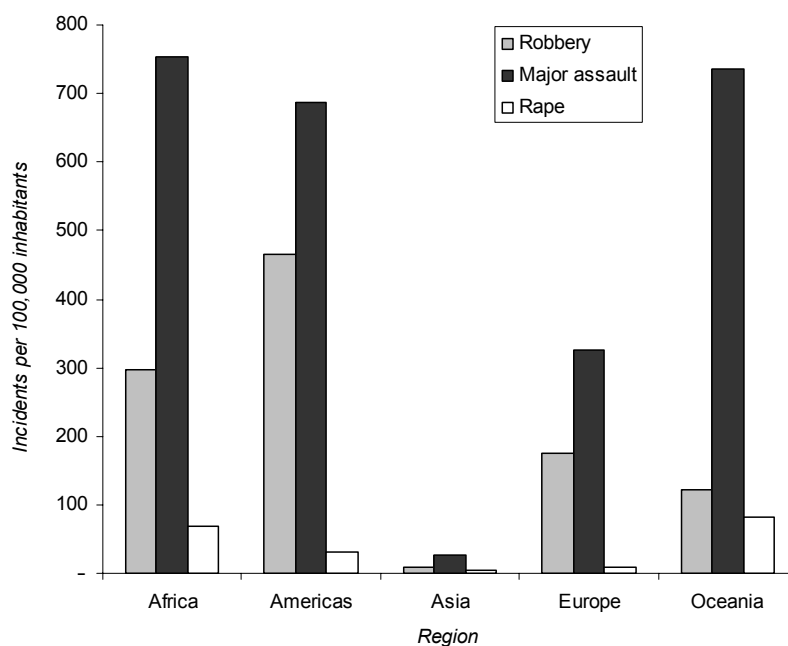
Intentional homicide, by region



Source: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002 or the latest available year.

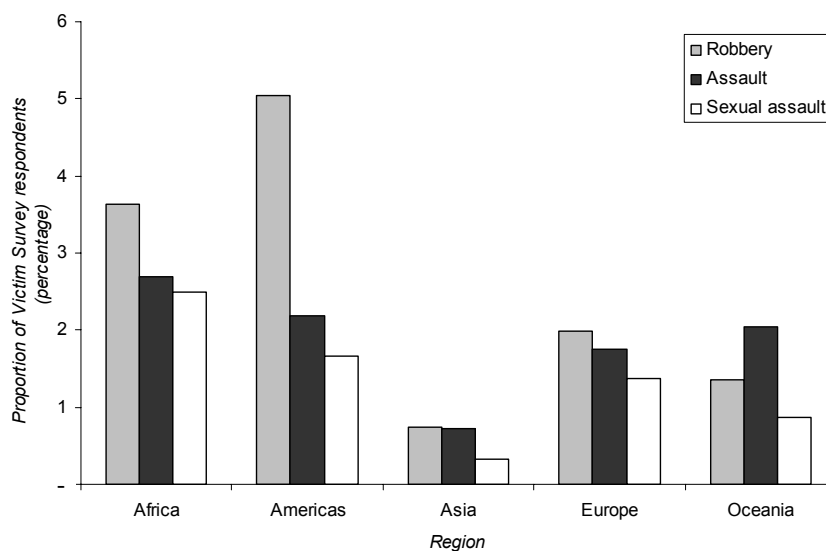
40. Figure IX shows police statistics for major assault, robbery and rape, while figure X shows Victim Survey data for the same types of crime. According to police statistics, the highest rate of assault was observed in Africa, while the other regions had much lower levels. Although the Victim Survey data also showed that Africa and the Americas were the regions most frequently exposed to assault, much smaller differences among regions were observed in those data than in police-recorded data.

Figure IX
Police-recorded incidents involving robbery, major assault and rape, by region



Source: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002 or the latest available year.

Figure X
Proportion of victims of robbery, assault and sexual assault, by region
(Percentage)



Source: Data from the International Crime Victim Survey, for 2000.

41. Robbery is a property crime that involves the use of violence. The events that may be included in the robbery category range from bank robberies to street incidents. Nevertheless, the involvement of force (and often the involvement of a weapon) indicates the particular seriousness of this type of crime. The highest rates for robbery, in both the United Nations Survey data (see figure IX) and the Victim Survey data (see figure X), were observed in the Americas and Africa.

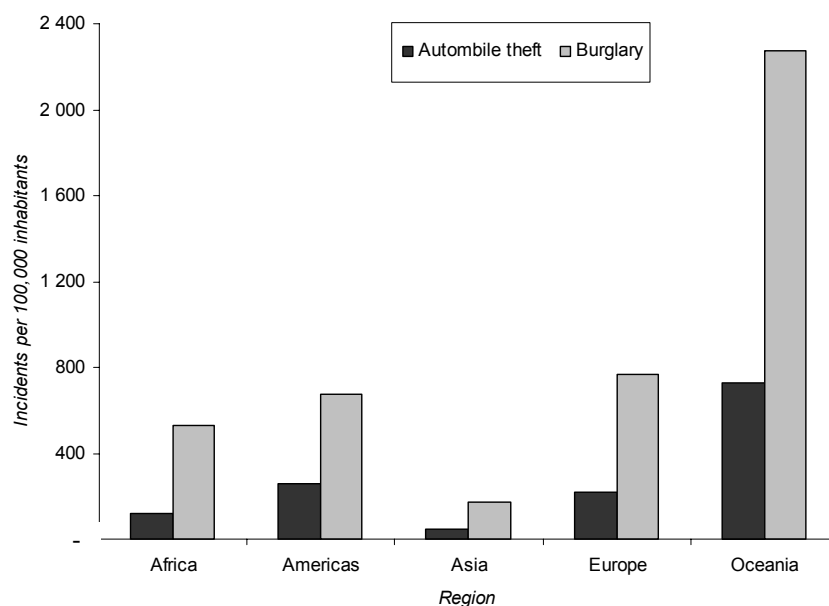
42. A comparison of the Victim Survey and the police-recorded data on rape show that in Oceania, where the highest rates of police-recorded rape were found, the reporting pattern may be different from that of the other regions. According to the United Nations Survey data (see figure IX), the second highest rate of reported rape was in Africa, where, according to the Victim Survey data, women were at the highest risk. In order to develop further comparable information on violence against women, the International Violence against Women Survey has recently been launched in 10 countries. The results are currently being analysed, and comparative information is expected to be made available in 2005.³⁰

B. Property crime: automobile theft and burglary

43. Automobile theft may reveal the presence of organized criminal groups. It is important to compare the proportion of stolen motor vehicles that are actually recovered with the proportion of those which are not. One key aspect of this form of crime is that the criminals involved need to legalize the stolen motor vehicles in order to make money. The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) estimates that 19 billion dollars are generated by illicit trafficking in stolen motor vehicles. While a number of motor vehicles are stolen for the purpose of "joyriding" or, quite often, to commit another crime, other vehicles are either dismantled or smuggled by organized criminal groups. An important indicator of the nature of motor vehicle theft and the efficiency of law enforcement in this respect is provided by the Victim Survey. On average, 87 per cent of stolen vehicles are recovered in Oceania; the recovery rate is lowest in Africa (43 per cent), which indicates that the level of efficiency in recovering stolen vehicles is also relatively low. Approximately one half of stolen vehicles are retrieved in the Americas, Asia and Europe.

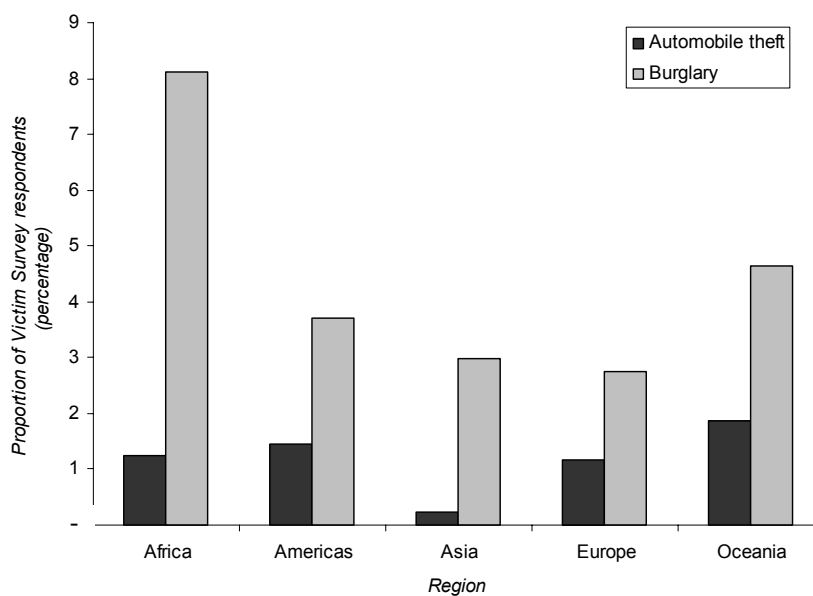
44. The actual level of motor vehicle theft may therefore indicate different phenomena. According to both the United Nations Survey and the Victim Survey, vehicle theft was highest in Oceania (see figures XI and XII). It should be noted that in Africa more than 1 per cent of the Victim Survey respondents were victims of car hijacking (the theft of a car with force, often at gunpoint, while the driver is inside); as a result, the rate of victimization in that region almost doubled. It is therefore clear that recorded automobile theft in that region does not match the actual level of victimization.

Figure XI
Police-recorded incidents involving automobile theft and burglary, by region



Source: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002 or the latest available year.

Figure XII
Proportion of victims of automobile theft and burglary, by region
 (Percentage)



Source: Data from the International Crime Victim Survey for 2000.

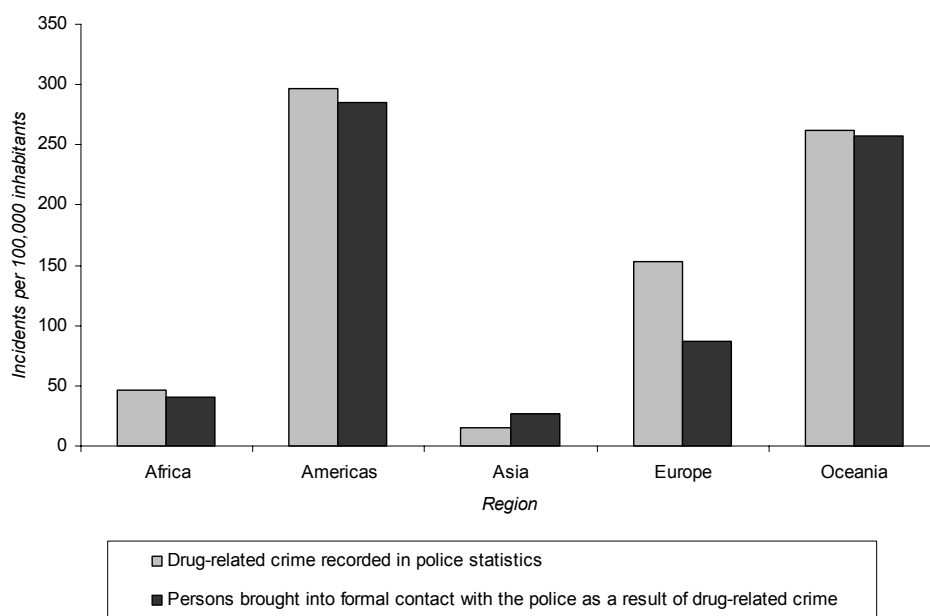
45. Recorded burglary was highest in Oceania; however, the Victim Survey results indicate that while Africa was the region most affected by burglary, it had the second lowest rate of police-recorded burglary. Low rates of police-recorded burglary were also observed in the Americas and Asia; according to respondents of the Victim Survey, however, risk of burglary was approximately the same in those regions as in Europe and Oceania.

46. It appears that there are major discrepancies between the data on property crime from the Victim Survey and those from the United Nations Survey, especially in Africa and the Americas, as well as in Oceania, where police and insurance practices may contribute to inflated statistics.

C. Drug-related offences

47. Drug-related crime in the various regions is presented in figure XIII as police-recorded offences and persons brought into formal contact with the police. Both indicators are provided by the United Nations Survey. Since they very much relate to police performance, they should not be interpreted as directly measuring the extent of drug-related crime. Both drug-related offences and arrests were highest in the Americas and Oceania, followed by Europe.

Figure XIII
Drug-related crime, by region



Source: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002 or the latest available year.

48. Through the annual reports questionnaire,³¹ UNODC also collects data on the number of persons arrested for drug-related crimes. Those data refer to persons arrested for illicit drug possession, manufacture or trafficking or for illicit drug crop cultivation; the data are divided according to the type of drug involved. With few exceptions, data collected through the annual reports questionnaire do not match those of the United Nations Survey, which generally yield higher values. Differences may be explained with the more comprehensive definition of “drug-related crimes” used in the United Nations Survey: the “intentional acts that involve the cultivation, production, manufacture, extraction, preparation, offering for sale, distribution, purchase, sale, delivery on any terms whatsoever, brokerage, dispatch, dispatch in transit, transport, importation, exportation and possession of internationally controlled drugs”.

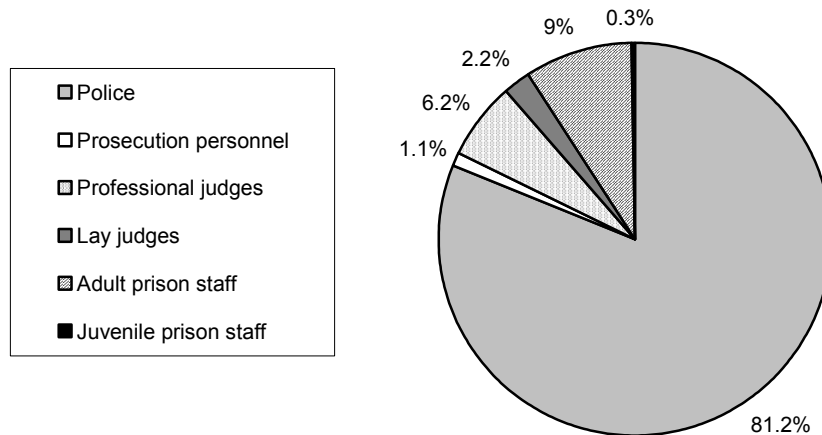
V. Operations of criminal justice systems

49. The United Nations Survey is a valuable source of information on the operations of criminal justice systems. Statistics also include data on personnel and resources. In general, the police represent the largest portion (80 per cent) of the criminal justice personnel, followed by adult prison staff (9 per cent) and professional judges (6 per cent) (see figure XIV). It should be noted, however, that the situation is not the same everywhere. In Asia, the police account for two thirds of the criminal justice personnel; they are followed by professional judges (26 per cent). In Europe, the police account for, on average, 73 per cent of criminal justice personnel, and adult prison staff, 16 per cent. The police personnel included in the United Nations Survey should be limited to “personnel in public agencies whose principal functions are the prevention, detection and investigation of crime and the apprehension of alleged offenders”. However, different countries may count their police force in different ways, especially those countries which have a number of different police bodies (for example, at the municipal, state and national levels), each of them with a mandate in crime prevention and control.

50. Differences in the ratio of police to citizens may affect the capacity of the police not only to investigate crime, but also to receive crime reports from citizens. According to the United Nations Survey, in 15 countries that reported regularly between 1995 and 2002 on police personnel, the overall average ratio of police to citizens remained almost unchanged (approximately 300 per 100,000 inhabitants, with an increase of 4 per cent since 1995). It should be noted that the ratios for Africa and Asia (191 and 179 per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively, in 2002) were below the regional average.

51. In the Victim Survey, citizens from developing countries gave the lowest rating of all the countries participating in the survey in terms of their satisfaction with police performance. A positive correlation was found between citizens’ satisfaction with the police and the reporting of the various types of crime to the police. It appears, therefore, that a good perception of the police may increase both public cooperation with law enforcement and the likelihood of victims reporting crimes to the police.

Figure XIV
Overall distribution of criminal justice personnel
 (Percentage)



Source: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002.

52. In 17 countries with comparable data between 1995 and 2002, the rate of persons brought into initial contact with the police and/or the criminal justice system, regardless of the type of crime, increased from 837 to 1,173 per 100,000 inhabitants. Among the types of crime that showed the sharpest increase, drug-related crimes increased from 50 to 106 per 100,000 inhabitants, assault from 110 to 121, robbery from 25 to 29 and fraud from 51 to 67. On average, in 19 countries that reported on a regular basis, arrests for drug-related crime represented 6 per cent of the total arrests in 1995, while their proportion with respect to the total doubled in 2002 (12 per cent). During the same period, the proportion of persons arrested for burglary decreased (from 91 to 84 per 100,000 inhabitants).

53. Among the persons convicted by criminal courts, the highest rates were observed for theft and assault (on average, 88 and 51 per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively), followed by drug-related crime (37 per 100,000 inhabitants). However, while the rates for assault and theft decreased between 1995 and 2002, the rates for drug-related crime increased.³² Persons convicted for drug-related crime accounted for approximately 20 per cent of the total in 2002.

VI. Prisons

54. The highest incarceration rates were observed in the Americas, followed by Africa (see figure XV). The rates of prisoners awaiting trial were highest in Asia and Africa, where it accounted for approximately one third of the total incarceration rate. In 24 countries that provided regular responses to the survey between 1995 and

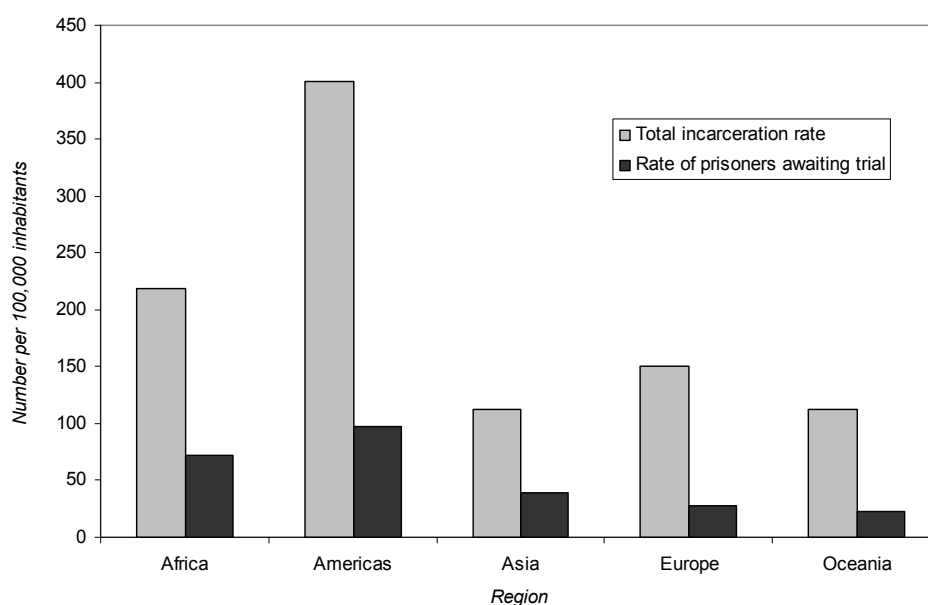
2002, the incarceration rate increased on average from 165 to 187 per 100,000 inhabitants, while the average percentage of prisoners awaiting trial remained stable, at 27 per cent.

55. A large prison population may be accompanied by prison overcrowding. In 2002, in a total of 36 reporting countries, the average occupancy rate (the ratio of the number of prisoners to the number of available beds in prison institutions) was 104, or slightly above the full capacity of the prison institutions.

56. In 22 countries that regularly provided responses in the United Nations Survey, the occupancy rate rose from 106 in 1995 to 109 in 2002. The increase was particularly notable in the Americas (from 114 to 117) and in Europe (from 103 to 107), while in Asia there was a decrease (from 114 to 110). A high occupancy rate may lead to subsequent problems, such as a high number of prisoners to be supervised by staff. In 18 countries with comparable data from 1995 to 2002, the average ratio of prisoners to staff almost doubled during that period.

Figure XV

Total incarceration rate and the rate of prisoners awaiting trial, by region



Source: Data from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, for 2002 or the latest available year.

57. In 2002, approximately 95 per cent of the convicted prisoners, on average, were male. The highest percentage of female convicted prisoners were observed in the Americas and Asia (7 per cent). Similar percentages were observed for convicted juvenile prisoners in all regions, with Africa and Europe being the highest (7 per cent). Finally, the average rate of convicted foreign prisoners was 9 per 100,000 inhabitants (10 in Europe and 11 in Asia).

VII. Conclusions

58. The analysis presented in this report confirms the urgent need to develop mechanisms for the collection and analysis of not only data on “new” non-conventional crime, but also for a more solid and better-quality database on conventional crime. No effective crime prevention initiative can be put in place in the absence of adequate and relevant comparative information. The problem is particularly noticeable in developing countries, where the development of data collection mechanisms may require the identification of resources for independent surveys and also necessarily includes promoting a service approach by the responsible law enforcement agencies.

59. Results of the Victim Survey show that a good performance by the police may generate more accurate statistics, which may give false impressions regarding crime levels. It may be that higher rates of recorded crime are found in places where the police do a better job rather than in those which are most affected by crime. It is therefore important to integrate different sources of information, such as police statistics and victim surveys, in order to get a more complete picture of the crime situation.

60. Results from both police records (the United Nations Survey) and other survey data (the Victim Survey) indicate a high level of violent crime in Africa and the Americas. Furthermore, victim surveys also show that property crime is prevalent in Africa, although that is not reflected in police statistics.

61. During the period 1995-2002, in the group of countries that provided consistent information over time, the overall increase of 12 per cent in police-recorded crime was matched by a corresponding increase in the incarceration rate. Trends for individual types of crime showed increases in drug-related crime and robbery. An increasing trend in robbery was observed in both data sets. In contrast, intentional homicide declined by 19 per cent. It appears, therefore, that the increase in violence was limited to property-related violent crime (robberies).

62. According to the findings of the United Nations Survey, it appears that the increase in drug-related crime was reflected throughout criminal justice systems and resulted in more arrests and more persons convicted for such crime. Drug-related crime therefore emerges as one of the major problems to be dealt with from the point of view of crime prevention.

Notes

¹ The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Assembly resolution 55/25, annex II); the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Assembly resolution 55/25, annex III); and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components, and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Assembly resolution 55/255, annex).

² In the 2003 Voice of the People Survey conducted by the Gallup International Association, 57 per cent of the respondents from more than 50 countries said that their country was currently less safe than it had been 10 years earlier.

- ³ Interestingly, in some countries such as Canada, South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, where crime levels have actually decreased, feelings of safety did not increase accordingly.
- ⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.XVII.6.
- ⁵ The final report of the meeting and relevant documentation are available on the website of ECE (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2004.11.crime.htm>).
- ⁶ Conducted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/48 on crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of development.
- ⁷ The International Crime Victim Survey is conducted by an International Board composed of representatives of the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands, the Home Office of the United Kingdom, the Department of Justice of Canada, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and UNODC, with the participation of the European Commission.
- ⁸ The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1997/27, urged Member States to assist the Secretary-General in establishing a mechanism, drawing upon extrabudgetary resources, inter alia, to strengthen national capacities for the collection, analysis and dissemination of crime and criminal justice statistics, including participation in the United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of criminal justice systems and the international surveys of victims of crime.
- ⁹ http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime_cicp_research.html and <http://www.unicri.it/icvs/index.htm> respectively.
- ¹⁰ Survey results were presented at the Seventh Congress (A/CONF.121/18 and Corr.1), the Eighth Congress (A/CONF.144/6), the Ninth Congress (A/CONF.169/15 and Add.1) and the Tenth Congress (A/CONF.187/5).
- ¹¹ Graeme Newman, ed., *Global Report on Crime and Justice* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999).
- ¹² Kauko Aromaa and others, eds., *Crime and Criminal Justice Systems in Europe and North America, 1995-1997: Report on the Sixth United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Criminal Justice Systems*, HEUNI Publication Series, No. 40 (Helsinki, 2003).
- ¹³ *Forum on Crime and Society*, vol. III, Nos. 1 and 2 (2003) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.IV.5).
- ¹⁴ Data in the figures appearing in this report refer to 38 countries participating in the United Nations Survey and also participating in the Victim Survey in 2000 (5 countries in Africa, 4 in the Americas, 4 in Asia, 24 in Europe and 1 in Oceania).
- ¹⁵ Ziggy MacDonald, "Revisiting the dark figure", *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 41, No. 1 (winter 2001), pp. 127-149.
- ¹⁶ Recent studies conducted in Europe by the European Sourcebook group showed that differences in crime rates might also depend on the moment in which an offence was recorded (either at the time of reporting to the police or once the police investigation had begun) and the way incidents were counted either in "secondary" offences (for example, in cases when multiple offences have been committed and the principle of "most serious" offence was applied, only the most serious crime was recorded) or in serial offences (for example, in cases involving continuous domestic violence, only one offence might be recorded even if the victim complained about a series of offences; in illicit drug transactions, only one offence might be recorded if the suspect had repeatedly been dealing with the same drug) (see Marcelo Aebi, Martin Killias and Cynthia Tavares, "Comparing crime rates", *International Journal of Comparative Criminology*, vol. 2, No. 1 (2003)).
- ¹⁷ Mike Maguire, "Crime statistics: the 'data explosion' and its implications", *Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, Mike Maguire, Rod Morgan and Robert Reiner, eds. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002).

- ¹⁸ Kristiina Kangaspunta, "Mapping the inhuman trade: preliminary findings of the database on trafficking in human beings", *Forum on Crime and Society*, vol. III, Nos. 1 and 2 (2003) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.IV.5).
- ¹⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Results of a Pilot Survey of Forty Selected Organized Criminal Groups in Sixteen Countries* (September 2002).
- ²⁰ The reports on both studies will be made available on the UNODC website.
- ²¹ "Measuring Organised Crime in Belgium: A Risk-Based Methodology", the Ghent University Research Group (ongoing project).
- ²² With a view to promoting good practices and standard methodologies, a study entitled "Developing an EU statistical apparatus for measuring organised crime, assessing its risk and evaluating organised crime policies", funded by the European Commission, is currently being conducted by Transcrime, in Italy, with two partners in France and the United Kingdom.
- ²³ Edgardo Buscaglia and Jan van Dijk, "Controlling organized crime and corruption in the public sector", *Forum on Crime and Society*, vol. III, Nos. 1 and 2 (2003) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.IV.5).
- ²⁴ In the questionnaire for the Eighth United Nations Survey, kidnapping was defined as "unlawfully detaining a person or persons against their will (or national equivalent e.g. using force, threat, fraud or enticement) for the purpose of demanding for their liberation an illicit gain or any other economic gain or other material benefit, or in order to oblige someone to do or not to do something".
- ²⁵ The survey was conducted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/16 (see the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in the prevention, combating and elimination of kidnapping and in providing assistance to victims (E/CN.15/2003/7 and Add.1).
- ²⁶ The participating countries were Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The survey involved interviewing approximately 500 businesses in each capital city. The questionnaire covered a variety of crime issues, including fraud, extortion and corruption (see Anna Alvazzi del Frate, "The International Crime Business Survey: findings from nine Central-Eastern European cities", *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, forthcoming).
- ²⁷ Extortion was defined as follows: extorting money from the company; threatening and intimidating managers and/or employees; and threatening product contamination (such as poisoning of food, altering of colours, damaging of external packages etc.).
- ²⁸ Of the 15 countries for which data were available for the entire period, 2 were in Africa, 3 were in the Americas, 1 was in Asia and 9 were in Europe.
- ²⁹ Fourteen per cent of respondents to the 2003 National Victims of Crime Survey in South Africa said they had witnessed a murder (P. Burton and others, *National Victims of Crime Survey: South Africa 2003*, Institute for Security Studies Monograph No. 101 (Pretoria, 2004)).
- ³⁰ The International Violence against Women Survey is coordinated by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, with input from Statistics Canada, the Australian Institute of Criminology, UNODC and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. The results of the Australian component of the International Violence against Women Survey are already available (see Jenny Mouzos and Toni Makkai, *Women's Experiences of Male Violence: Findings from the Australian Component of the International Violence against Women Survey (IVAWS)*, Research and Public Policy Series No. 56 (Canberra, Australian Institute of Criminology, 2004)).
- ³¹ The annual reports questionnaire provides Government-based information (see *Annual Reports Questionnaire, Part III: Illicit Supply of Drugs* (E/NR/2004/3)).

³² The above-mentioned trends are based on replies provided in section III (“Courts”) of the questionnaire for the United Nations Survey. The replies were received from 8 countries consistently reporting between 1995 and 2002 on assault (the rate decreased from 57 to 54 per 100,000 inhabitants), 11 countries reporting on theft (the rate decreased from 234 to 147 per 100,000 inhabitants) and 13 countries reporting on drug-related crime (the rate increased from 26 to 30 per 100,000 inhabitants). Rates for 2002 do not match those mentioned in the text because of the fact that more countries were included.
