

Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific

16 PEACE AND
JUSTICE



2015





Sustainable Development Goal 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

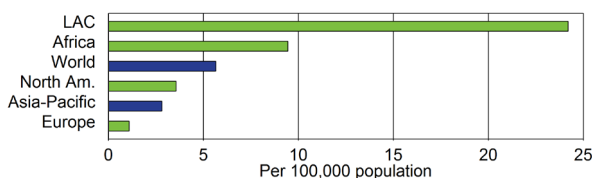
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Stability, peace and inclusive societies are important for sustainable development. Some countries in Asia and the Pacific enjoy sustained levels of peace, security and prosperity, others experience long-term cycles of conflict and violence. Sustainable Development Goal 16 is focused not only on peace and inclusive societies but also on justice, crime and governance aspects, as well as legal identity for all. These aspects will be considered in this chapter.

16.1 Homicide

Intentional homicide is unlawful death purposefully inflicted on a person by another person; it is more commonly described as “murder”. Homicide is considered the ultimate crime as homicides have a ripple effect on families and societies and have a broad impact on security as well as the perception of security.¹

Homicide rates in Asia and the Pacific are among the lowest in the world



Asia and the Pacific has some of the lowest rates of homicide in the world, with Europe being the only region with lower rates. In 2011, the latest year for which comparable data are available for all regions of the world, the Asia-Pacific region had 2.8 homicides per 100,000 population compared with the global average of 5.7 homicides per 100,000 . (Fig 1)

Mirroring the situation in the region, several countries and areas in Asia and the Pacific have some of the lowest homicide rates in the world: Singapore (0.2 per 100,000 population), Japan (0.3 per 100,000) and Hong Kong, China (0.4 per 100,000).

In 2012, the country in the region with the highest rate of intentional homicide was Tuvalu, with 20.1 homicides per 100,000 population. Homicide rates for countries with small population sizes, such as many Pacific island countries and territories – Tuvalu in particular – vary hugely in different years as their small population sizes make the rate highly dependent on specific, one-off events. Tonga is a case in point, where the rate in 2012 was 0.9 intentional homicides per 100,000 population compared with 7.7 homicides per 100,000 in 2009, which was one of the highest rates in the Pacific subregion that year. The country with

Figure 1
Intentional homicide per 100,000 population by region, latest year

consistently high homicide rates is Papua New Guinea; in 2010, the rate was 10.4 homicides per 100,000.

Homicide rates in Asia and the Pacific are decreasing

Overall, there has been a slight reduction in the homicide rate in the Asia-Pacific region since 2002, as can be seen in figure 2. In East and North-East Asia and North and Central Asia, homicide rates have declined, although the rates in North and Central Asia are still substantially higher than in the rest of the region. (Fig 2)

In North and Central Asia, the countries with the highest homicide rates are Kazakhstan (9.0 per 100,000 population) and the Russian Federation (9.2 per 100,000). National distribution of homicides in the Russian Federation is atypical, however, as the homicide rates are higher outside major urban centres than inside. In most other countries, the reverse is true with urban areas experiencing higher homicide rates than rural areas.²

In East Asia and North-East Asia, Mongolia stands out with a rate of 7.2 homicides per 100,000 population, much above the subregional average rate of 0.8.

One type of homicide worth noting is intimate partner/family-related homicides, where women are often the victims. According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), many female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicides are found in Asia and the Pacific; the estimated total number of such deaths was 19,900 in 2012, or 46 per cent of all estimated intimate partner/family-related homicides worldwide.³

16.2 Prisons

Prison populations and prison population rates reflect to varying degrees the levels of crime, criminal justice policy and adherence to the rule of law in a country; such populations also

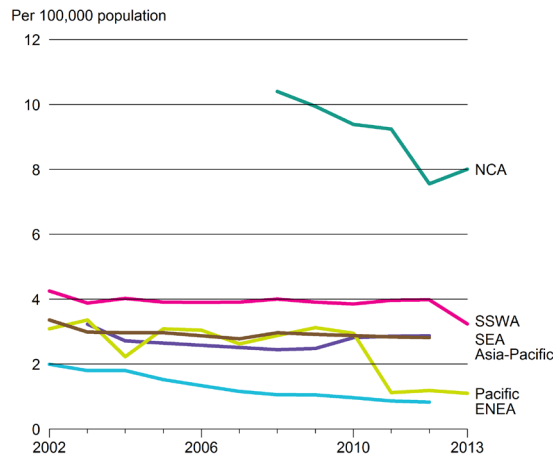


Figure 2
Intentional homicides per 100,000 population by subregion, 2002-2013

have substantial and often underestimated social and economic impacts. High prison rates can, for example, result in long-term economic problems if they lead to income inequality and more concentrated poverty, particularly if prison rates are highest among vulnerable groups, such as the young, the poor, the poorly educated and minorities. Further disaggregation of data, suggested as part of the Sustainable Development Goal process, would give a more complete picture of the prison population and its socio-economic impacts.

Asia and the Pacific has the lowest number of persons held in prisons per 100,000 population in the world

Asia and the Pacific has the lowest number of people held in prisons per 100,000 population of all regions in the world, with 99 prisoners per 100,000 compared with the global average of 155 prisoners per 100,000. (Fig 3)

Despite this comparatively low incarceration rate, due to the large population of the region 45 per cent of all prisoners in the world are in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2013, the majority of these prisoners were in China (1.68 million) followed by

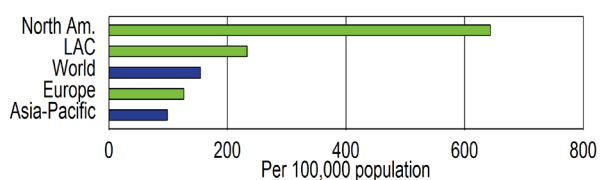


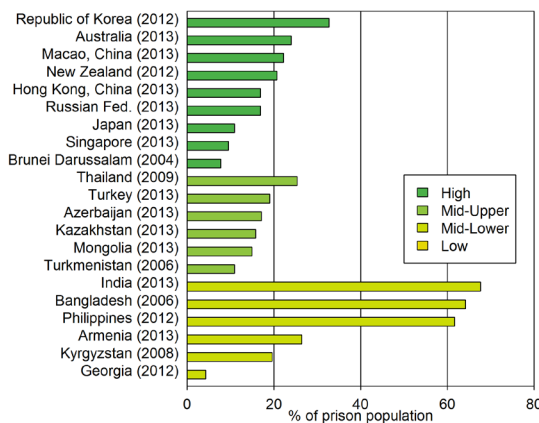
Figure 3
People held in prison per 100,000 population, by region, 2012

the Russian Federation (677,287). In 2012, nearly a third (31 per cent) of all prisoners in the world were held in China and the Russian Federation.

The highest incarceration rates in the region are found in countries in North and Central Asia, such as the Russian Federation (490 per 100,000 population) and Georgia (444 per 100,000). In contrast, countries such as India (31 per 100,000 population), Japan (53 per 100,000) and Indonesia (63 per 100,000) have very low incarceration rates. (Fig 4)

More than 450,000 prisoners in Asia and the Pacific are being held without trial or are awaiting trial

Figure 4
Untried or in pre-trial detention as percentage of prison population

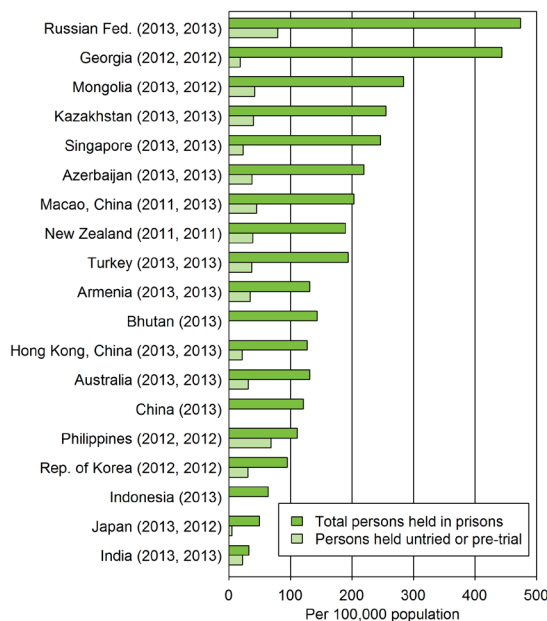


In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁴ it is stated that no one may be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or imprisonment. All prisoners should have a fair trial and the chance to defend themselves against their accusers. Despite provisions in international law which restrict the use of pretrial detention to narrowly prescribed circumstances, the overuse and long periods of pretrial detention are endemic in many countries.⁵

The proportion of prisoners held without trial or awaiting trial varies substantially across countries in the region, from a low in Georgia of 4.2 per cent of all prisoners to a high of more than 60 per cent of all prisoners in three countries: the Philippines (61.6 per cent); Bangladesh (64.2 per cent); and India (67.6 per cent). In India alone, that statistic equates to more than a quarter of a million prisoners being held without trial or awaiting trial. (Fig 4)

While the numbers of untried prisoners is staggering in some countries, for the sake of comparison the rate of untried or pretrial prisoners per 100,000 population should be compared. Figure 5 shows this rate for a few countries where data are available. As can be seen, the Russian Federation has the highest number of individuals in untried or pretrial detention (79.4 per 100,000 population), followed by the Philippines (68.5 per 100,000). Japan has the lowest number of untried or pretrial detainees in the region at 5.8 per 100,000. (Fig 5)

Figure 5
Total persons held in prisons and persons held untried or pre-trial, per 100,000 population



16.3 Legal identity

All States issue some sort of proof of identity for their citizens, such as ID cards, birth certificates, drivers' licenses and passports. Such documents are essential for individuals to establish their identity, demonstrate their civil status, and to ensure their rights. Currently, the best proxy data on legal identity are the available data on birth registration coverage, although such data do not exist for all countries in the region and are rarely collected on a routine basis.

More than 135 million people in Asia and the Pacific have not had their births registered⁶

As can be seen in figure 6, many countries in Asia and the Pacific are still far from providing universal birth registration coverage. It is, however, important to note that the data on birth registration coverage are still scarce, and a lot more work is needed on this matter before it will be possible to compare data from different countries.

Based on the latest data available, the three countries in the region with the lowest proportion of registered births are Bangladesh (31 per cent), Pakistan (34 per cent) and Afghanistan (37 per cent). These data are, however, from 2011, and all three countries have recently made a strong effort to improve their registration rates as part of their activities under the regional Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) initiative to "Get Every One in the Picture".⁷ In Pacific island countries and territories, the picture is mixed, with countries such as Samoa and Vanuatu having low birth registration rates, while other countries have almost 100 per cent coverage rates. As in other subregions, the reasons for these diversions are predominantly historical and depend on government support for establishing and maintaining well-functioning CRVS systems. (Fig 6)

Poorer families and those living in rural settlements are less likely to register the birth of their children than wealthier families and those living in urban settlements

While there are only small differences between the birth registration rates of females and males, in many countries a child born into wealthier families is more likely to have its birth registered than a child born into a less wealthy family. As figure 7 shows, birth

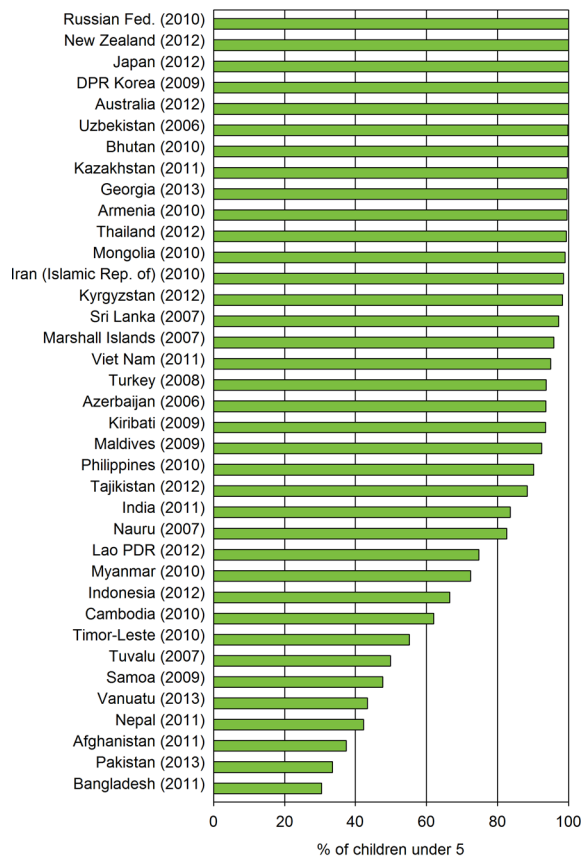


Figure 6
Birth registration coverage, children under 5

registration rates in Afghanistan, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Pakistan, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are higher in wealthier quintiles. A lack of legal identity disadvantages individuals in lower wealth quintiles even more than those in higher quintiles. Such anonymity may decrease the access of poorer people to social services, such as education and health, as well as their chances of gaining formal employment. (Fig 7)

The likelihood of parents registering their children's birth is highly dependent on how easily accessible are the registration offices that carry out this function. The distance to registration offices as well as difficulties that parents face in registering their child's birth, such as time and financial costs, can influence parents' decision-making process when they consider registering their child's birth. It is therefore no surprise that birth registration rates are often lower in rural than in urban areas.

Figure 7
Birth registration by wealth quintiles, children under 5

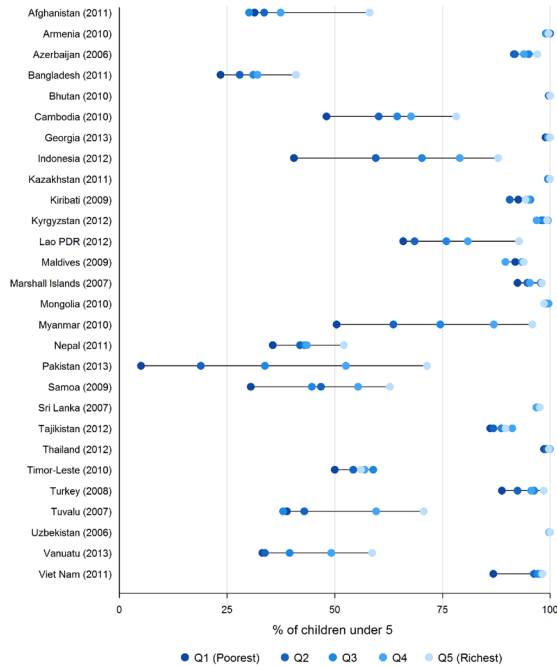
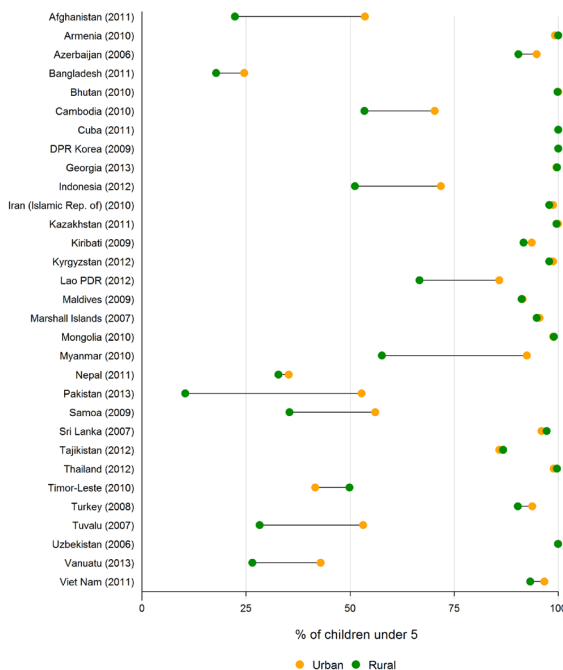


Figure 8
Birth registration rates, rural and urban residence, children under 5



As can be seen in figure 8, in some countries in the region very large differences exist between birth registration coverage for rural and urban populations. The country with the greatest disparity is Pakistan, where 59 per cent of the urban population is registered, compared with only 23 per cent in rural areas. In Myanmar, there is almost universal (94 per cent) birth registration coverage in urban areas; in rural areas, 64 per cent of births are registered. Unfortunately, birth registration rates for the entire region do not yet exist.

16.4 Data and monitoring issues

Data coverage

According to recent discussions on measuring indicators for Sustainable Development Goal 16, significant progress has been made in measuring peace, justice and institutions, although substantial methodological work still needs to be done for some targets.⁸ Cases in point are topics including trafficking, corruption and transparency, although countries such as Indonesia have developed a National Democracy Index, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has developed a framework of human rights indicators in addition to the ongoing work by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, among others.

Due to data availability, chapter 16 is focused predominantly on issues related to homicide, prisons and legal identity, i.e. birth registration. Some data on robbery and other violent crimes, such as sexual violence, were also available but not included in the chapter as the relevant data were available only for a limited number of countries. In respect of the available indicators, the Pacific island countries and areas were less likely to have data available, although availability has improved over the past 15 years. In looking at the issue of data availability for the region overall, it is clear that there were substantial improvements in data availability in the period from 2000-2004 to 2005-2009 and for the period 2010-2014 when data from more countries were available than previously had been the case.

With regard to the indicator used for legal identity, i.e. birth registration of children under age 5, the data used predominantly come from Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys. The source for registration coverage for children under age 5 should, ideally, come directly from civil registration systems combined with other data sources, such as national censuses, while alternatives, such as Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and Demographic and Health Surveys, could be used in the interim until civil

Box 1

Human trafficking

Human trafficking is a particularly heinous type of crime, but measurement of such trafficking is rife with measurement errors. Currently, no methodologically sound estimate of the magnitude of the trafficking problem is available,^a although UNODC has carried out some analysis of the issue of human trafficking in Asia and the Pacific based on officially detected offenders and victims. The real scope of the problem is therefore likely to be larger than the current estimates, although data can be used to provide an indication of patterns and flows of trafficking in persons.

In South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific,^b the majority of trafficking victims are exploited in the form of forced labour, servitude and slavery (64 per cent),^c whereas in Europe and Central Asia, the majority of victims are trafficked into sexual exploitation (66 per cent).

Globally, about 60 per cent of trafficking victims are women or girls.^d In South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, the proportion is even higher, with 83 per cent of victims being female. In Asia and the Pacific, the majority of victims are adults (67 per cent in East Asia and the Pacific; 60 per cent in South Asia; and 98 per cent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia).

Trafficking flows are national, regional and interregional, with victims from East Asia being the most widely dispersed around the world. Victims from East Asia are being detected in all regions of the world.^e South Asia is also a significant source area for trafficked victims.

^a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.14.V.10), p. 30.

^b UNODC subregions definitions differ from ESCAP definitions, please refer to *Ibid* p. 20.

^c *Ibid.*, p. 5. (Note: The data in the UNODC report refer to East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific; those from Central Asia are grouped with those from Europe.)

^d *Ibid.*, p. 29.

^e *Ibid.*, p. 41.

registration system data are of sufficient quality for the purpose.

As for the issue of measuring birth registration of children under 5, insufficient focus is placed on the issue of timeliness of birth registration. Births need to be registered within the time limit prescribed by the national law and within a maximum of one year of the birth, as recommended by the United Nations.⁹ Registration of births after one year is done within the provisions for delayed registration, a practice that should be discouraged. Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁰ clearly calls for States to register children immediately after birth.

Measuring corruption

Measurement of corruption is particularly difficult because of its hidden and complex nature; however, corruption covers a range of offences from “petty” exchanges of small amounts of money to “grand” corruption that pervades the highest levels of a national Government, leading to a broad erosion of confidence in good governance, the rule of law and economic stability. However, there is no single, comprehensive, universally accepted definition of corruption; attempts to develop such a definition invariably encounter legal, criminological and, in many countries, political problems. Comprehensive understanding of the extent, modality, cost and enablers of corruption therefore require

a range of indicators that can be tailored to specific country and cultural contexts, including tolerance towards corruption. Data, results and methodologies should be made publicly available in order to increase transparency, assess anti-corruption measures, raise awareness and drive change.

Household corruption surveys and victimization surveys with a module on corruption can provide solid information on the experience of bribery, typically occurring in the interaction between businesses and the public sector in the context of basic service delivery/transactions. However, they do not capture instances of “grand” corruption, trading in influence or abuses of power.

Endnotes

- 1** United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Global Study on Homicide 2013: Trends, Contexts, Data* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 14.IV.1). Available from http://www.unodc.org/documents/gsh/pdfs/2014_GLOBAL_HOMICIDE_BOOK_web.pdf (accessed 5 October 2015).
- 2** *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 3** *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 4** General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).
- 5** United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), “Handbook on strategies to reduce overcrowding in prisons”, *Criminal Justice Handbook Series* (Vienna, 2013). Available from http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Overcrowding_in_prisons_Ebook.pdf.
- 6** United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Every Child's Birth Right: Inequalities and Trends in Birth Registration* (New York, 2013), p. 15.
- 7** ESCAP: Report of the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific E/ESCAP/MCCRVS/4, see also the statements made by these countries at the Ministerial Conference, available from <http://www.getinthepicture.org>.
- 8** See “Six main takeaways on indicators for Sustainable Development Goal 16 from the Virtual Network on SDG 16 consultations”. Available from <http://www.globalpolicywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Six-main-takeaways-on-Indicators-for-SDG-16.pdf>.
- 9** See United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3* (Sales No. E.13.XVII.10).
- 10** United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.



1 NO POVERTY



2 NO HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



7 RENEWABLE ENERGY



8 GOOD JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



14 LIFE BELOW WATER



15 LIFE ON LAND



16 PEACE AND JUSTICE



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific