

The Geneva Declaration

How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?

Global Burden of Armed Violence

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

[Launch in Geneva](#)

[Press Release](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Interactive Map & Charts](#)

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008

Armed Violence and Development

Country-Level Assessments

Influencing processes

Public Event

Every Body Counts: Launch of the Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

Monday 11 May 2015 | 12:00 - 14:00

Auditorium Ivan Pictet, Maison de la Paix | Geneva

Organized by the Geneva Declaration Secretariat and the Small Arms Survey, in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

Every Body Counts, the 2015 edition of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence*, provides a wealth of data relevant to security and the post-2015 sustainable development framework. It estimates that 508,000 people died violently—in both conflict and non-conflict settings—every year in 2007–12.

The report offers new evidence of the global distribution of lethal violence and its trends since 2007. It benefits from increased availability of disaggregated data enhancing knowledge of context and characteristics of lethal violence, especially incidents involving firearms. The report also includes in-depth analysis of gender aspects of lethal violence and provides a fine-grain picture of the economic costs of homicide.

The third volume in the Global Burden of Armed Violence series examines how a comprehensive approach to violent deaths can serve to track progress towards a peace and security goal—whether as part of the post-2015 development framework or as a goal within a national strategy.

The *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015: Every Body Counts* was launched at the Maison de la Paix, Geneva, at 12:00 on 11 May 2015. The event included presentation on the research findings, followed by a panel discussion.

Every Body Counts: Launch of the Global Burden of Armed Violence



Programme

12:00 Welcome and Opening

- ▶ **Michael Møller**, Acting Head, United Nations Office at Geneva
- ▶ **Claude Wild**, Ambassador, Head of the Human Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

12:15 The Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015: Every Body Counts

- ▶ **Keith Krause**, Programme Director at the Small Arms Survey and Director of the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) at the Graduate Institute

12:40 Panel discussion: Using data for 'peaceful and inclusive societies'

The panel discussion will highlight how monitoring data on violence can be used to track progress in implementing violence reduction targets at national as well as regional and global level.

- ▶ **Neil Buhne**, Director, UNDP Office in Geneva
- ▶ **Markus Heiniger**, Senior Policy Adviser Conflict and Human Rights, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)
- ▶ **Anna Alvazzi del Frate**, Research Director, Small Arms Survey

Moderation: **Sara Sekkenes**, UNDP

Measuring problems

Supporting solutions



Previous Reports

- ▶ [Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011](#)
- ▶ [Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008](#)

Related Link

- ▶ **More** on Small Arms Survey work on [measuring armed violence](#)
- ▶ **More** on the Graduate Institute's [events webpage](#)
- ▶ **More** about the [Maison de la Paix](#)

Follow on twitter

- ▶ [#GBAV2015](#)
- ▶ [#SDG16](#)

Related Publications

- ▶ **See also** [Research Note 49 Every BodyCounts: Measuring Violent Deaths](#)



The Geneva Declaration

- ▶ What is the Declaration?
- ▶ What is the political context?
- ▶ How does it work?
- ▶ Who has signed it?

Influencing processes

- ▶ SDGs and Goal 16
- ▶ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
- ▶ Civil Society Process
- ▶ Other Processes

Measuring problems

- ▶ How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence
- ▶ Armed Violence and Development
- ▶ Country-Level Assessments

Supporting solutions

- ▶ Best Practice Seminars
- ▶ Guidelines on Programming
- ▶ Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP)
- ▶ Focus Countries

Press Release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.30 AM (GENEVA) ON 8 MAY 2015



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Every Body Counts

Violent deaths decrease; yet armed conflict grows more lethal

Geneva, 8 May 2015 – *The Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015: Every Body Counts* reveals that violent deaths decreased globally; yet armed conflict grows more lethal.

This edition estimates 508,000 violent deaths per year between 2007–12, down from 526,000 reported in 2011 for the period 2004–09. A larger proportion of these deaths, however, were directly related to conflict (70,000 deaths per year, up from 55,000).

Data shows that lethal violence was highly concentrated among a small group of countries: 25 per cent of violent deaths occurred in 18 countries that count only four per cent of the world's population. The three most violent countries in 2012 were Syria, Honduras, and Venezuela.

While the global number of violent deaths decreased, the economic impact of homicide increased. The report calculates the global cost of homicide in 2010 at USD 171 billion, a 6 per cent increase on USD 160 billion in 2000. The longer, safer, and more productive people's lives become, the higher the economic cost of homicide. Those countries with growing economies and high homicide level stand to reap the most economic benefit from violence prevention efforts.

Other findings include:

- Intense outbreaks of conflict-related violence result in sharp peaks in the rate of violent deaths in affected countries. Libya and Syria experienced the most violent crises in 2011 and 2012 respectively, with a rate of 276.5 violent deaths per 100,000 population in 2011 in Libya (or a total of approximately 17,000 violent deaths), and 180.2 in 2012 in Syria (39,000 violent deaths).
- Violence was concentrated in non-conflict countries. Among the 18 top-ranking countries (those with an average over 30 violent deaths per 100,000 population over the study period), only one-third were experiencing armed conflict. In 2012, the violent death rate of Honduras (90.4) and Venezuela (72.2) ranked these countries just after Syria.
- The number of women victims of homicide decreased. The global estimate of 60,000 female homicide victims per year is almost ten per cent lower than that for 2004–09. Compared to the data from the previous edition, Honduras and El Salvador show the most dramatic increases in the rate of female homicides. For the same period, rates in South Africa registered the sharpest drop, though the average remains high.
- Firearms were used in 44 per cent of all violent killings, or an annual average of nearly 197,000 deaths for the period 2007–12. The share of firearms-related deaths was highest in Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.
- Disaggregated data at the subnational level can help to define priorities for interventions and identify targets for programmes and assistance where they are likely to be most effective. For example in Brazil, trend data show that while rates of lethal violence decreased in state capitals such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, they increased in the north of the country and smaller municipalities, with no major effect on the national rate.

A new interactive online tool, available at www.smallarmssurvey.org/GBAV, allows users to examine lethal violence data at the national level.

The *Global Burden of Armed Violence* series represents a unique integrated approach to understanding the global impact of lethal violence, and provides a solid base for supporting the measuring and implementation of the proposed Goal 16 on 'peaceful and inclusive societies' in the post-2015 development framework.

The three editions of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* are based on a comprehensive database that covers violent deaths across both conflict and non-conflict settings. The ongoing research, conducted by the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey, is a key monitoring tool for the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. This diplomatic initiative was launched by Switzerland and UNDP in 2006 with the goal of achieving a measurable reduction in the burden of armed violence by 2015. ■

MEDIA CONTACTS: SMALL ARMS SURVEY **MARTIN FIELD** (+41 79 573 3319 or martin.field@smallarmssurvey.org)
UNDP **SARAH BEL** (+41229178544 or sarah.bel@undp.org)

Background

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development is a diplomatic initiative aimed at addressing the interrelations between armed violence and development. Launched in 2006 by UNDP and Switzerland, and initially supported by 41 other countries, the Geneva Declaration strives to achieve measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and improvements in human security by 2015. It is currently supported by 113 countries. The Small Arms Survey hosts the Secretariat of the Declaration.

The Small Arms Survey has led the research under the 'measurability pillar' of the Geneva Declaration since the beginning of the initiative. In this framework the Small Arms Survey has produced the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* reports (2008, 2011, and 2015) which take an integrated approach to the complex and volatile dynamics of lethal violence around the world.

The *Global Burden of Armed Violence* reports use 'violent deaths' as the main indicator for measuring and monitoring the scope and impact of armed violence globally, and refine a methodology for its collection and analysis. The violent death of a human being is the most extreme consequence of armed violence, and is treated seriously in all societies. For this reason it is likely to be recorded more accurately than other violent events. As a consequence, the number of persons who die violently is frequently used as a proxy measure for insecurity in both conflict and non-conflict settings.

The *Global Burden of Armed Violence* is published by Cambridge University Press.



Executive Summary

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

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

This volume presents analysis of comprehensive data for the period 2007–12 as well as assessments of more recent trends and dynamics in lethal violence in both conflict and non-conflict settings. Thanks to marked improvements in the collection and reporting of disaggregated lethal

violence data in many countries, its chapters are able to offer more robust and simultaneously more nuanced assessments of changes in various aspects of lethal violence over time, including the use of firearms and gender-based victimization. In proposing a new calculation method for estimating the global economic cost of homicide, this edition also takes a significant step towards quantifying the costs of armed violence.

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

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

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

Key findings of this volume include the following:

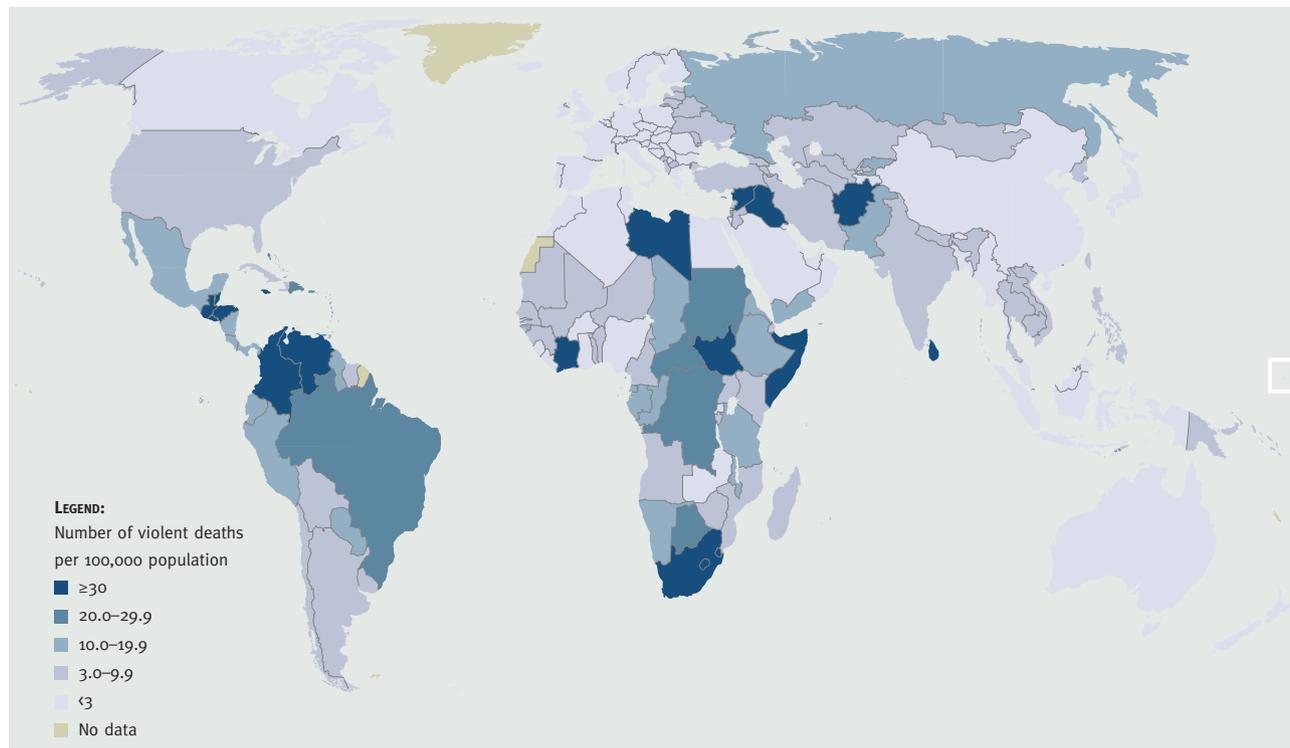
- Estimates reported in successive editions of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* show a continuous drop in the average annual number of violent deaths worldwide: from 540,000 violent deaths for the period 2004–07 and 526,000 for 2004–09, to 508,000 for 2007–12.
- Although the total number of violent deaths per year decreased over the above-mentioned periods, the annual number of direct conflict deaths increased significantly: from an average of 52,000 deaths, to 55,000, to 70,000—with a large proportion of the latter deaths due to armed conflict in Libya and Syria.
- In addition to the 70,000 direct conflict deaths per year, the period 2007–12 also saw an annual average of 377,000 intentional homicides, 42,000 unintentional homicides, and 19,000 deaths due to legal interventions.
- For the period 2007–12, the average global rate of violent deaths stood at 7.4 persons killed per 100,000 population.
- The 18 countries with the highest violent death rates are home to only 4 per cent of the world's population but account for nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of all violent deaths in the world.
- Globally, firearms are used in 46.3 per cent of all homicides and in an estimated 32.3 per cent of direct conflict deaths. That means that

firearms are used in 44.1 per cent of all violent deaths, or an annual average of nearly 197,000 deaths for the period 2007–12.

- On average, an estimated 60,000 women worldwide became victims of homicide every year from 2007 to 2012, accounting for 16 per cent of intentional homicides.
- If the homicide rate between 2000 and 2010 had been reduced to the lowest practically attainable levels—between 2 and 3 deaths per 100,000 population—nearly USD 2 trillion of global homicide-related economic losses could have been saved. That amount is equivalent to 2.64 per cent of the global GDP in 2010.

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

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

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

SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

The post-2015 debate

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

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

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

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

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

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

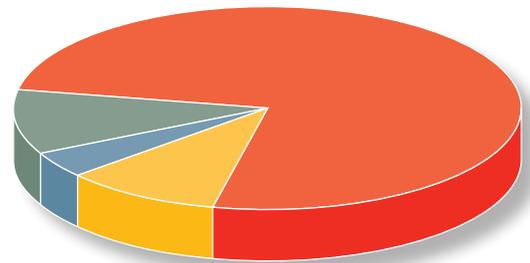
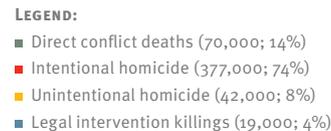
Yet while the growing agreement and support of states and organizations for the inclusion of a goal on peaceful and stable societies within the post-2015 development framework is promising, it should be noted that the reduction of violence and insecurity is not only a means of achieving development goals,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

Chapter highlights

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

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

FIGURE 1 The distribution of the global burden of lethal violence



SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)



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

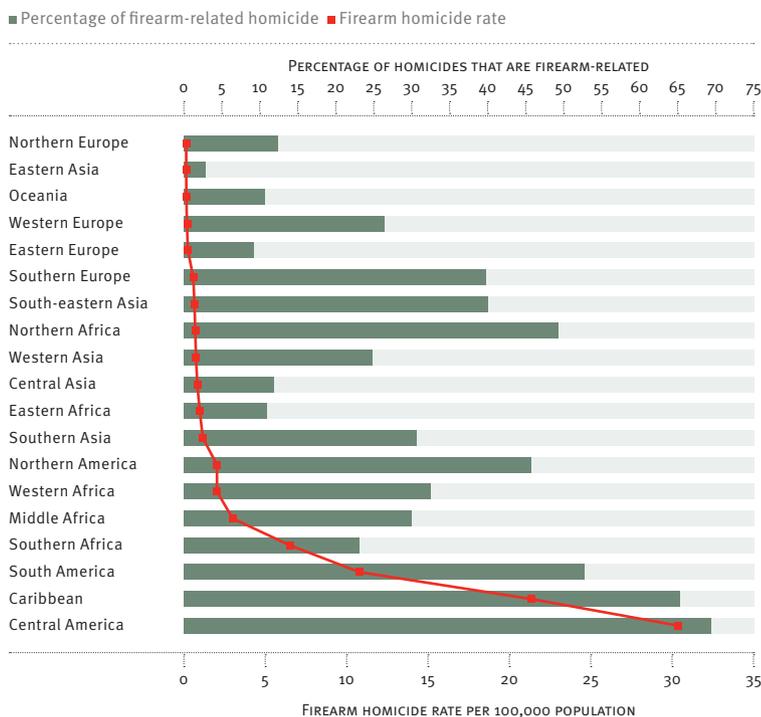
The vast majority of countries exhibit low and decreasing levels of lethal violence. While most of the sub-regions in the world have witnessed

corresponding drops in the number of violent deaths, Northern Africa, Central America, and Southern Africa experienced significant increases in violent death rates per 100,000 population from 2004–09 to 2007–12. Indeed, this volume finds that despite promising reductions of violence around the world, a few countries that are not at war suffer from extremely high levels of violence.

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

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

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



SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

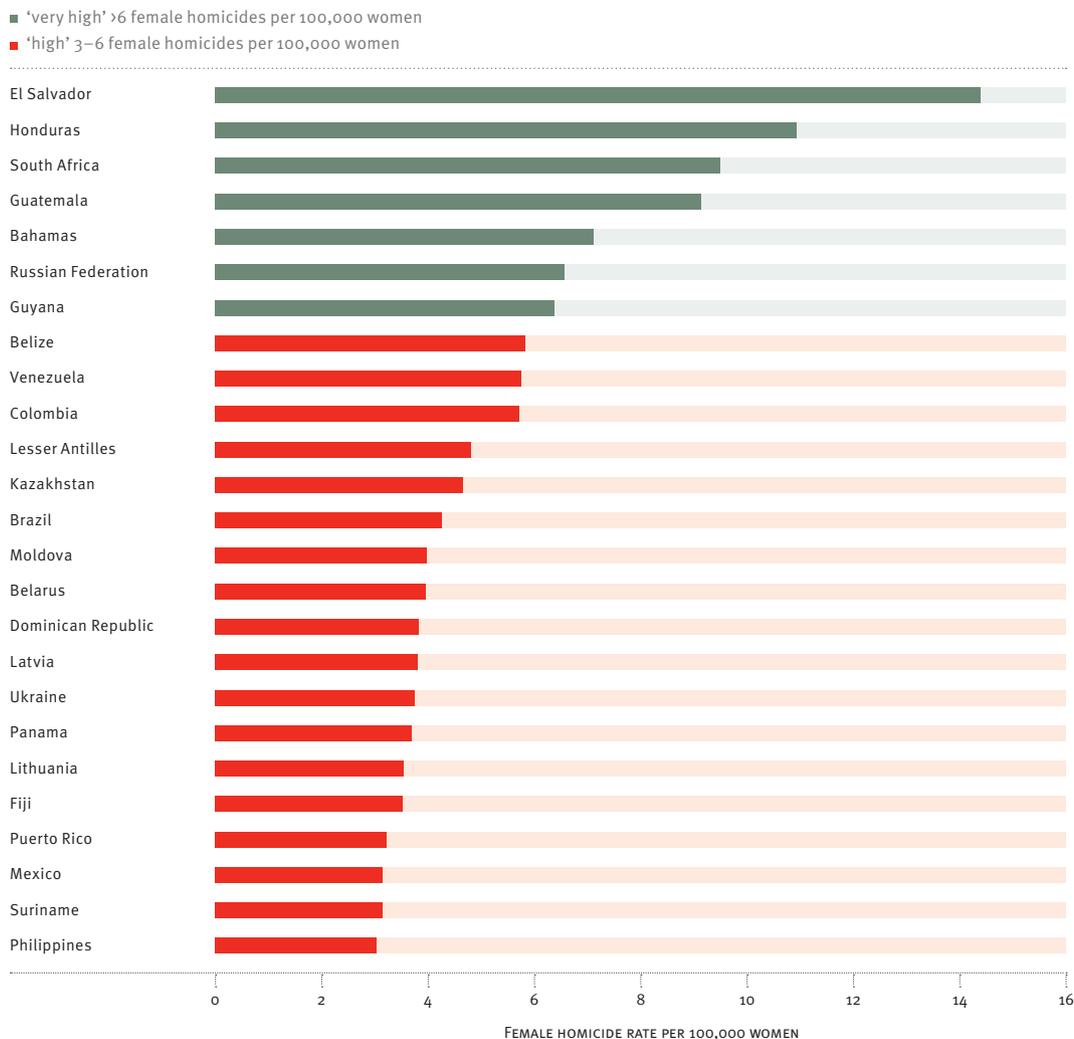
regions with the highest prevalence of firearms use in homicides—in descending order, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America—are also the ones with the highest homicide rates (see Figure 2.17).

Chapter Three (Lethal Violence against Women and Girls) provides an update on figures and patterns of lethal violence against women. In line with the overall decline in the global number of homicides, the average annual number of female homicide victims also decreased slightly, from 66,000 women in 2004–07 to 60,000 women in 2007–12, which corresponds to a small drop from 17 per cent of all intentional homicides to 16 per cent. Of the 360,000 women killed between 2007

and 2012, more than half lost their lives in one of the 25 countries with the highest rates of female homicide, with El Salvador, Honduras, and South Africa topping the list (see Figure 3.4). Countries that witness the highest rates of female homicide tend to have the lowest share of intimate partner violence-related homicide. In these countries, the proportion of women who are killed outside of the private sphere—as opposed to the ‘intimate circle’—is greater than elsewhere. Analysis of the data also shows that the proportion of women who are killed by a firearm—as opposed to other mechanisms—is greater in areas that exhibit high rates of firearm homicide.

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

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

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

SOURCE: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

Disaggregated data can also help to reveal sub-national developments that may remain hidden in national-level data. In Brazil, for example, high rates of lethal violence travelled from state capitals such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo to the north of the country and smaller municipalities, yet the national rate remained the same. Data on

such sub-national shifts can help to define priorities for interventions and to identify targets for programmes and assistance where they are likely to be most effective.

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





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

Conclusion

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

Endnotes

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

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

Bibliography

- Geneva Declaration Secretariat. 2006. Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Geneva, 7 June. <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/GD-Declaration-091020-EN.pdf>
- . 2011. *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011: Lethal Encounters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/globalburden-of-armed-violence/global-burden-of-armed-violence-2011.html>
- . 2014. GBAV 2014 Database. Geneva: Geneva Declaration Secretariat.
- Millennium Project. n.d. 'Goals, Targets and Indicators.' <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm>
- UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). 2000. *United Nations Millennium Declaration*. Adopted 8 September. UN Document A/RES/55/2 of 18 September. <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>
- . 2004. 'Follow-up to the Outcome of the Millennium Summit.' UN Document A/59/565 of 2 December. <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/report.pdf>
- . 2009. *Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence*. Report to the Secretary-General. UN Document A/64/228 of 5 August. <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/UNSG-Report-Armed-Violence.pdf>
- . 2014. *Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals*. UN Document A/68/970 of 12 August. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/970
- UNTT (United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda). 2013. *Statistics and Indicators for the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. New York: United Nations Publications. July. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/UNTT_MonitoringReport_WEB.pdf

The Geneva Declaration

How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?

Global Burden of Armed Violence

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

Launch in Geneva

Press Release

Executive Summary

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Interactive Map & Charts

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008

Armed Violence and Development

Country-Level Assessments

Influencing processes

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

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

Introduction & Chapter Summary

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

The ‘business case’ for reducing the cost of armed violence is strong. In Latin America, one-third of businesses identify crime as their major challenge; in Mexico, the cost of insecurity and violence to enterprises and businesses is estimated to have reached around USD 7.7 billion in 2011 (World Bank, 2011, p.

Measuring problems

Supporting solutions

GBAV Reports

- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008
- ▶ Cumulative Index (2008–2011)

Interactive Map & Charts



- ▶ Map, trend and bar charts for several key armed violence indicators
- ▶ Download database (excel)

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

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



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

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

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

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

The chapter's main conclusions are:

▶ Despite continued debates on the importance and directionality of the links

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

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

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

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

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

The Geneva Declaration

- What is the Declaration?
- What is the political context?
- How does it work?
- Who has signed it?

Influencing processes

- SDGs and Goal 16
- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
- Civil Society Process
- Other Processes

Measuring problems

- How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?
- Global Burden of Armed Violence
- Armed Violence and Development
- Country-Level Assessments

Supporting solutions

- Best Practice Seminars
- Guidelines on Programming
- Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP)
- Focus Countries

The Geneva Declaration

How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?

Global Burden of Armed Violence

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

Launch in Geneva

Press Release

Executive Summary

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Interactive Map & Charts

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008

Armed Violence and Development

Country-Level Assessments

Influencing processes

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

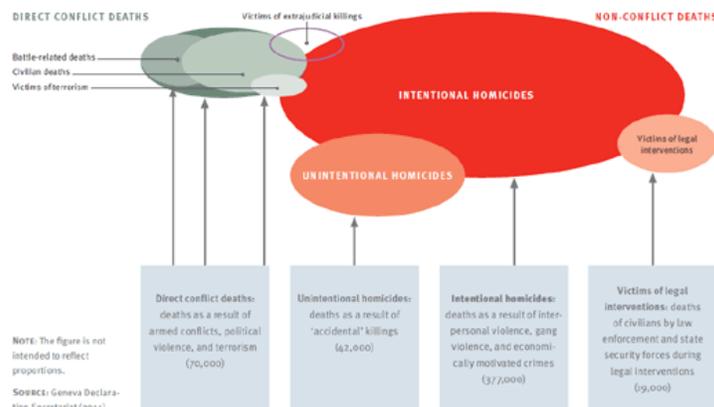
Chapter Two: Lethal Violence Update

Introduction & Chapter Summary

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

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

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



Note: The figure is not intended to reflect proportions.
Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

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

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

Measuring problems

Supporting solutions

GBAV Reports

- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008
- ▶ Cumulative Index (2008–2011)

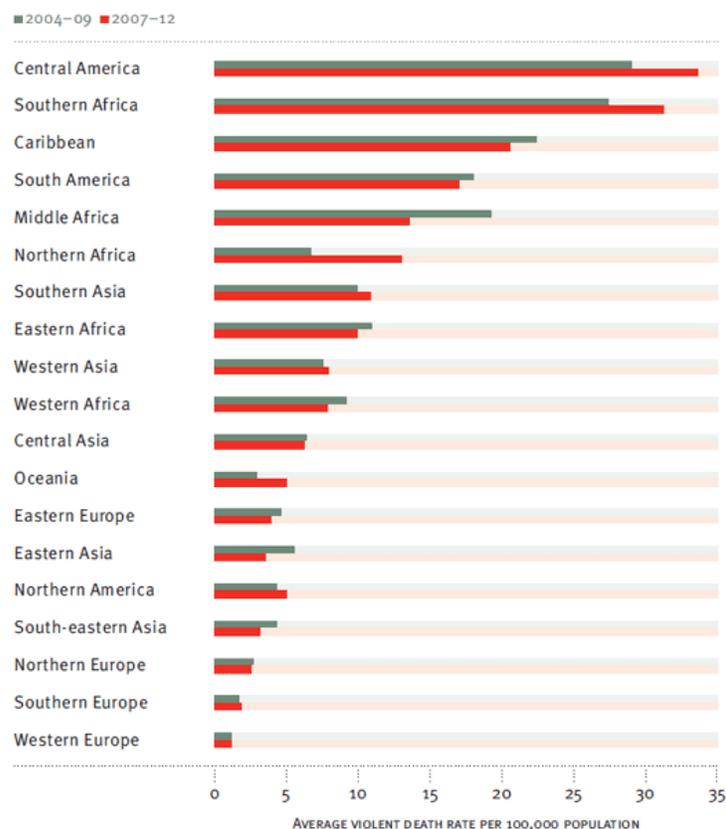
Interactive Map & Charts



- ▶ Map, trend and bar charts for several key armed violence indicators
- ▶ Download database (excel)

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

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



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

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

The chapter finds that:

- ▶ At least 508,000 people died annually as a result of lethal violence in the period 2007–12, corresponding to an average rate of 7.4 persons killed per 100,000 population. This figure comprises approximately 70,000 direct conflict deaths, 377,000 intentional homicides, 42,000 unintentional homicides, and 19,000 deaths due to legal interventions.
- ▶ More than one in ten violent deaths around the world occurs in conflict settings. Intentional homicides account for nearly three out of four violent deaths in the world.
- ▶ The 18 countries with the highest violent death rates are home to a mere 4 per cent of the world's population but account for nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of all violent deaths in the world.
- ▶ A comparison of GBAV data for the periods 2004–09 and 2007–12 reveals reductions in the numbers of intentional homicides (from 396,000 to 377,000), unintentional homicides (from 54,000 to 42,000), and killings during legal interventions (from 21,000 to 19,000), but a significant increase in direct conflict deaths (from 55,000 to 70,000).
- ▶ In 2012, the latest year for which data is available, 37 countries exhibited lethal violence rates higher than 10 per 100,000. Only 13 of these countries were experiencing a conflict or had recently emerged from one.
- ▶ In 2012, the countries with the highest rates of lethal violence per 100,000 were Syria (180.2), Honduras (90.4), and Venezuela (72.2).
- ▶ The sub-regions most affected by lethal violence are—in decreasing order—

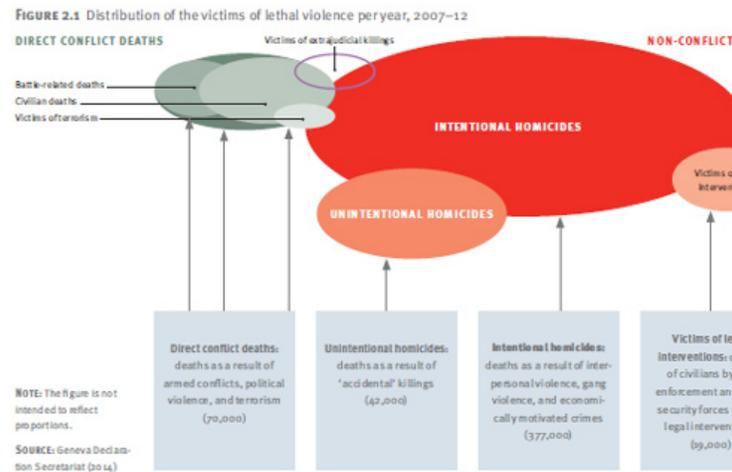
Central

America (with a rate of violent 33.6 deaths per 100,000 population), Southern Africa (31.2), the Caribbean (20.5), and South America (17.0).

- ▶ The sub-regions with the greatest increase in the violent death rates per 100,000 population from 2004–09 to 2007–12 are Northern Africa (94.8 per cent increase), Central America (15.7 per cent), and Southern Africa (13.8 per cent).
- ▶ Globally, firearms are used in 46.3 per cent of all homicides and in an estimated 32.3 per cent of direct conflict deaths. That means that firearms are used in 44.1 per cent of all violent deaths, or an annual average of nearly 197,000 deaths for the period 2007–12.
- ▶ Central America, the Caribbean, and South America suffer from the highest firearm homicide shares (above 50 per cent) and exhibit the highest firearm homicide rates.

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

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



The Geneva Declaration

- ▶ What is the Declaration?
- ▶ What is the political context?
- ▶ How does it work?
- ▶ Who has signed it?

Influencing processes

- ▶ SDGs and Goal 16
- ▶ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
- ▶ Civil Society Process
- ▶ Other Processes

Measuring problems

- ▶ How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence
- ▶ Armed Violence and Development
- ▶ Country-Level Assessments

Supporting solutions

- ▶ Best Practice Seminars
- ▶ Guidelines on Programming
- ▶ Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP)
- ▶ Focus Countries

The Geneva Declaration

How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?

Global Burden of Armed Violence

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

Launch in Geneva

Press Release

Executive Summary

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

[Chapter 3](#)

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Interactive Map & Charts

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008

Armed Violence and Development

Country-Level Assessments

Influencing processes

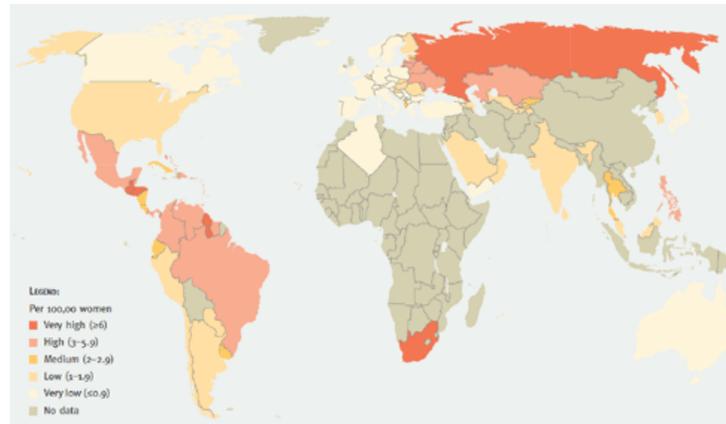
Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

**Chapter Three:
Lethal Violence against Women and Girls**

Introduction & Chapter Summary

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

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



Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2014)

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

Measuring problems

Supporting solutions

GBAV Reports

- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008
- ▶ Cumulative Index (2008–2011)

Interactive Map & Charts



- ▶ Map, trend and bar charts for several key armed violence indicators
- ▶ Download database (excel)



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

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

- ▶ On average, based on data available from 104 countries and territories, the GBAV estimates that 60,000 women and girls worldwide were killed violently every year, from 2007 to 2012. These deaths account for approximately 16 per cent of all intentional homicides committed globally.
- ▶ Since the 2011 edition of the GBAV, the median rate of women killed has decreased slightly and female homicide rates have become polarized, as the number of countries with very high and very low rates of lethal violence against women increased.
- ▶ While much of the lethal and non-lethal violence against women and girls takes place in non-conflict settings, the risk of multiple or repeat victimization of women is compounded during conflicts.
- ▶ In countries with high rates of firearm-related lethal violence the percentage of women killed with firearms is also higher.
- ▶ While the majority of homicide victims are men, women are the primary victims of intimate partner homicide, including homicide-suicide events.
- ▶ In countries with low levels of female homicide, most killings occur inside the home and are generally perpetrated by an intimate partner or member of the nuclear or extended family.

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

The Geneva Declaration

- ▶ What is the Declaration?
- ▶ What is the political context?
- ▶ How does it work?
- ▶ Who has signed it?

Influencing processes

- ▶ SDGs and Goal 16
- ▶ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
- ▶ Civil Society Process
- ▶ Other Processes

Measuring problems

- ▶ How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence
- ▶ Armed Violence and Development
- ▶ Country-Level Assessments

Supporting solutions

- ▶ Best Practice Seminars
- ▶ Guidelines on Programming
- ▶ Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP)
- ▶ Focus Countries

The Geneva Declaration

How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?

Global Burden of Armed Violence

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

Launch in Geneva

Press Release

Executive Summary

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Interactive Map & Charts

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008

Armed Violence and Development

Country-Level Assessments

Influencing processes

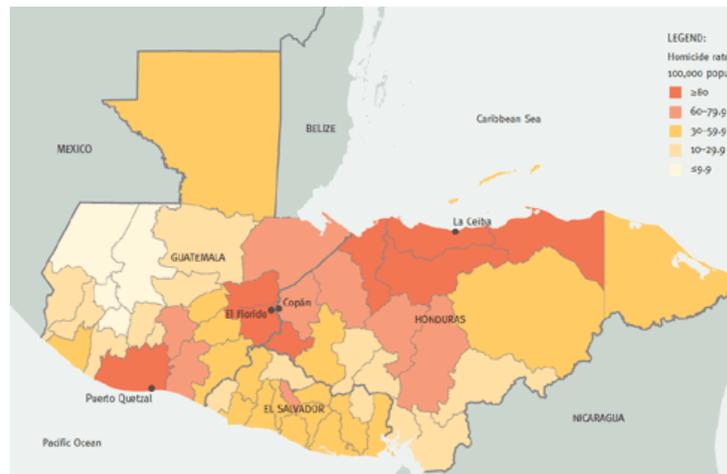
Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

Chapter Four: Unpacking Lethal Violence

Introduction & Chapter Summary

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

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



Source: ACAPS (2014)

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

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

Measuring problems

Supporting solutions

GBAV Reports

- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008
- ▶ Cumulative Index (2008–2011)

Interactive Map & Charts



- ▶ Map, trend and bar charts for several key armed violence indicators
- ▶ Download database (excel)

violence.

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



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

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

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

This chapter finds that:

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

can be of key significance in tracking progress towards the post-2015 development goals.

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

The Geneva Declaration

- ▶ What is the Declaration?
- ▶ What is the political context?
- ▶ How does it work?
- ▶ Who has signed it?

Influencing processes

- ▶ SDGs and Goal 16
- ▶ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
- ▶ Civil Society Process
- ▶ Other Processes

Measuring problems

- ▶ How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence
- ▶ Armed Violence and Development
- ▶ Country-Level Assessments

Supporting solutions

- ▶ Best Practice Seminars
- ▶ Guidelines on Programming
- ▶ Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP)
- ▶ Focus Countries

The Geneva Declaration

Influencing processes

Measuring problems

Supporting solutions

How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?

Global Burden of Armed Violence

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

Launch in Geneva

Press Release

Executive Summary

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Interactive Map & Charts

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008

Armed Violence and Development

Country-Level Assessments

Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

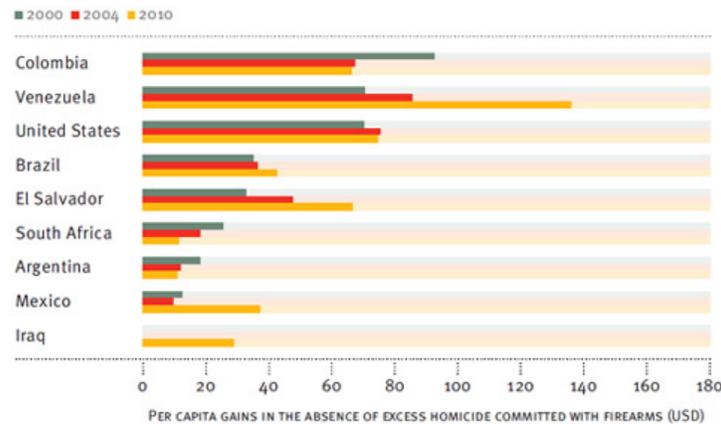
**Chapter Five:
The Economic Cost of Homicide**

Introduction & Chapter Summary

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

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

Figure 5.11 Per capita GDP gains in the absence of firearm-related homicide, 2000–10



Source: CERAC (2014a)

This chapter focuses on the economic loss to society of homicide and the benefits of reducing it, using two key concepts: ‘excess homicide’ and average life expectancy. The first refers to an ideal situation in which violence is rare and people can expect to live without the fear of meeting a violent death. Excess homicide is the difference between a ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ level of homicide (see Box 5.1)³ and the incidence of homicide observed in reality. By comparing average life expectancy in 105 countries for which age and sex-disaggregated data is available,⁴ with the life expectancy these countries would have had in the absence of excess homicide, it is possible to estimate how many more months on average people would have lived in a context of a ‘normal’ level of homicide. The economic impact⁵ is calculated on the basis of how much more the victims of homicide would have contributed to the economy during those additional months.

Figure 5.13 Gains in life expectancy in the absence of firearm-related homicide

GBAV Reports

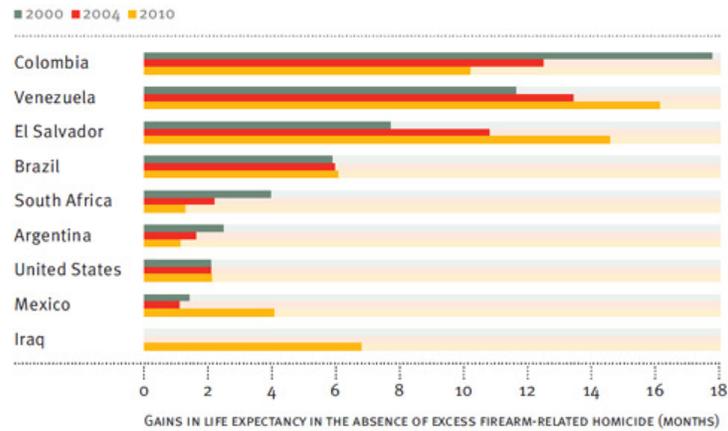
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008
- ▶ Cumulative Index (2008–2011)

Interactive Map & Charts



- ▶ Map, trend and bar charts for several key armed violence indicators
- ▶ Download database (excel)

expressed in months, 2000–10



Source: CERAC (2014a)

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

Second, since income and economic productivity vary greatly from one country to another, so does 154 *GLOBAL BURDEN OF ARMED VIOLENCE 2015* the absolute cost of homicide. For example, an increase in the number of homicides in Singapore, where the per capita income in 2012 was USD 54,007, will cost more in absolute terms than a similar increase in Afghanistan, where per capita income in 2012 was only USD 688 (World Bank, 2014a). In this sense, the murder of a Singaporean has a higher cost in absolute terms than the murder of an Afghan. It is important to underline here that the economic cost in monetary terms has no bearing on the value of a human life, merely that in absolute terms the forgone income depends on the country's wealth.

The chapter finds that:

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

1 Due to the lack of available data for many countries, most of which are in sub-Saharan Africa, the sample used in this chapter covers only 105 countries, which together account for about 71 per cent of the total global population. Unless otherwise stated, the terms 'global cost' or 'global population' refer to this proportion of the total global population for which there is reliable data on homicide rates, life expectancy, and per capita GDP between 2000 and 2010. For this reason, some figures for homicide rates and population differ from the data cited in the other chapters, because they employ a different sample size. See the methodological annex for a complete list of the countries included in this survey.

2 Direct costs are the actual or potential economic value lost due to homicide, usually using income or economic value of production as the basis of calculation. Indirect costs refer to a subjective valuation of the impact of violence on society, for example of the fear engendered by homicide, which is difficult to express in monetary terms, but has an impact on the affected family and community; similarly, the stress a pregnant woman experiences if her baby is endangered by violence, which can be estimated precisely, is difficult to value (see Camacho,

2008). Another way to approach indirect costs is to calculate the costs of containing violence, which have been estimated by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) at USD 9.46 trillion a year (IEP, 2014), although this figure tends to double count elements of security and justice provision.

3 'Estimating the cost of homicide' discusses the 'natural' homicide rate in more depth.

4 See Endnote 1.

5 For the methodological details on how the monetary value of lives lost and reduced life expectancy are calculated see CERAC (2014b).

6 The 105 countries are broken down into four categories according to national income levels. Lower middle-income countries (LMICs) are with a per capita GDP between USD 976 and USD 3,855 (16 countries); upper middle-income countries (UMICs), with a per capita GDP between USD 3,855 and USD 11,905 (37 countries); high-income countries (HICs) that are OECD members, with a per capita GDP above USD 11,905 (29 countries); and non-OECD HICs (23 countries). The categories do not correspond to geographical regions: there are countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America in almost every different income level.

The Geneva Declaration

- ▶ What is the Declaration?
- ▶ What is the political context?
- ▶ How does it work?
- ▶ Who has signed it?

Influencing processes

- ▶ SDGs and Goal 16
- ▶ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
- ▶ Civil Society Process
- ▶ Other Processes

Measuring problems

- ▶ How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?
- ▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence
- ▶ Armed Violence and Development
- ▶ Country-Level Assessments

Supporting solutions

- ▶ Best Practice Seminars
- ▶ Guidelines on Programming
- ▶ Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP)
- ▶ Focus Countries

See the Interactive Maps, Charts and Data Base (Excel) at www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/global-burden-of-armed-violence/gbav-2015/interactive-map-charts.html



[NEWS](#) [EVENTS](#) [PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES](#) [CONTACT](#)

SEARCH

The Geneva Declaration

Influencing processes

Measuring problems

Supporting solutions

▶ How to Measure and Monitor Armed Violence?

▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence

▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

▶ Launch in Geneva

▶ Press Release

▶ Executive Summary

▶ Chapter 1

▶ Chapter 2

▶ Chapter 3

▶ Chapter 4

▶ Chapter 5

▶ Interactive Map & Charts

▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011

▶ Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008

▶ Armed Violence and Development

▶ Country-Level Assessments

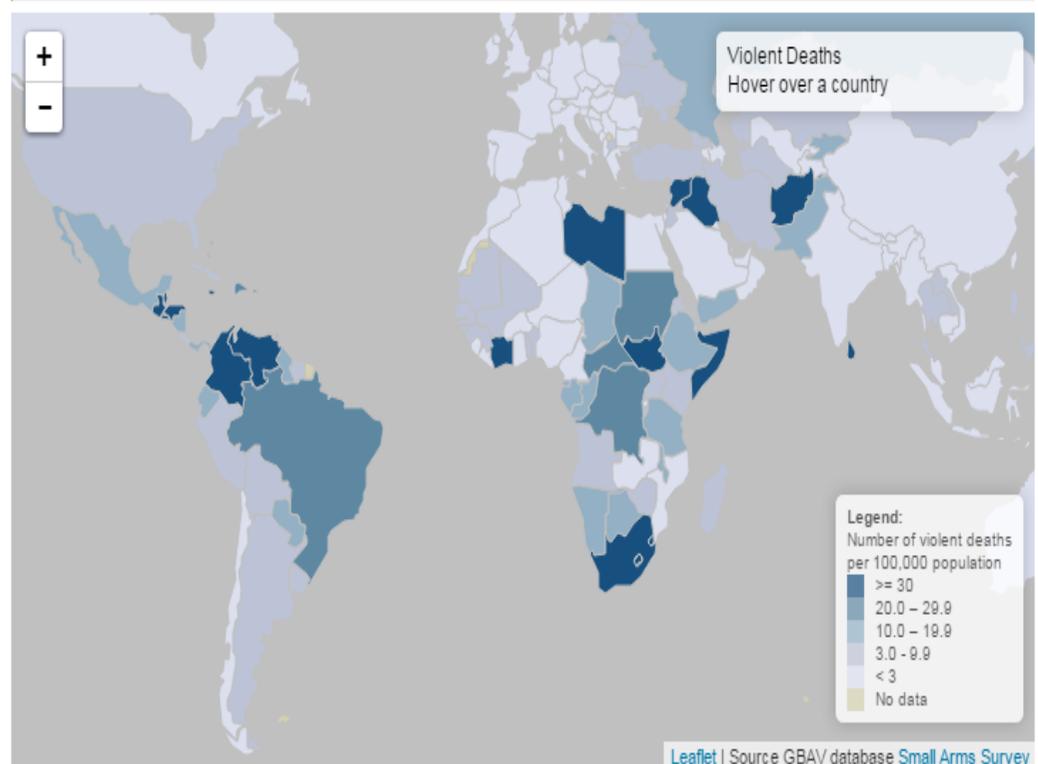
Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015

Interactive Map & Charts

▶ [Download database \(excel\)](#) | [Notes](#)

▶ For additional information, please contact [gbav\(at\)smallarmssurvey\(dot\)org](mailto:gbav(at)smallarmssurvey(dot)org)

- Violent Deaths
- Homicide by Firearm
- Female homicide victims
- Map and Trend (by country or territory)
- Bar chart (average rate 2007 - 2012)
- Bar chart (2012)



Leaflet | Source GBAV database Small Arms Survey