Report

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GLOBAL VIOLENT DEATHS 2017

Time to Decide

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SECTION II
THE CONSEQUENCES OF (IN)ACTION: VIOLENT DEATH SCENARIOS

small arms survey

Key findings

Violent death scenarios

- If current regional trends persist, annual violent deaths are likely to increase from about 560,000 in 2016 to more than 610,000 by 2030. Reflecting projected population growth, the yearly *number* of homicides will increase from approximately 385,000 to 421,000 while the global homicide *rate* will decrease marginally between 2016 and 2030, from 5.15 to just below 5.0 per 100,000 population. The number of annual direct conflict deaths is anticipated to exceed 100,000 by 2030.
- A more positive scenario entails a reduction in the annual number of violent deaths to about 408,000 by 2030, down from 560,000 in 2016. In a significantly more negative scenario, the total number of violent deaths could increase to about 819,000 by 2030.
- Up to 1.35 million lives could be saved between 2017 and 2030 if states were to abandon the 'business-as-usual' approach in favour of the positive scenario. Compared to the negative scenario, the positive one foresees nearly 2.6 million saved lives.
- In terms of homicides alone, states could save up to 825,000 lives between 2017 and 2030 if they gradually stepped up their approach to crime control and prevention to reach the violence reduction levels of the top performers in their respective world regions. In so doing, states in the subregion of Latin America and the Caribbean would benefit most, saving as many as 489,000 lives in total by 2030, followed by states in South-eastern Asia (86,000 lives) and Eastern Africa (56,000 lives).

Future scenarios of violent deaths point to widely differing outcomes, depending—to a significant extent—on what actions policy-makers take. How many people will die violently if current trends continue between 2017 and 2030? And how many lives can be saved if states take effective action to reduce and prevent violence?

This section presents three possible outcomes for the 2017–30 period:

- the 'business-as-usual' scenario: nothing changes in terms of initiatives to reduce or prevent violent deaths;
- the 'positive' scenario: states take effective further action to reduce and prevent violence; and
- the 'negative' scenario: global crime and violence control efforts become significantly less effective.

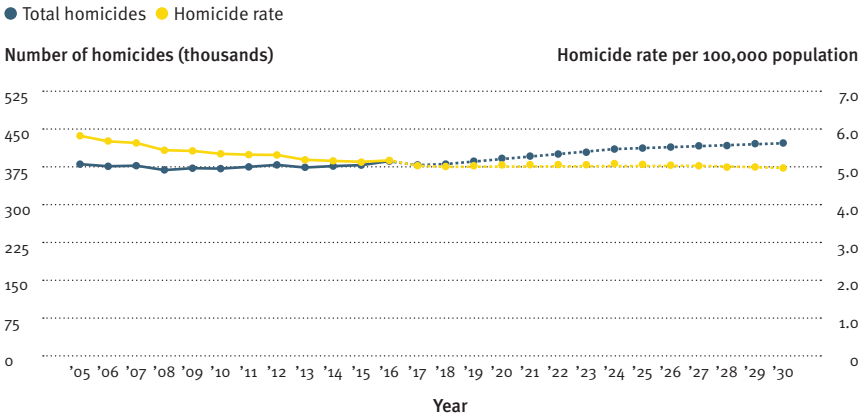
If current trends continue and states opt for 'business as usual', the annual number of violent deaths is likely to exceed 610,000 by 2030 (see Box 1). If states were to shift to the positive scenario—meaning that they would make the maximum effort to achieve SDG Target 16.1—they could save up to 1.35 million lives between 2017 and 2030. Put another way, the annual number of violent deaths could drop to 408,000 by 2030. Yet if states abandon some of their programmes or simply are not able to contain increasing levels of violence, and global crime and violence control efforts become less effective as a result, fatalities from interpersonal and collective violence could rise to 819,000. Given that it is impossible to predict conflict deaths with any degree of accuracy, however, that figure could be a significant underestimate. The projections do not include the possibility of a widespread global or regional armed conflict, which could vastly inflate the numbers of conflict-related deaths.

Scenario 1: 'business as usual'

If current trends persist until 2030, the global homicide rate will decrease only slightly (see Figure 1).[1] Continued good performance among countries that have managed to decrease their rates of violence would lead to a shrinking of the global homicide rate from 5.15 per 100,000 population to somewhat below 5.0 by 2030. Given rapid population growth in many countries, however, the number of homicide victims per year would still increase substantially, from about 385,000 to 421,000.

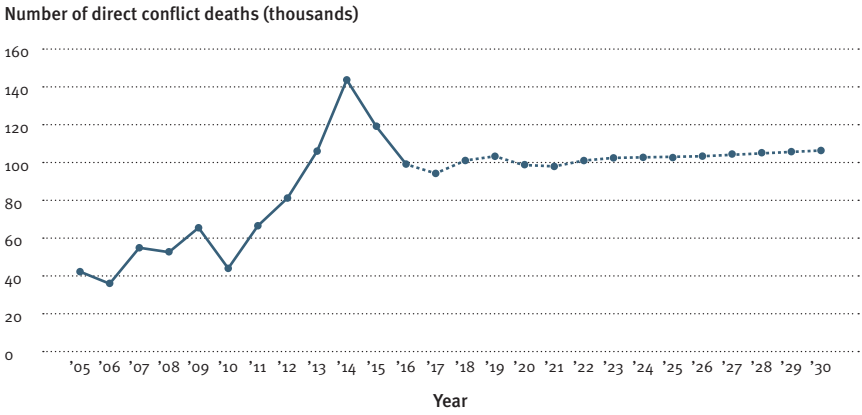
Figure 2 shows a projection of the number of direct conflict deaths using a conservative, logarithmic estimation (in which the growth rate decreases incrementally over time). The annual number of direct conflict deaths in 2030 is expected to be just above 100,000, or about 7 per cent higher than in 2016.

Figure 1 Global homicide trends and projections, 2005–30



Source: Small Arms Survey (n.d.)

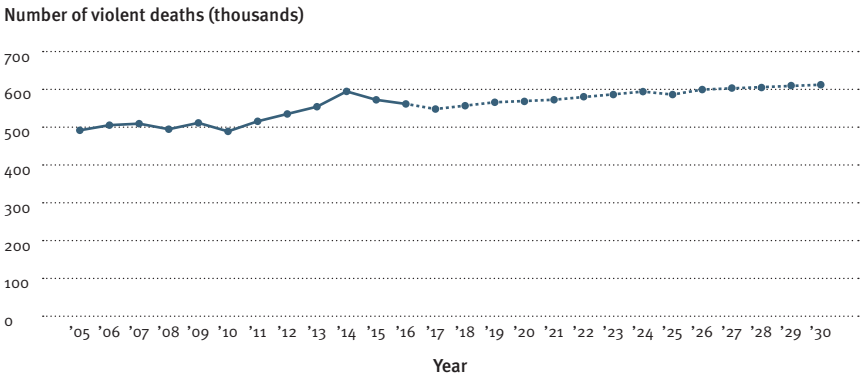
Figure 2 Global direct conflict death trends and projections, 2005–30



Source: Small Arms Survey (n.d.)

These projected global homicide and direct conflict death figures form the bulk of the global numbers of violent deaths predicted for 2017–30, which also include unintentional homicides and killings in legal interventions (see Box 1). As shown in Figure 3, the annual global number of violent deaths is predicted to increase from about 560,000 in 2016 to more than 610,000 by 2030 if current trends persist. This combination of violent deaths projects a fairly linear—although not very steep—increase over the next decade and a half.

Figure 3 'Business-as-usual' scenario: global violent death trends and projections, 2005–30



Source: Small Arms Survey (n.d.)

Box 1 A note on scenarios: methodology and interpretation

As with the rest of the data in this report, the scenarios are based on information gathered in the Small Arms Survey's Database on Violent Deaths and a unified approach to violent deaths (Small Arms Survey, n.d.). For each scenario, the global number of violent deaths comprises four categories:

- projected annual number of intentional homicides—the largest single portion of the total;
- projected annual number of direct conflict deaths;
- annual number of unintentional homicides, estimated at 15 per cent of the projected intentional homicide totals; and
- annual number of killings in legal interventions, estimated at 5 per cent of the projected intentional homicide totals.

Simple regression analysis was used to determine the homicide rate trends in the recent past for each UN world region (see Annexe 1); these were projected for the entire 2017–30 period. The 'business-as-usual' model was then adjusted to develop positive and negative scenarios, to reflect the potential impact of action or inaction with respect to reducing violent deaths. For direct conflict deaths, trends were estimated at the global level and projected for the period from 2017 to 2030.[2]

The scenarios should be understood as 'a structured way [. . .] to think about the future' (*Economist*, 2008); they provide an indication of what is possible, not an actual forecast. It is impossible to predict with any accuracy what the next decade and a half will bring in terms of armed conflict or influential technological or sociopolitical developments. If drugs were to be legalized, for example, the world could experience a substantial reduction in violence related to drug trafficking—a significant risk factor associated with violent deaths. The scenarios in this report should, therefore, be viewed as a reasonable and statistics-based approach to estimating a range of eventualities.

Whether this 'business-as-usual' scenario occurs depends to a large extent on the actions of policy-makers at the national and global levels. A coordinated commitment to the achievement of Target 16.1 could change the trajectory of current trends and result in a more positive scenario. Research indicates that major and long-term declines in homicide rates have occurred in the past, but that policy-makers do not have the requisite information to bring them about. The development of a knowledge base of what works in violent crime reduction is thus a key priority. Such a knowledge base would need to overcome 'traditional limitation to Western, highly developed societies', incorporate macro-level dynamics, and be based on a 'significant expansion of experimental, quasi-experimental and observational studies on the effects of programs and processes on violence in different setting[s] and for various groups' (Eisner and Nivette, 2012, p. 6).

It is also worth remembering that a fuller picture of the global burden of violence comprises not only violent death figures, but also data on non-lethal violence, which is much harder to measure. It includes sexual and psychological violence and abuse, as well as perceptions of insecurity[3] and estimates of indirect conflict deaths (see Box 2). The latter have hardly been taken into account in estimating the impact of conflicts, even though 'recent technical advances make such neglect increasingly unacceptable'; indeed, our abilities to measure these deaths[4] and to reduce their number through medical interventions have both improved (Wise, 2017, p. 139).

Women participate in a march to celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 2013.
Source: Ricardo Rojas/Reuters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Box 2 Beyond the battlefield: understanding the human cost of armed conflict[5]

The scenarios in this report cover direct conflict deaths, but not the people who die as an indirect consequence of armed conflict, such as the breakdown of infrastructure, health, and social services, a heightened risk of disease transmission, or malnutrition, both during and after hostilities. These deaths are understood as non-violent mortality that exceeds levels that could have been expected in the absence of war.[6]

Data on direct conflict deaths is available from a variety of sources—including UN missions, international databases on conflicts, and casualty recorders[7]—although it remains patchy and does not cover a number of smaller conflicts that garner less international attention (and that do not lead to military interventions). In contrast, there is a dearth of information on indirect conflict deaths. The lack of knowledge on these deaths is exacerbated by a host of methodological challenges that limit our understanding of their root causes and, by extension, how to prevent them.

Methods used to measure the broader scope of conflict-related deaths generally focus on excess mortality, or the difference between wartime crude mortality rates and the baseline or counterfactual mortality that would have occurred in the absence of conflict. Typically, retrospective mortality surveys, prospective surveillance through health information systems, and the analysis of multiple data sources are used to arrive at estimates. Many researchers have suggested methodologies to measure conflict-related deaths, but no validation mechanism has been developed to create consensus on which methods best capture both direct and indirect conflict deaths.

SDG Indicator 16.1.2 explicitly calls for the disaggregation of data on conflict-related deaths by sex, age, and cause. Disaggregation by cause is particularly useful in the assessment of conflict-related deaths. Data collected under this indicator will inform policymakers on how, when, and where people—both male and female[8]—are dying (Alda and Mc Evoy, 2017, p. 5).[9] Complementing this type of analysis with qualitative data can shed light on the causal chains that lead to indirect deaths; in turn, information on these chains can be used to inform efforts to prevent such deaths, for example through rapid humanitarian interventions.

The international community often has the capacity to relieve suffering by responding quickly to humanitarian crises. Yet, in some conflicts—such as the current one in Yemen—humanitarian agencies cannot access populations in need and thus cannot prevent people from dying. Their access may be blocked due to factors such as insecurity, the inaccessibility of locations, an absence of funding, military tactics, or government interference.

SDG Goal 3 is germane to a discussion about indirect conflict deaths because it endeavours to '[e]nsure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages', including in conflict settings. It mandates the measurement of mortality from a number of communicable and non-communicable conditions that are highly relevant in conflict and post-conflict situations.[10] Health-related targets under the following SDGs are also key in conflict situations:

- Goal 2: '[e]nd hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture'; and
- Goal 6: '[e]nsure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all' (IAEG, 2017, pp. 16–19, 22–23).

In response to the need to assess the scale of indirect conflict deaths, some researchers have produced ratios of direct to indirect deaths (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 32; Human Security Project, 2011, p. 105). Based on its analysis of conflicts that date back to the early 1990s and for which sufficient data exists, the Small Arms Survey estimated in 2008 that the number of indirect deaths was anywhere between three and 15 times the number of direct conflict deaths. It suggested a conservative global ratio of four indirect conflict deaths for every direct death as a reasonable average estimate (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 32).

Analysts now recognize that estimates that feed into such ratios should take into account a host of local factors and their role in the causal chains that lead to indirect deaths. A more fine-grained analysis could produce ratios that reflect factors such as the intensity and length of a conflict, the sex and age of the victims, available humanitarian aid (such as the provision of medicine, food, or shelter), the condition of pre-war public health infrastructure, and seasonal or climatic trends.

To date, efforts to measure conflict-related deaths—both direct and indirect—have been scattered and driven by institutional and individual interests. The official SDG monitoring process itself will initially focus on direct conflict deaths, partly due to methodological uncertainties regarding the measurement of indirect conflict deaths. To take the discussion to another level, experts have called for the establishment of a dedicated, resourced civil society research platform with a clear mandate to:

- develop more nuanced ratios of direct to indirect conflict deaths on the basis of case studies;
- advance and develop related methodologies;
- scientifically triangulate and validate different methods; and
- unpack causal chains that lead to conflict-related deaths beyond the battlefield.

This initiative would complement and take advantage of the official SDG data collection process—specifically, data gathered in conflict settings—and ultimately lead to more informed decision- and policy-making on violence prevention.

Scenario 2: progress against Target 16.1

In a more positive—yet still evidence-based—scenario, the global human toll of lethal violence could be reduced by 2030. A two-pronged approach would be required. First, individual states (or the international community) would need to find ways to reduce the direct conflict death rate, meaning that they would have to ensure that conflicts decrease in both number and intensity. Second, states would need to bring about significant reductions in homicide rates, especially in highly affected areas.

Homicide projections in this scenario are based on the assumptions that:

- countries and territories in any of the world's regions should be able to—via policy, knowledge transfers, and a strengthened focus on violent crime prevention at the national level—curb their homicide rates at a pace similar to that of the best-performing countries in their regions (see Box 3);[11] and
- the positive impact of violence reduction policies or strategies will become apparent over time, and all countries and territories in every region will reach their best performance rates over a span of eight years—from 2017 to 2024.

This scenario foresees a reduction of the annual number of global violent deaths to about 408,000 by 2030, down from approximately 560,000 in 2016 (see Figure 4). It signals that, given the necessary political will and successful, coordinated, and integrated interventions, a serious reduction in the number of violent deaths could be possible even if the global population increases by about a billion people in this period. This positive scenario, which builds on actual regional best performances in the 2004–16 period, projects a global violent death rate of 4.80 per 100,000 population by 2030, significantly below what the 'business-as-usual' scenario projects for that year (7.18).

If states managed to move from a 'business-as-usual' to a positive scenario, they could save up to 1.35 million lives between 2017 and 2030. This total can be broken down into two categories of prevented deaths: more than 400,000 direct conflict deaths and 949,000 other violent deaths. The latter category comprises:

- 162,000 prevented deaths in Africa;
- 593,000 in the Americas;
- 176,000 in Asia;
- 16,000 in Europe; and
- 2,000 in Oceania.

Projections for direct conflict deaths in this positive scenario anticipate a gradual reduction to levels registered in 2006–08 (50,000–60,000 fatalities annually), or less than half of the current total. A change of this magnitude could save more than 400,000 lives between 2017 and 2030. It would require a serious reduction in the number of deaths occurring in the world's most violent ongoing conflicts, namely Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria; together, these three have accounted for about 60 per cent of all direct conflict deaths since 2012.

With respect to homicide, states could save about 825,000 lives over the next decade and a half by shifting away from the 'business-as-usual' approach and instead prioritizing the development and implementation of more effective violence prevention policies, including by fighting impunity, for example.[12] If countries were able to reduce their

Box 3 Top performers in homicide rate reductions, 2004–16

Over the period from 2004 to 2016 (or the year with the latest available data), countries and territories across all regions in the world demonstrated that a reduction in lethal violence levels was possible, even where high levels of violence were endemic.[13] Those that recently emerged from armed conflicts were able to profit most immediately, as homicide rates dropped by an average of anywhere between 4 per cent (Nepal) and 11 per cent (Kosovo)[14] per year.[15] Colombia, Georgia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, and Timor Leste all fall into this category.

Progress varies across the world's regions (see Annexe 1). Although they remain at risk of surges of violence, Middle and Western Africa are home to countries that secured marked annual reductions in violent deaths from 2004 to 2016. On average, homicide rates declined by 10 per cent in Côte d'Ivoire, 16 per cent in the Republic of the Congo and Mauritania, and 17 per cent in Senegal.

The situation is similar in other countries that have faced security crises due to local or subregional instability. Papua New Guinea, for example, recorded an average annual decrease of 15 per cent.

Countries in the Baltic region and in Eastern and Southern Europe, such as Croatia and the Czech Republic, registered a slightly lower rate of progress: their homicide rates dropped by 5–6 per cent annually.

In Central America and the Caribbean—regions that are affected by some of the highest homicide rates since 2004—countries such as Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic were able to decrease lethal violence by 3 per cent annually over the 2004–16 period.

Finally, reductions of homicide levels were also possible in subregions or countries where lethal violence levels were relatively low, as in the case of Australia (which saw a decrease of 3 per cent), Austria (4 per cent), France (4 per cent), and Switzerland (5 per cent).

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homicide rates at a pace similar to that of the top performers in their world regions, Latin America and the Caribbean would benefit most, saving as many as 489,000 lives from 2017 to 2030 (about 59 per cent of the global gain), followed by South-eastern Asia (86,000 lives), and Eastern Africa (56,000 lives).

The immediate challenge will be to demonstrate at least some measurable progress in reducing violent deaths by 2019, when the High-level Political Forum is due to review progress in relation to Goal 16. Doing so would provide a platform for scaling up delivery on Target 16.1 in the 2020s (Pathfinders, 2016, p. 2). Related advocacy campaigns could focus on illustrating recent progress in curbing violent deaths—reductions in the number of female homicide victims, for example—and what can be achieved given the necessary political will.[16]

> “Equipped with a better understanding of what is achievable, how change can happen, and how individual states can contribute to national and global progress on reducing violent deaths, governments are more likely to take meaningful steps towards achieving Target 16.1.”

It is clear that progress in building more peaceful and inclusive societies—in line with SDG 16—will not be a technical or process-based exercise. Ultimately, it will come down to ‘power and politics’ and political will (Saferworld, 2016). Equipped with a better understanding of what is achievable, how change can happen, and how individual states can contribute to national and global progress on reducing violent deaths, governments are more likely to take meaningful steps towards achieving Target 16.1.

Scenario 3: losing control of lethal violence

The ‘business-as-usual’ scenario anticipates a slight increase in the total number of violent deaths (to about 610,000). In a significantly more negative scenario, the total number of violent deaths could increase by nearly 50 per cent, from about 560,000 in 2016 to 819,000 by 2030 (see Figure 4). Such an upsurge in lethal violence could arise from a variety of potential factors, including new armed conflicts or the intensification of existing ones, serious shortages of food or water on a regional scale, mass displacement or migration, or globally strengthened organized crime. States’ failure to curb related violence could be a symptom of negligence or grave structural problems, such as increased fragility[17] or lawlessness.

This scenario assumes that changes in homicide rates in all countries in a given region will regress towards those experienced in the worst-performing countries in that region.[18] Unlike in the positive scenario, the analysis does not presume that countries will in fact *reach* the annual rates of change in homicides among the worst performers; the trend anticipates only a relatively slow regression *towards* these rates.[19]

It is unlikely that all countries in each region will simultaneously regress towards the average among their worst performers, yet it is not outside of the realm of possibility. Violence is not necessarily confined to one country; it can easily spread across borders. In this negative scenario, annual homicide deaths around the world would exceed 551,000 by 2030. That figure would correspond to a homicide rate of nearly 6.50 per

100,000, up from 5.15 in 2016, and a violent death rate of nearly 10 (9.64), which is almost 30 per cent higher than the 2016 rate (7.50).

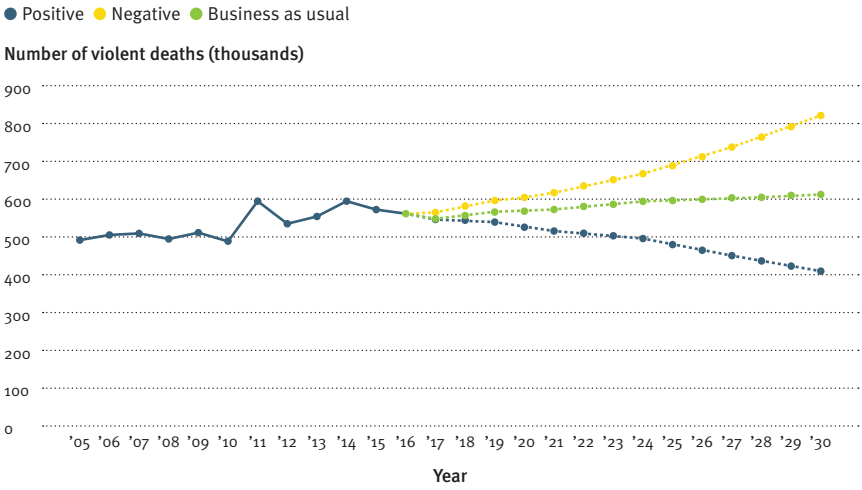
Estimating direct conflict deaths for a negative scenario is particularly difficult as it not possible to provide a reliable forecast of future armed conflicts. Nor is it possible to estimate the duration or intensity of ongoing conflicts, as these will vary.[20] Furthermore, conflict-related casualties do not typically correlate directly with country size, as a conflict may be limited to particular regions and the number of combatants is not directly related to a country's population. This negative scenario anticipates that conflict deaths continue to rise, not exponentially (as the trend since 2004 would suggest), but rather in a linear fashion. This scenario also foresees a slight rise in the number of armed conflicts, possibly in addition to a higher number of fatalities in ongoing or future conflicts. It assumes that the number of direct conflict deaths will gradually reach levels that are about 50 per cent higher than the ones predicted in the 'business-as-usual' model. It thus yields a projection of nearly 160,000 battlefield deaths in 2030—about 60 per cent more than in 2016.

In the negative scenario, violence claims nearly 2.6 million more lives in 2017–30 than in the positive scenario,[21] and about 410,000 more lives in 2030 alone.[22]

A comparison of scenarios

In Figure 4, the trend lines for global violent deaths reflect the projected direct conflict deaths and intentional homicides as well as estimated unintentional homicides and

Figure 4 Global violent death trends and projections, 2005–30



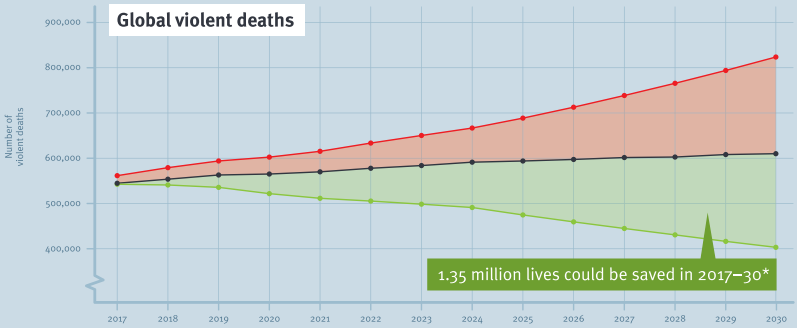
Source: Small Arms Survey (n.d.)

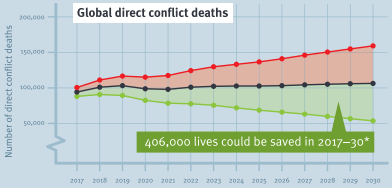
legal intervention fatalities for all three of the Small Arms Survey's scenarios (see Box 1). The results suggest that, depending to a large extent on the actions of policy-makers, the annual number of violent deaths could fall to 408,000, or rise to double that figure by 2030. As indicated above, if states were to intensify their violence prevention efforts and were able to replicate past best performances in their respective regions, about 1.35 million lives could be saved between 2017 and 2030. Nearly half a million of those lives could be saved in Latin America and the Caribbean.

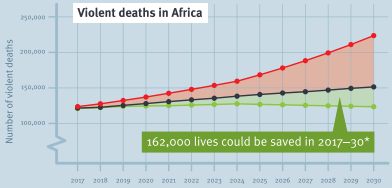
Violent death scenarios, 2017–30

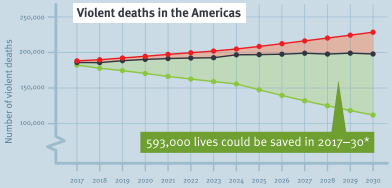
How many lives can be saved globally by 2030 by moving from a 'business-as-usual' to a positive scenario?

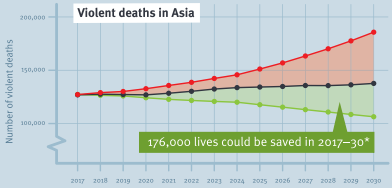
- 'Business-as-usual' scenario *(if current trends continue)*
- Positive scenario *(if states reinforce violence prevention efforts)*
- Negative scenario *(if crime and violence control efforts fail)*

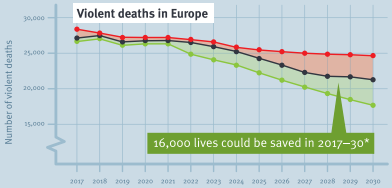


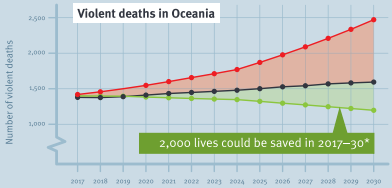












* In view of the inherent limitations of scenario analysis, none of the hypothetical projections should be treated as reliable predictions of future violent death patterns.

Endnotes

1 A continuation of current trends would mean that existing mechanisms for controlling crime, violence, and conflict would persist and develop, following their current respective trajectories.
2 The global level was used because the number of individual conflicts is unpredictable, as is their duration, intensity, and scale in relation to host populations.
3 Perceptions of insecurity can be gauged through surveys. See, for example, UNDP and Small Arms Survey (2017).
4 For a review of challenges in measuring indirect conflict deaths and a discussion of applicable methodologies, see Alda and Mc Evoy (2017).
5 The analysis in this box is largely based on Alda and Mc Evoy (2017).
6 Conflict is also associated with increased rates of homicide, suicide, and unintentional, life-threatening injuries, which blur the distinction between violent and non-violent deaths. See Ghobarah, Huth, and Russett (2003, p. 8).
7 For a review of monitoring systems that track conflict-related deaths, see Pavesi (2017).
8 Sex-disaggregated data on most indicators under Goal 16, including conflict-related deaths, is still scarce.
9 Disaggregation by time is not specified in SDG Indicator 16.1.2 but is arguably implicit in the intention to measure and track mortality trends.
10 The following indicators are particularly relevant to measuring indirect conflict deaths: 3.1.1 on maternal mortality; 3.2.1 on under-five mortality rates; 3.2.2 on neo-natal mortality rates; and 3.9.2 on mortality rates attributed to unsafe water, sanitation, and poor hygiene (IAEG, 2017, pp. 17–19).
11 For every region, the Small Arms Survey identified up to three top performers based on the pace at which they reduced their homicide rates from 2004 to 2016. The presumption for this scenario is that every country will gradually reach the average annual progress rate of the top performers in their region.
12 This calculation is based on the aggregate number of possible homicide victims in 2017–30.
13 This analysis excludes countries with populations of less than 200,000, with no available data, or with only a single known data point. Projections were made based on data for 2005–16.
14 The designation of Kosovo is without prejudice to positions on its status.
15 The percentages represent the average annual reduction in the homicide rate between the earliest and latest available data points, divided by the number of years passed; the first data point equals 100 per cent. For example, if a country decreased its homicide rate from 10.0 to 5.0 over a five-year span, the annual average decrease is (((5.0–10.0)/5)/10.0)*100 = -10%.
16 For examples of recent advocacy drives, see Krisch et al. (2015) and the Instinct for Life campaign to reduce homicides in seven Latin American countries by half in ten years (Igarapé Institute, n.d.).
17 Fragility is 'the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises or other emergencies' (OECD, 2016, p. 21).
18 The benchmarks used were the annual homicide rate changes in 2004–16.
19 This approach also allows for a possible *decrease* of homicide rates in some countries, as some of the worst performers may in fact decrease their homicide rates, although not as much as other countries in their region.

20 While attempts have been made to estimate the average duration of conflicts, estimating the intensity is more challenging. It depends in particular on how the start and end dates of a conflict are defined. Furthermore, intensity varies with time and sometimes countries revert to an armed conflict while temporarily reducing levels of armed violence. For background, see Hegre, Nygård, and Ræder (2017, p. 247).

21 This calculation is based on an aggregation of all annual gains and losses for the entire period.

22 As the model anticipates gradual change, the annual number of lives saved would be relatively small in the early years and would gradually increase to the level indicated for 2030.

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Scenarios

Table A1 summarizes the statistical approach and considerations used in developing the 'business-as-usual', positive, and negative projections of violent deaths for the 2017–30 period, with a focus on intentional homicides and direct conflict deaths.

Table A1 Overview of scenario methodology

Scenario Research question	Assumptions	Notes
'Business-as-usual' *What happens if current trends continue?*	**Homicide**: Current trends continue on a subregional level.	Homicide projections are derived from current trends.[71] Most regions display logarithmic trends,[72] which are projected to continue until 2030.[73] For regions that exhibit exponential trends, extrapolations were undertaken more cautiously, to avoid a rapid inflation or deflation of rates.
	Direct conflict deaths: A moderate increase is foreseen.	While current trends reflect a decrease in conflict deaths since 2014, this scenario anticipates a logarithmic curve that starts in 2004 and remains just above 100,000 direct conflict deaths for most of the 2020s and 2030.
Positive *How many lives could be saved if states reinforced their efforts to achieve SDG Target 16.1?*	**Homicide**: Countries start to progress towards, and eventually reach, the average homicide rate changes recorded by the top performers in their respective world regions.	This scenario assumes that countries will gradually be able to replicate the performance of states in their respective world regions that exhibited the greatest annual rates of decrease in homicides in 2005–16 (based on up to three top performers, depending on the number of countries in the particular region). It is anticipated that immediate policy action could bring countries close to this performance over a period of about eight years and that from 2025 onwards, each country would improve its homicide rate annually, at the rate seen in 2005–16 among the top performers in their respective world regions.

Scenario Research question	Assumptions	Notes
	Direct conflict deaths: Global conflict deaths gradually drop to levels recorded prior to the conflicts of the current decade.	This scenario presumes a gradual phasing out of ongoing major armed conflicts, such as the ones in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria; it assumes that countries will revert back to the pattern that prevailed from 2001 until 2008, with 40,000–60,000 direct conflict deaths annually.
Negative *What happens if the situation deteriorates?*	**Homicide**: Countries start to regress towards the worst performers in their respective world regions.	This scenario assumes that countries will regress towards the performance—that is, the average annual growth rate in homicides—of the worst performers in their respective world regions in 2005–16 (based on up to three worst performers, depending on the number of countries in the particular region). It is anticipated that countries will generally not be able to replicate these worst performances, but that their performance will gradually deteriorate towards those levels. In comparison to lives lost in the 'business-as-usual' scenario, Eastern Africa and South-eastern Asia would suffer an additional 170,000 and 140,000 homicides, respectively, in 2017–30. Latin America and the Caribbean could see 147,000 more deaths in the same period.
	Direct conflict deaths: Conflict deaths continue to rise, yet not exponentially (as in 2004–16, but rather in a linear fashion. This scenario foresees a slight rise in the number of armed conflicts, possibly in addition to a higher number of fatalities in ongoing or future conflicts.	It is impossible to anticipate the number, duration, or intensity of conflicts that could potentially erupt or continue in 2017–30. This scenario presumes that by the year 2030 the number of direct conflict deaths will be about 50 per cent higher than levels predicted by the 'business-as-usual' model, meaning that an additional 409,000 people would be killed in armed conflicts between 2017 and 2030.

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About the **Small Arms Survey**

The Small Arms Survey is a global centre of excellence whose mandate is to generate impartial, evidence-based, and policy-relevant knowledge on all aspects of small arms and armed violence. It is the principal international source of expertise, information, and analysis on small arms and armed violence issues, and acts as a resource for governments, policymakers, researchers, and civil society. It is located in Geneva, Switzerland, at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

The Survey has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, sociology, and criminology, and collaborates with a network of researchers, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

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