



# GLOBAL STATUS REPORT ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION 2014





**World Health  
Organization**



**UNODC**  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



**United Nations  
Development Programme**

*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# GLOBAL STATUS REPORT ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION 2014

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# Preface



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Violence shatters lives. Around the world almost half a million people are murdered each year. Beyond these deaths, millions more children, women and men suffer from the far-reaching consequences of violence in our homes, schools and communities. Violence often blights people's lives for decades, leading to alcohol and drug addiction, depression, suicide, school dropout, unemployment and recurrent relationship difficulties. In crisis and conflict-affected countries, violence can hamper recovery and development efforts by exacerbating societal divisions, perpetuating crime, and in some cases leading to the recurrence of war.

In addition, the costs of violence are high. Families on the brink of poverty can be ruined when a breadwinner is killed or disabled because of violence. For nations, social and economic development is eroded by the outlay on the health, criminal justice and social welfare responses to violence. As the late Nelson Mandela wrote in the World

Health Organization's 2002 *World report on violence and health*, "Many who live with violence day in and day out assume that it is an intrinsic part of the human condition. But this is not so. Violence can be prevented. Governments, communities and individuals can make a difference."

This *Global status report on violence prevention 2014* takes stock of how governments are making a difference, by assessing the measures countries are taking to prevent and respond to interpersonal violence. The report – the first of its kind – finds that considerable violence prevention activity is underway around the world. For instance, on average, each of the prevention programmes surveyed was reported to be implemented in about a third of countries; each of the services to protect and support victims surveyed was reported to be in place in just over half of countries; and some 80% of countries were found to have enacted each of the prevention laws surveyed.

But importantly the report also reveals gaps in global violence prevention that must be filled: gaps in knowledge about the extent of the problem; in the quality and reach of prevention programmes; in access to services for victims; in the enforcement of existing laws; and in mechanisms to coordinate multisectoral work.

Collaboration across sectors is a necessary starting point for filling these gaps. The health sector must expand its role in violence prevention, increase services for victims and improve the collection of data on violence. The justice and law enforcement sectors must ensure that laws which strengthen violence prevention are promulgated and rigorously applied, that laws discriminating against women are changed, that efforts to improve community policing and problem-orientated policing are intensified, and that institutions to support such efforts are strengthened. The development sector must integrate governance and rule of law more closely with violence prevention programming.

Publication of the *Global status report on violence 2014* coincides with proposals to include several violence

prevention goals in the post-2015 development agenda. These include halving violence-related deaths everywhere, ending violence against children and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. Whether or not these goals are eventually adopted, their prominence in the debate so far confirms the relevance of violence prevention to the challenges facing society now and in the future. Indeed, preventing violence is one of the top five priorities expressed by the five million citizens who have conveyed their views on the focus for the new development agenda through the global United Nations-led consultations.

The *Global status report on violence prevention 2014* builds on existing commitments by several United Nations agencies to support countries in their violence prevention efforts. It identifies clear gaps and opportunities and inspires us to action. Further, it provides a baseline and a set of indicators to track future violence prevention progress. Please join us in ensuring its findings are made use of and its recommendations implemented, particularly as we anticipate the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. Together we can indeed make a difference.

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