

ICCS BRIEFING NOTE

Intentional homicide from the ICCS perspective

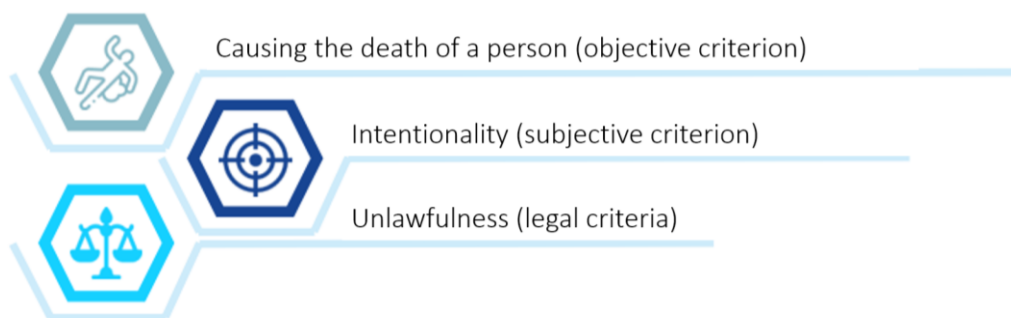


INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE FROM THE ICCS PERSPECTIVE

Intentional homicide is often considered as a proxy variable for violent crime and as an indicator of security levels in countries. Therefore, its measurement and analysis are essential for the development of prevention policies.

According to the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)¹, intentional homicide is the "unlawful death inflicted upon a person with the intent to cause death or serious injury". This definition provides clear guidance on whether a homicide should be considered intentional for the production of statistics.

To comply with this definition, there are three characteristics that must be met:



For statistical purposes, all violent deaths that meet the above criteria should be considered as intentional homicides, regardless of the definitions of national authorities or criminal legislation.

0101 Intentional homicide

Unlawful death inflicted upon a person with the intent to cause death or serious injury

Inclusions: Murder; honour killing; serious assault leading to death; death as a result of terrorist activities; dowry-related killings; femicide; infanticide; voluntary manslaughter; extrajudicial killings; killings caused by excessive use of force by law enforcement/state officials

Exclusions: Death due to legal interventions; justifiable homicide in self defence; attempted intentional homicide (0102); homicide without the element of intent is non-intentional homicide (0103); non-negligent or involuntary manslaughter (01031); assisting suicide or instigating suicide (0104); illegal feticide (0106); euthanasia (0105)

¹ Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime/ICCS/ICCS_English_2016_web.pdf

The criteria included in the definition of intentional homicide, according to the ICCS, lead to classifying different criminal manifestations in this way, regardless of the means used or the victim's characteristics. As an example, the International Classification contains a list of "inclusions" or crimes that can commonly be classified as intentional homicide.

In addition, the ICCS includes a series of disaggregation variables (called "tags") that facilitate the standardization of administrative records on criminal offenses. The tags are a key tool of the ICCS, which attempts to grasp the multidimensional nature of crime and tries to get at the motives that influence criminal behaviors.

Several "tags" are included in the ICCS, respectively on the crime event, the victim, and the perpetrator, and are a recording tool used at different moments of information recording along the justice chain. For practical reasons, not all possible disaggregations can be listed in the ICCS, but a harmonized minimum set is presented as a basis for international standardization. The ICCS gives equal importance to the classification of criminal behaviors and to the recording of disaggregated information for each criminal event.²

EVENT DISAGGREGATIONS				
Geo – Geographical location of the crime	DaT – Date and time	Lo – Location of the crime	We – Type of weapon used	Rep – Reported by

VICTIM DISAGGREGATIONS				
SV – Sex of victim	AV – Age of victim	STV – Age status victim	Cit – Citizenship	Int – Victim was intoxicated with controlled drugs or other psychoactive substances

PERPETRATOR DISAGGREGATIONS					
SP – Sex of perpetrator	AP – Age of perpetrator	STP – Age status of perpetrator	Cit – Citizenship	Int – Perpetrator was intoxicated with controlled drugs or other psychoactive substances	Rec – Repeat offender/recidivist

² A detailed list of the disaggregation variables and all their categories can be found in Table II "Categories of the disaggregation variables" of the ICCS.

For records of intentional homicide, there is often a need for more detailed quantitative information on contexts and social mechanisms to help design better evidence-based policies to prevent and address this particular type of crime. For comparison and analysis purposes, there are some classification criteria that are particularly relevant for the "further" characterization of intentional homicide and can be used to define it in more detail.

SITUATIONAL CONTEXT	
Homicide related to other criminal activities	Homicide related to organized criminal groups or gangs
	Homicide related to other criminal activities
Interpersonal homicide	Intimate partner/family member
	Other interpersonal homicide
Socio-political homicide	Homicide related to social prejudice
	Homicide related to political agendas
	Homicide related to civil unrest
	Homicide related to other socio-political agendas

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR	
Intimate partner or family member	Intimate partner
	Family member
Other perpetrator known to the victim	Friend/acquaintance
	Colleague/business or work relationship
	Authority/care relationship (doctor/nurse/teacher/police/public official, clergy, etc.)
	Other perpetrator known to the victim
Perpetrator unknown to the victim	Perpetrator unknown to the victim

MECHANISM OF KILLING	
Attack with firearms or explosives	Firearm
	Explosives
Attack with another weapon	Sharp object
	Blunt object
	Other object used as a weapon (including deliberately hitting or running over with a motor vehicle)
Attack without a weapon	Hanging, strangulation or suffocation
	Drowning or submersion
	Pushing from a high place
	Pushing or placing victim before moving object
	Bodily force
Other	Drugs and chemical substances
	Other
Assault by unspecified means	

There are still significant differences between the classifications and disaggregations of crime records between countries, and even between different institutions of security and justice within the same country. This is exactly the kind of gap that the ICCS aims to fill: to ensure that criminal behaviors are classified in a standardized way, applying a series of disaggregated variables which are useful for the development of public policies.

The ICCS is currently being implemented in a growing number of countries with the aim of improving data on crime and criminal justice. UNODC closely monitors this implementation by providing technical assistance and specialized support to overcome possible obstacles that may arise at the country level.

From the UNODC-INEGI Center of Excellence for Statistical Information on Government, Crime, Victimization and Justice, we support countries in Latin America and the Caribbean throughout the process of adoption and implementation of the ICCS, leaving no one out, leaving no one behind.

