

2. Methodology

As in standard international practice, the Malawi National Crime Victimization Survey was conducted as a household survey in which the adult head of a randomly selected household or their spouse was asked to respond, in a face-to-face interview, to a structured and pre-tested questionnaire.

The survey questionnaire was based on the internationally recognised questionnaires used by the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS) of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) as refined through the victim survey research conducted in the past few years by the ISS. The questionnaire was further refined and adapted to Malawian conditions through a 7-day pilot study conducted in the last week of April 2003 by researchers from the Crime and Justice Statistical Division supported by the ISS.

The survey questionnaire was administered to 7,000 households by 10 specifically trained field teams, each consisting of six enumerators and a supervisor, between the 28th May and 27th July 2003.

Household respondents were asked to provide detail on their experience of crime in the 12 months immediately preceding the survey, that is, respondents were asked to relate their experience of crime between 1 May 2002 and 31 May 2003.

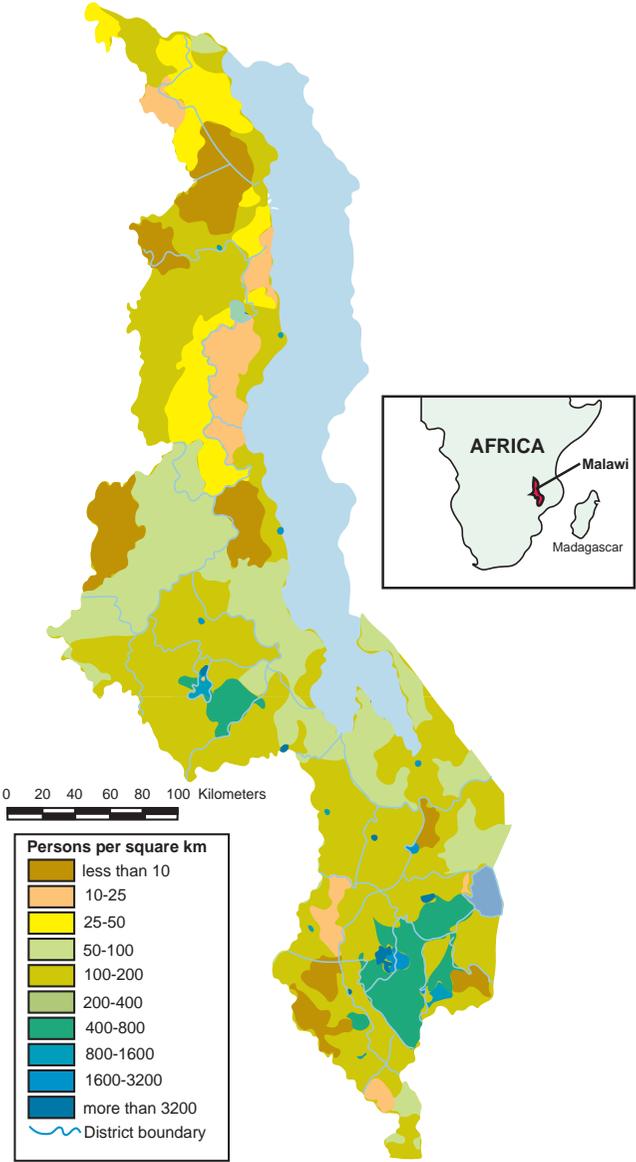
Details on the sample design, sample population and generic limitations of the methodology are provided below.

2.1 The Sample Design

The budget and time allocated for the implementation of the survey allowed for a comparatively large survey sample of 7,000 households. These 7,000 households were selected through a random, multi-stage four-step probability proportionate to size selection process (PPS), based on the results of the 1998 Malawi Population and Housing Census:¹⁰

¹⁰ National Statistical Office. *1998 Malawi Population and Housing Census. Report of the Final Census Results*. National Statistical Office, December 2000.

Malawi population density



Data NSO, 1998

Malawi administrative districts



- First, to determine an accurate regional sample, the total number of households in Malawi (2,273,846) were divided proportionately into the Northern, Central and Southern Regions according to the number of households in each region.
- Second, to determine an appropriate district sample, the total number of households in each region were stratified proportionately into 30 districts, which consisted of Malawi's 26 administrative districts and the four urban areas of Lilongwe, Mzuzu, Zomba and Blantyre.¹¹
- Third, using the total number of households in each district, a total of 232 enumeration areas were drawn for the administration of the survey
- Fourth, using the same PPS methods, the total number of households to be sampled in each enumeration area was drawn, and random tables were used to select the individual households at which the survey would be administered.

The survey questionnaire was administered to the 7,000 households selected in the manner described above. However, a quality control and data validation process resulted in the rejection of 139 questionnaires – 2% of the total sample.

The data presented in this report is therefore based on a nationally representative sample of 6,861 respondents.

Table 1 below indicates the stratification of the households selected for the survey.

11 Note that for the purposes of this survey, the island district of Likoma, was excluded.

Table 1 The household sample

| | Selected Sample Households | Proportion of Total |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Malawi | 6,861 | 100% |
| Urban (Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, Zomba) | 1,027 | 15.0% |
| Rural | 5,834 | 85.0% |
| Northern Region | 741 | 10.8% |
| Central Region | 2,771 | 40.4% |
| Southern Region | 3,349 | 48.8% |

2.2 The Sample Population

It is useful, when analysing and interpreting the findings presented in the report, to understand the basic demographics of those who participated in the study, and therefore, of the Malawian population. The tables below detail the nature of the sample population.

Table 2 Household status of respondent

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Head of household | 5,260 | 76.7 |
| Spouse of head of household | 1,559 | 22.7 |
| Other (parent, sibling or in-law of head) | 42 | 0.6 |
| Total | 6,861 | 100% |

Table 3 Gender of respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Male | 3,926 | 57.2 |
| Female | 2,935 | 42.8 |
| Total | 6,861 | 100% |

Table 4 Age of respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| 16-25 years | 1,438 | 20.9 |
| 26-30 years | 1,135 | 16.5 |
| 31-40 years | 1,637 | 23.9 |
| 41-50 years | 994 | 14.5 |
| 51-60 years | 761 | 11.1 |
| 60 years + | 732 | 10.7 |
| Refused to answer | 2 | .0 |
| Don't know | 162 | 2.4 |
| Total | 6,861 | 100 |

The average or mean age of respondents to the survey was 39 years.

Table 5 School education of respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|
| No schooling | 1,611 | 23.5 |
| Some primary schooling | 4,071 | 59.3 |
| Some secondary schooling | 715 | 10.4 |
| M.S.C.E | 464 | 6.8 |
| Total | 6,861 | 100 |

Table 6 Post school education of respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| None | 6,499 | 94.7 |
| Some university | 10 | 0.1 |
| Vocational training | 94 | 1.4 |
| 1 year diploma/certificate | 154 | 2.2 |
| 3 year diploma/certificate | 64 | 0.9 |
| Undergraduate degree | 17 | 0.2 |
| Post graduate degree | 23 | 0.3 |
| Total | 6,861 | 100 |

Table 7 Occupational status of respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Unemployed | 303 | 4.4 |
| Scholar/Student | 21 | 0.3 |
| Housewife | 906 | 13.2 |
| Employed seasonal | 83 | 1.2 |
| Employed part-time | 52 | 0.8 |
| Self employed | 1,565 | 22.8 |
| Employed full time – informal sector | 233 | 3.4 |
| Employed full time – formal sector | 653 | 9.5 |
| Commercial farmer | 510 | 7.4 |
| Subsistence farmer | 2,462 | 35.9 |
| Retired/pensioner | 43 | 0.6 |
| Other | 30 | 0.4 |
| Total | 6,861 | 100 |

The high incidence of subsistence farmers, and by implication, households that are dependent on their own small-scale crop and livestock farming activities for survival, is particularly significant when exploring the dynamics around crop and livestock theft.

Table 8 Home ownership amongst respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Own home/traditional tenure | 5,624 | 81.9 |
| Rent home | 940 | 13.7 |
| House sitting (rent free) | 276 | 4.0 |
| Illegal occupation (squatting) | 17 | 0.2 |
| Total | 6,861 | 100 |

The very high level of home ownership amongst the sample respondents is attributable to the predominantly rural nature of the sample, that is, 85% of the respondents lived in rural villages where they would reside in their own traditional homes. Indeed, 73.4% of the homes accessed in the survey were built with traditional materials like mud, thatch and dung.

Table 9 Monthly household income¹²

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| Less than MK500 | 1443 | 29.4 |
| MK500 – 1,000 | 992 | 20.2 |
| MK1,001 – 5,000 | 1883 | 38.4 |
| MK5,001 – 10,000 | 347 | 7.1 |
| MK10,001 – 20,000 | 136 | 2.8 |
| MK20,001 – 50,000 | 72 | 1.5 |
| MK50,001 – 100,000 | 27 | 0.6 |
| More than MK100,000 | 8 | 0.2 |
| Total | 4,908 | 100 |

The levels of poverty characterising Malawi are perhaps best represented in the profile of the household income of the 6,861 surveyed households. Almost nine out of ten households surveyed (88%) indicated that they were surviving on a monthly income of less than MK5,000, which, at the time of the survey, was equivalent to US\$58.8.¹³

In addition, very few households indicated that they received supplementary income – just 99 respondents (1.4% of the total sample) indicated that they received some form of supplementary income in the form of government grants, pensions, child maintenance grants or workman's compensation.

Also, other forms of household support be they in the form of remittances from relatives or handouts were extremely limited. For instance, just 537 respondents (7.8% of the sample) indicated that they received food parcels, 501 respondents (7.3%) indicated that they received some money occasionally and 88 respondents (1.3%) said that they received clothing occasionally.

12 Note that this excludes any value that may be attached to the respondent's home as well as the value of any household production used for household consumption.

13 Exchange rate 1US\$ = 85 Malawi Kwacha (MK). It should be noted that since then, the Malawi Kwacha has depreciated substantially, till, at the time of writing this report, it was trading at 1US\$ = MK108.

Table 10 Respondent's length of residence in neighbourhood

| | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|
| Less than 1 year | 363 | 5.3 |
| 1 – 5 years | 1,791 | 26.1 |
| 6 -10 years | 1,003 | 14.6 |
| 11-20 years | 1,138 | 16.6 |
| 21-30 years | 1,143 | 16.7 |
| 31-40 years | 634 | 9.2 |
| 41 years + | 765 | 11.1 |
| Don't know | 24 | 0.3 |
| Total | 6,861 | 100 |

The fact that the majority of the sample had lived in their area for more than one year is important when considering changes that might have occurred in the neighbourhood over a period of time. The longer a respondent has been resident in the same neighbourhood, the greater the continuity and accuracy of perceptions regarding changes over any given time period.

Table 11 Household means of transport

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Resident of household owns a bicycle | 2,541 | 37 |
| Resident of household owns a car | 113 | 1.6 |
| Resident of household owns an ox-cart | 101 | 1.5 |
| Resident of household owns a motorbike or scooter | 41 | 0.6 |
| Resident of household owns a boat/canoe | 33 | 0.5 |
| Resident of household owns a van/minibus or taxi | 30 | 0.4 |
| Resident of household uses own horse or donkey for transport | 28 | 0.4 |
| Resident of household owns a truck | 11 | 0.2 |

Ownership of various means of transport is significant when exploring crimes relating to vehicle ownership or use. The ownership profile above, particularly the very limited private ownership of cars, trucks, vans or

minibuses and motorbikes and scooters is explored in more detail in later sections.

The tables above indicate that the sampling techniques used to draw the sample survey were appropriate – the sample population, predominately rural, poor, under-educated and engaged in subsistence farming or in limited self-employment, is representative of the population of Malawi.¹⁴

2.3 Limitations of the Methodology

Social research is not an exact science and all survey research is methodologically limited. Therefore, despite the care taken to develop sound sampling techniques and appropriate research tools, the methodology is limited by a number of factors, chief amongst which are:

- Victimization surveys focus on individual or household victimisation, not crimes that may be committed against organisations. Victim surveys therefore generally do not capture crimes like burglary or robbery of shops or factories, crimes against the state, white collar crimes like fraud, shop-lifting, or the vandalism of property not owned by a respondent or member of a respondent’s household.¹⁵
- The sensitivity of respondents towards discussing sometimes traumatic incidents – this particularly affects the recording of sexual abuse and rape, which respondents may understandably be reluctant to discuss.
- The sensitivity of respondents towards discussing issues in which they may feel “complicit” – this particularly affects the recording of domestic violence, sexual abuse and corruption
- The ability of respondents to accurately recall and articulate details of their victimisation

14 See National Statistical Office. *1998 Malawi Population and Housing Census. Report of the Final Census Results*. National Statistical Office, December 2000.

15 See Stavros Stavrou. *Victimization surveys: A methodology paper*. Paper commissioned by the UNDP Dar-es-Salaam Safer Cities Project, February 2001.

- Varying interpretations of what constitutes a crime – respondents may not realise that a particular incident constitutes a ‘real crime’, that is, one that is covered in the survey. This is sometimes the case with spousal abuse which the victim, living with the offender, does not perceive as assault. However, it is more likely for incidents deemed trivial by the respondent, like petty theft or minor vandalism.
- As parental consent and specialised and expensive interviewing techniques are required to interview minors, those aged under 16 years are generally excluded from victim surveys.
- Languages and translation – the translation of key concepts from English into vernacular languages may, in some instances, lead the respondents to their answers. For instance, in Malawi there is no vernacular word for “crime”. To address this, the key concepts and critical questions were translated by the University Centre for Language and the enumerators were specifically trained in the manner in which to address the respondents.

These limitations affect all victim surveys. Despite such limitations, victim surveys provide a detailed insight into the scope and nature of crime in particular countries. Thus, the results of the survey outlined in this report provide the most detailed picture of public experience of crime in Malawi, public perceptions of safety and public perceptions of the institutions of the criminal justice system currently available.