



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



# **VICTIMIZATION SURVEY IN EGYPT**

## **Executive summary**

**October 2009**

The UNODC initiative *Data for Africa* has the overall objective to improve the knowledge of drugs and crime problems in Africa, by strengthening the capacity of African countries to collect and analyse data and trends in drugs, crime and victimization.

This report presents the results of a victimization survey carried out within the framework of the UN Development Account project 06/07R *Collection and analysis of data and trends on drugs, crime, and victimization in Africa*.

<http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/2006/0607R.html>



The victimization survey in Egypt was carried out by the National Centre for Social and Criminological Research (NCSCR).

This report and other Data for Africa publications can be downloaded from:<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Data-for-Africa.html>

The boundaries, names and designations used in all maps in this document do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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This document has not been formally edited.

## Rate of victimization

Findings from a survey of 3,126 households in urban and rural areas of Egypt show relatively low rates of victimization during the year preceding the survey (Table 1). Personal theft and burglary were the types of crime most frequently experienced by survey respondents in 2007, with 5.3 and 2.1 per cent of victims respectively. Car owners were more frequently exposed to theft of objects from the car (8.3 per cent) and car vandalism (4.6 per cent). The same happened to owners of livestock, 4.5 per cent of whom were victims of theft of animals.

A different pattern can be observed regarding victims of cheating (consumer fraud) and requests for bribes (corruption). Almost one third of respondents (32.4 per cent) said they had been cheated by someone who was selling something or delivering a service to them in terms of quality or quantity of the goods/service.

**Table 1 – Prevalence of victimization during the year preceding the survey (2007)**

Type of crime	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Household crimes</b>		
Theft of car	8	1.6 <sup>1</sup>
Car hijacking	7	1.4 <sup>2</sup>
Theft from car	42	8.3 <sup>3</sup>
Car vandalism	23*	4.6 <sup>4</sup>
Theft of motorcycle	2	1.0 <sup>5</sup>
Theft of bicycle	24	3.4 <sup>6</sup>
Theft of livestock	30*	4.5 <sup>7</sup>
Burglary with entry	67*	2.1
Attempted burglary	53*	1.7
<b>Crimes against the individual respondent</b>		
Robbery	27*	0.9
Personal theft	165*	5.3
Assault / threat	7*	0.2
Consumer fraud	1012	32.4
Corruption	554	17.7

When asked whether any government official, for instance a customs officer, police officer, traffic officer, court official, pensions officer or building inspector, had either asked for or expected to be paid a bribe for his/her services, 17.7 per cent of the survey respondents

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\* Frequency is recalculated from percentage.

<sup>1</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a car (503).

<sup>2</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a car (503).

<sup>3</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a car (503).

<sup>4</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a car (503).

<sup>5</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a motorcycle (192).

<sup>6</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a bicycle (700).

<sup>7</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning livestock (681).

answered yes. Such requests for bribes most frequently involved police officers (31 per cent of cases) and municipal/local government officials (23 per cent).

## **Experiences of victims in reporting to authorities**

It is known that many victims of crime do not report it to the competent authorities. According to the survey, theft of car (71.4 per cent), car hijacking (56.3 per cent) and theft of motorcycle (43.8 per cent) are the types of crime most frequently reported to the police, while only 1.3 per cent of the cases of corruption is brought to the attention of the police. Several victims of robbery, car hijacking, theft of car and assault/threat referred to authorities other than the police. Nevertheless, rates of reporting (Table 2) were generally low.

**Table 2 – Percentage of victims who reported crimes to the police or other authorities**

Type of crime	% reported to the police	% reported to other authorities
Theft of car	71.4	-
Car hijacking	56.3	6.3
Theft from car	30.2	6.3
Car vandalism	13.0	-
Theft of motorcycle	43.8	-
Theft of bicycle	18.1	-
Theft of livestock	20.5	-
Burglary with entry	32.1	0.7
Attempted burglary	11.7	-
Robbery	22.4	6.0
Personal theft	19.7	-
Assault / threat	30.6	5.6
Consumer fraud	4.0	2.3
Corruption	1.3	1.3

When respondents who reported crimes to the police were asked what motivated them to do so, three reasons were regularly mentioned: to recover property, to help the police apprehend the offender so that (s)he could be punished, and to stop crime from happening again.

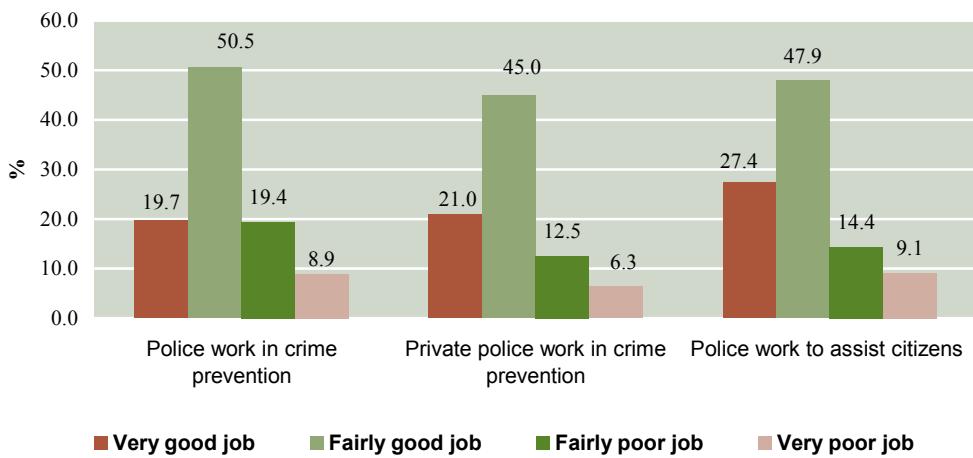
Approximately half of the victims of robbery (53.8 per cent) and theft of car (52.6 per cent) who reported to the police were satisfied with the way their case was handled. On the contrary, the highest percentage of dissatisfaction with the police was recorded when respondents were victims of corruption or assault/threat. The two main reasons for dissatisfaction were that the police did not do enough and were not interested.

Victims who did not report to the police often said that they did not consider the case “serious enough” or that “the police could do nothing” about it.

## **Opinions about police work**

Despite the fact that few victims reported crime, the majority of respondents gave a positive assessment of the role of the police in controlling crime in their area of residence. Seventy per cent of respondents considered the police to be doing either a “very good job” or a “fairly good job” in preventing and controlling crime (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Opinion about police work in preventing and controlling crime**

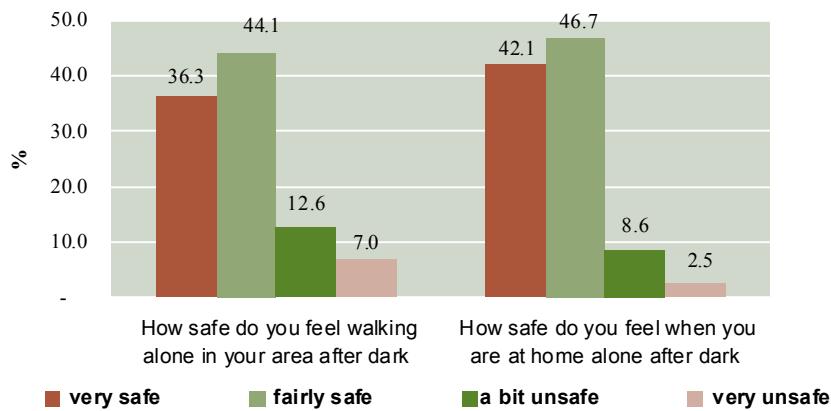


Private security officials are increasingly taking on certain policing and public protection functions previously performed by the police, or which can be seen as part of the government's safety, security and justice responsibilities. Therefore, respondents were asked about their opinions of the way these security officials are doing their job. Private security officers' work received a positive assessment, with 21 per cent of respondents saying they were doing a "very good job" and 45 per cent a "fairly good job." Only 19 per cent said that private security officers were doing either a "fairly poor job" or a "very poor job."

Respondents were also asked about the helpfulness of the police, and to what extent they agreed that the police were doing everything they could to help people. More than three quarters either fully agreed or tended to agree that the police were helpful towards citizens. The same pattern was observed in all surveyed governorates, regions and levels.

## Fear of crime

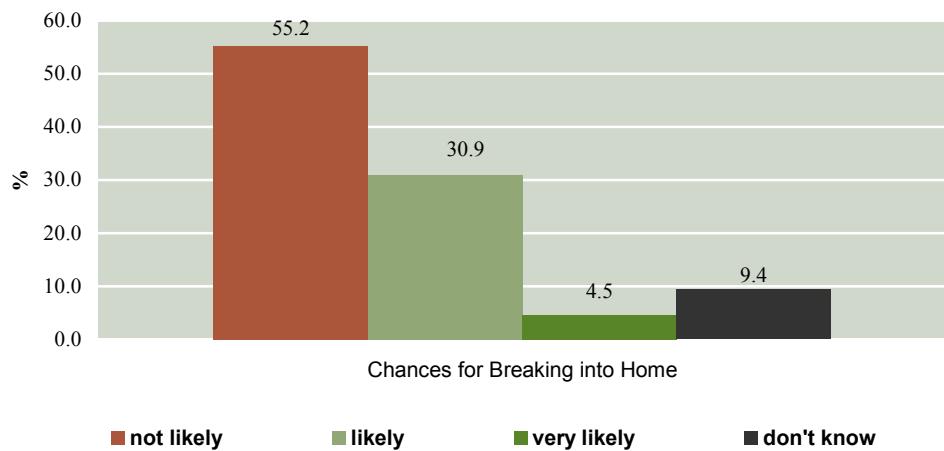
**Figure 2: Feelings of safety in the street and at home**



Respondents were asked whether they felt safe while walking in their own area and at home after dark. Eighty percent of respondents felt either "very safe" or "fairly safe" walking after dark, whilst some 20 per cent felt either a bit or very unsafe. Respondents felt even safer in their own home, with only 10 per cent feeling a bit or very unsafe (Figure 2).

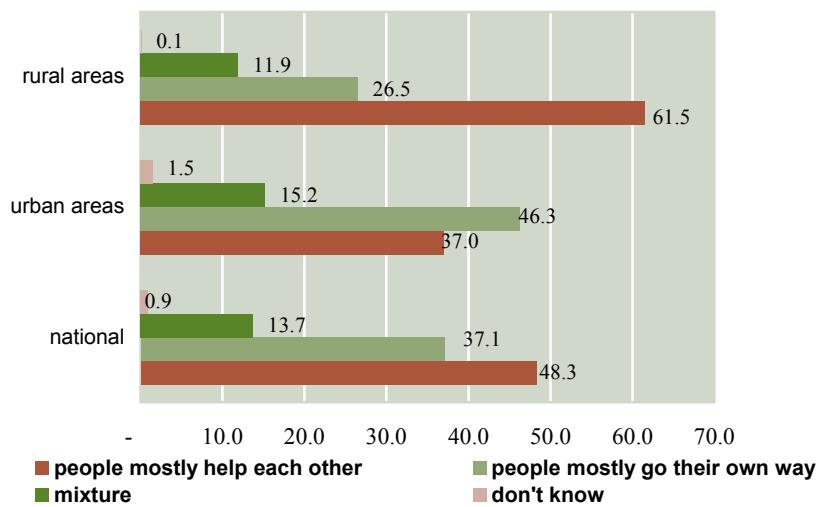
The majority of respondents (55 per cent) also thought it unlikely that somebody would break into their homes with the intention to steal something during the next twelve months (Figure 3). Approximately one third thought that this was likely, while 4 per cent said it was very likely.

**Figure 3: Likelihood of becoming victims of burglary**



Responses to a question regarding helpfulness of people with each other highlighted important differences between urban and rural areas. In governorates and regions where there are more urban areas, and where the economic level is higher, people are more likely to go mostly their own way (Figure 4). In the same areas it was also observed that people tended not to feel very safe in their daily lives. This was the case, for example, in Cairo and Port Said. The opposite was observed in other areas, for example Fayoum. In general and in accordance with the survey findings, it can be said that the readiness of people to help each other and to feel safe has to do with the nature of the region where they live.

**Figure 4: Are people helpful to each other?**



## Crime prevention measures

The overall feeling of safety of respondents with respect to crime was confirmed by the finding that 43.7 per cent of respondents were not protecting their homes by using any crime prevention device or measure. The majority (51.8 per cent) said they were protecting their houses with special door locks and 16.6 per cent with special window/door grids. Only 3.2 per cent had a high fence or were using the services of a caretaker or security guard.

## Attitudes of respondents towards punishment

The survey asked respondents which type of punishment was in their opinion the most appropriate for a 21-year-old recidivist offender who had been found guilty of stealing a colour television. A prison sentence was by and large considered the most appropriate punishment in all governorates, regions and levels, with approximately 70 per cent of respondents in favour of imprisonment. These findings reflect Egyptian public opinion that a prison sentence is the most effective way for achieving deterrence and crime prevention.

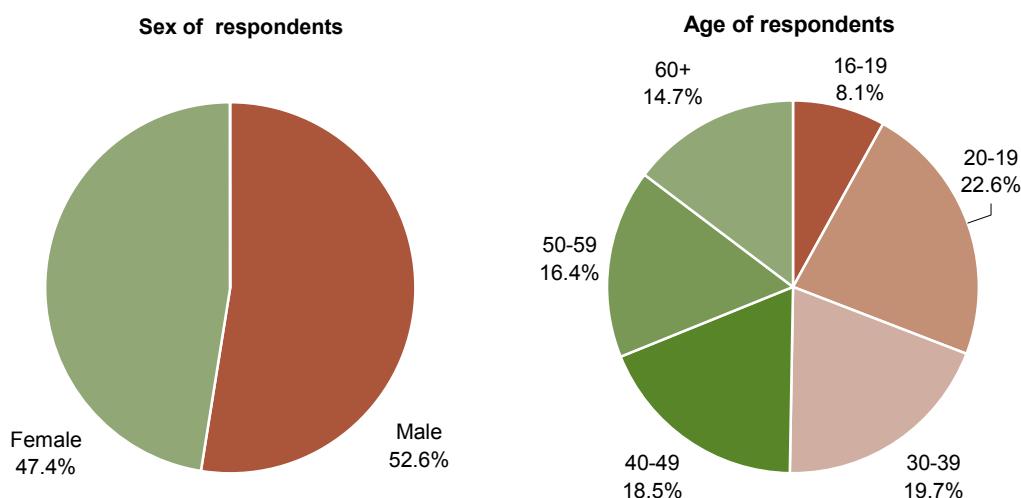
Although 40 per cent of respondents were in favour of sentencing the above-mentioned offender to one year imprisonment and less than 13 per cent to two or three years, some 5 per cent indicated life imprisonment. Only 20 per cent considered a monetary fine, community service or any other sentence an adequate form of punishment for this offender.

## Methodology and sample description

The survey involved 3,126 households representing different social and economic levels. At the national level, 6 governorates out of 26 were chosen randomly according to their geographical situation, and classified into three levels of criminality (high, medium and low) as indicated in the Egyptian official statistics. Within the chosen governorates, cities for urban areas, marakez (singular: markaz) for rural areas and living quarters for Cairo and Port Said were selected according to the above-mentioned level of criminality.

The living quarters were divided into streets, among which one or more were chosen randomly. Within the streets, chosen houses were numerated and also randomly selected. Afterwards, the flats within each house were numerated and a systematic random sample was selected. As for Assiut, Al Fayoum, Dakahlia, and Behera governorates, the same procedures were adopted within the urban areas. At the rural areas, each markaz was divided into villages, from which a random sample was chosen. Within each village, a random sample of streets and flats was selected.

**Figure 5: Distribution of respondents by sex and age**



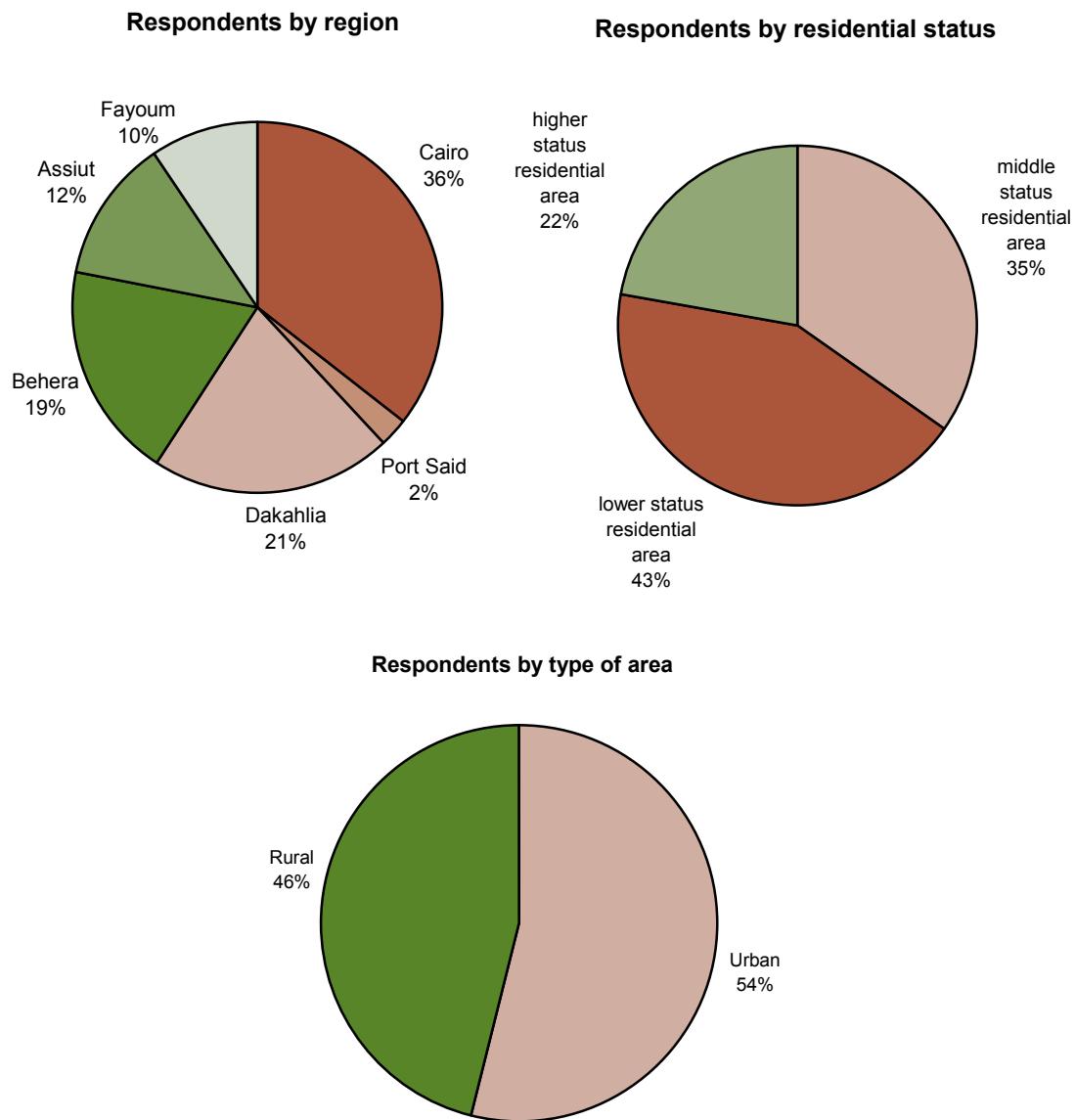
The composition of the resulting sample is illustrated in Figures 5 and 6.

The sample was almost equally split between respondents from urban and rural areas (54 and 46 per cent, respectively), male and female (53 and 47 per cent, respectively). More than half

of the respondents (57 per cent) lived in a higher or middle status residential area. Approximately one third of interviewees came from Cairo, followed by Dakahlia with 21 per cent and Behera with 19 per cent.

With regard to age distribution, the majority of respondents (50.4 per cent) were under 40 years old. The next age group is 40-49 with 18.5 per cent. Respondents aged between 50-59 years represent 16.4 per cent, and those above 60 are less represented in the sample with 14.7 per cent.

**Figure 6: Distribution of respondents by region, residential status and survey area**







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