United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime

UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

UN
DP

Global Progress Report
on Sustainable Development Goal 16

Latin America and the Caribbean
Indicators on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies
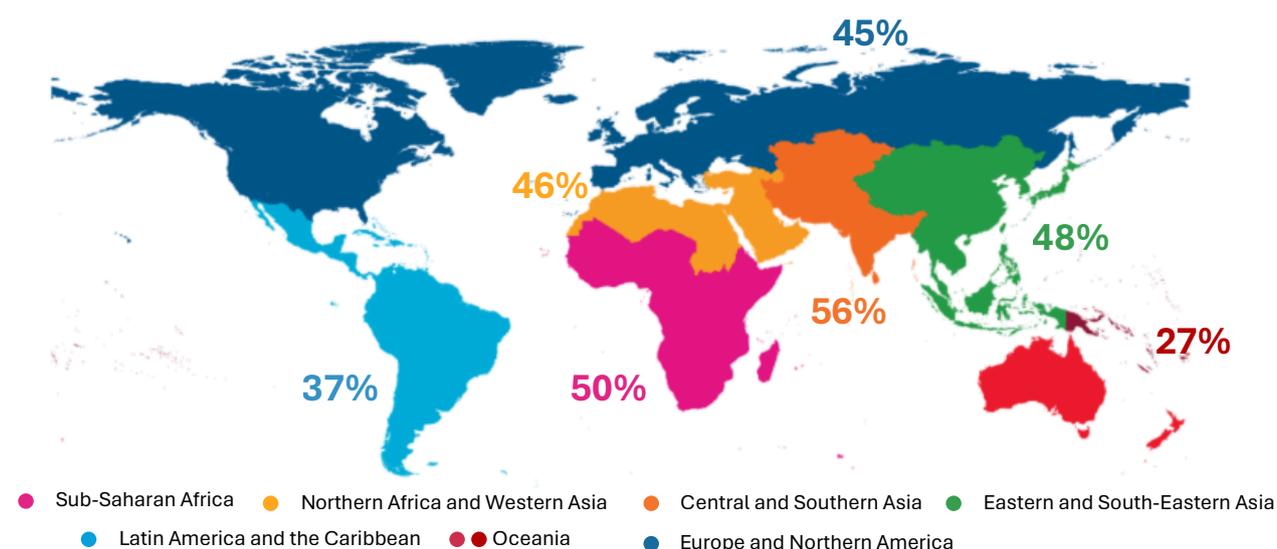
Regional Snapshot Series 1

Introduction

This Regional Snapshot presents the latest data and evidence on Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) indicators across Latin America and the Caribbean. It is the first in the Regional Snapshot Series, and it offers a concise overview of data availability, progress across the region and, where possible, its subregions. It includes all indicators with available data, and it is designed to complement the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)'s broader analysis and monitoring of SDG.[1] The Regional Snapshot offers a focused examination of the governance, peace, justice, and inclusion - core dimensions of sustainable development. Beyond showing data availability, this Snapshot aims to highlight progress, identify persistent data gaps, and inform ongoing efforts to strengthen Goal 16 statistics across the region.

Aligned with the Global Progress Report on SDG 16: Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, this Snapshot follows the same structure, grouping of indicators, and methodological approach, including data sources and definitions.

Despite notable progress in recent years, Goal 16 remains among the Goals with the lowest data availability, both in terms of geographical and temporal coverage. As of September 2025, 55.9% of 193 Member States had data on Goal 16.[2] Within this context, Latin America and the Caribbean region[3] stands out for having the second lowest data availability globally, only ahead of Oceania with just 36.9% of 33 countries in the region reporting data on Goal 16 since 2015. While Latin America and the Caribbean continues to face deep challenges around violence, civic trust, and inclusion, the region also demonstrates important strengths: a mature culture of governance data collection, leadership in innovative Goal 16 measurement, robust civil registration systems, and steady progress on integrity and institutional accountability. These are critical foundations for accelerating progress toward peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.

Figure 1: Percentage of countries that have data (weighted average across indicators), Goal 16 by region, 2015 – 2025

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Northern Africa and Western Asia
- Central and Southern Asia
- Eastern and South-Eastern Asia
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Oceania
- Europe and Northern America

Source: SDG Database.

---

[1] Refer to the Methodological Annex for further details on data availability and the regional groupings used in this Snapshot.

[2] Weighted average across indicators. Data availability is calculated as follows: (i) availability at indicator level is the average across its series, (ii) availability at target level is the average across the indicators under this target, (iii) availability at goal level is the average across targets under this goal and (iv) data availability across regions will only consider the 193 UN member states.

[3] The region consists of 33 countries and 19 territories, for a total of 52 countries and territories. For additional details, refer to the Methodological Annex, which provides the full list of countries and territories included in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

Peaceful Societies

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Peaceful Societies occupy a central place, recognizing that peace is both a foundation and a result of sustainable development. Under Goal 16, a connected set of indicators capture how safe, secure, and resilient societies are. High levels of conflict-related deaths (16.1.2) or homicides (16.1.1) point to fragile institutions and weak social cohesion. Violence against human rights defenders (16.10.1) reflects shrinking civic space, while violence in its various forms, both physical, psychological, or sexual (16.1.3), including violence against children (16.2.1 and 16.2.3) and gender-based violence (16.1.1), erodes trust, equality, and stability within communities and has profound socio-economic consequences for societies. Human trafficking (16.2.2) further exposes systemic failures to protect the most vulnerable. And even where violence appears low, widespread fear and perceptions of insecurity (16.1.4) weaken civic participation and social cohesion.

Measuring these dimensions remains a challenge. Many victims never report their experiences due to fear, stigma, or lack of trust in institutions, leaving much of this reality hidden from official statistics. Crimes such as homicides, violence against human right defenders or human trafficking often go undetected by the authorities. Crime victimization surveys, along with related instruments such as domestic violence surveys, surveys on violence against women, surveys on child maltreatment and violence, etc., remain essential for uncovering the "dark figure of crime" and providing valuable insights into people's lived experiences.

Latin America and the Caribbean stands out for its relatively longer history of conducting such surveys and collecting data on victimization and violence. As a result, the region has stronger data coverage for intentional homicide, and some non-lethal forms of crime, such as robbery and physical assault. Yet, data gaps persist, and continued investment is needed to build a fuller picture of how peaceful, and secure, societies truly are across the region.

SDG Indicators

Intentional homicides and deaths during conflicts
- **16.1.1 (Intentional Homicide)**
- **16.1.2 (Deaths in conflict)**

Violence and the threat of violence
- **16.10.1 (Violence against human rights defenders)**
- **16.1.3 (Physical, psychological and sexual violence)**
- **16.1.4 (Feeling safe)**

Violence against children
- **16.2.1 (Violence against children by their caregivers)**
- **16.2.3 (Sexual violence against children)**

Abuse, exploitation and human trafficking
- **16.2.2 (Human trafficking)**

Countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean with available data

2015 - 2025
(52 countries and territories)

Intentional homicide
40

Physical assault
13

Robbery
14

Sexual assault
6

Sexual violence
3

Physical Violence
6

Psychological violence
2
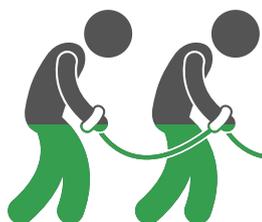
Human trafficking
25

Perception of safety
13

Sexual violence among girls
11

Violent discipline at home (1-14 years old children)
16

Killings of human rights defenders
17

*Official data on conflict-related deaths (indicator 16.1.2) are not available for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Region with the World's Highest Homicide Rate

Latin America and the Caribbean remains the region most affected by organized crime and gang-related violence. It also continues to have the highest homicide rate in the world at 19.7 victims per 100,000 population in 2023, nearly four times the global average of 5.2. Together with Sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the second highest homicide rate, it accounts for nearly two thirds of all intentional homicide victims worldwide. Although the region's homicide rate has declined from 22.7 in 2015 to 19.7 in 2023, the level of lethal violence remains alarmingly high. The gender dimension is equally stark in comparison to the global average: men in the region are killed at a rate of 36.0 per 100,000, compared to the global rate of 8.3, while women face homicide rates of 4.0 per 100,000, almost double the global average of 2.1.[4]

Figure 2: Rate of intentional homicide per 100,000 population by country, Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023 or latest year available since 2015
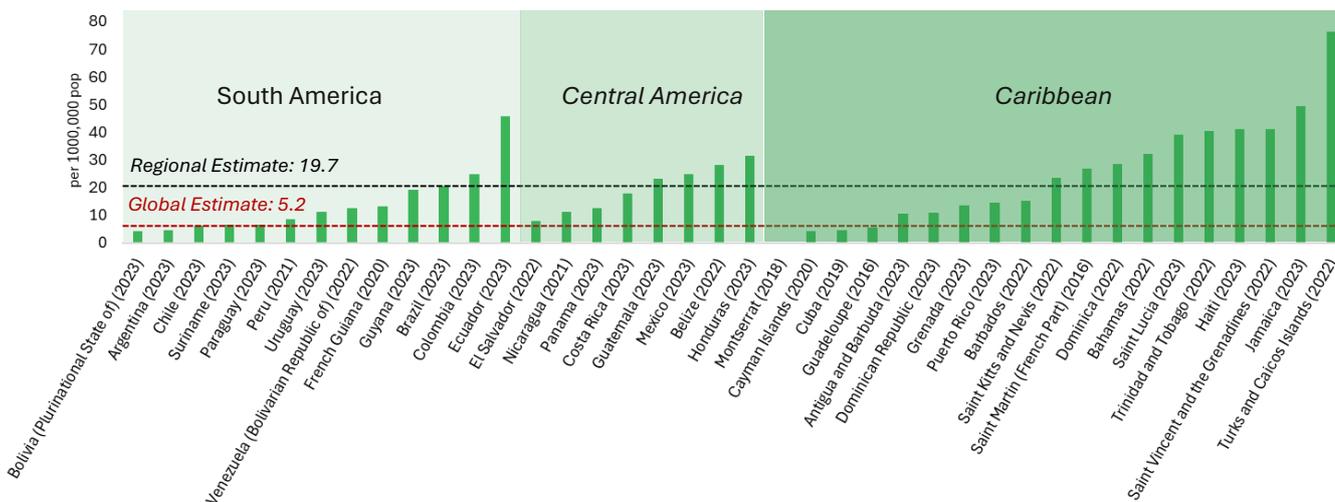
Source: SDG Database. Global and regional estimates refer to 2023. Only countries with data available since 2015 are included in the chart.

---

[4] Global Study on Homicide, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2023

The Region with the Second Highest Femicide Rate

Americas recorded

2nd highest femicide rate*

globally
(2024)

*intimate partner / family member

Femicide[5] represents the most extreme manifestation of gender-based violence against women and girls. The Americas[6] overall recorded the second highest rates of intimate partner / family member femicide in 2024 at 1.5 victims per 100,000 population in comparison to the global average that stood at 1.2 women per 100,000 female population. Estimates based on available data suggest that in the Americas, 69% of femicides occuring in the private sphere are perpetrated by intimate partners - a similar pattern also observed in Europe. Despite some fluctuations over time, the rate of femicides committed by intimate partner or family members in the Americas remained nearly the same in 2024 as in 2010. Subregional trends show that this rate is consistently higher in Central America than in other parts of the region.

In 2024, the rate of intimate partner or family member femicide was 1.9 victims per 100,000 female population in Central America, compared with 1.4 victims per 100,000 female population in South America and the Caribbean[7]. However, the annual variations observed across the subregions are not yet sufficient to indicate a clear long-term trend.

Figure 3: Subregional trends in the rate of intimate partner/family member femicide, the Americas (2010–2024)
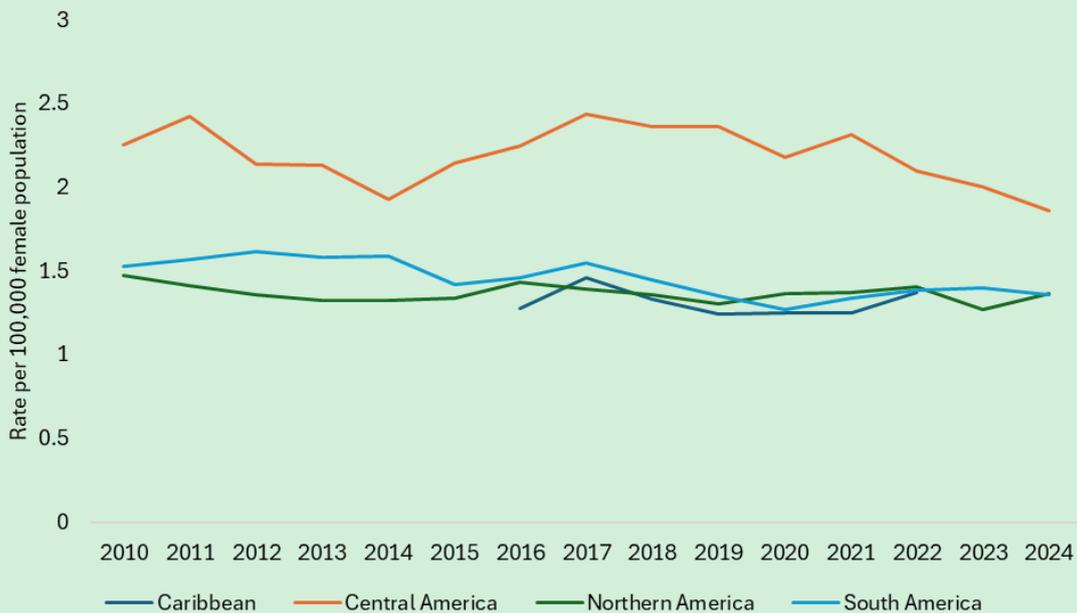
Source: UNODC estimates based on UNODC Homicide dataset. UNODC and UN Women, Femicides in 2024: Global Estimates of Intimate Partner/Family Member Femicides United Nations publication, 2025)

---

[5]In this publication, the term "femicide" is used to refer to all types of gender-related killings of women and girls as described in the "Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as "femicide/feminicide")", developed by UNODC and UN Women and approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2022.

[6]Regional estimates specific to Latin America and the Caribbean are not available. Subregional trends are shown in Figure 3.

[7]The estimate for the Caribbean refers to 2022.

Beyond the Headlines: The Hidden Toll of Non-Lethal Violence

Non-lethal forms of violence - physical, sexual, or psychological - leave deep and lasting scars on individuals and communities across the region. Their impact extends well beyond the immediate harm, leading to poorer health and education outcomes, eroding social trust, and limiting economic participation. Yet, data on such violence remain limited and fragmented, making it difficult to draw a comprehensive regional picture. Even so the available evidence is troubling: the median prevalence of robbery - a form of physical violence - in Latin Americs and the Caribbean countries with data is 4.5%, compared to just 0.6% in countries from other regions. Data on physical assault are available for only 13 countries, making regional comparisons with global estimates difficult, while information on sexual and psychological violence among adults remains too limited to draw any conclusions.

Robbery
Latin America and the Caribbean
4.5%
(Median prevalence rate)

Robbery
Other regions
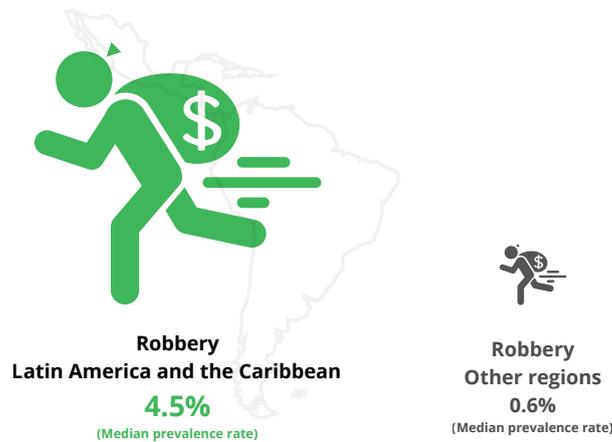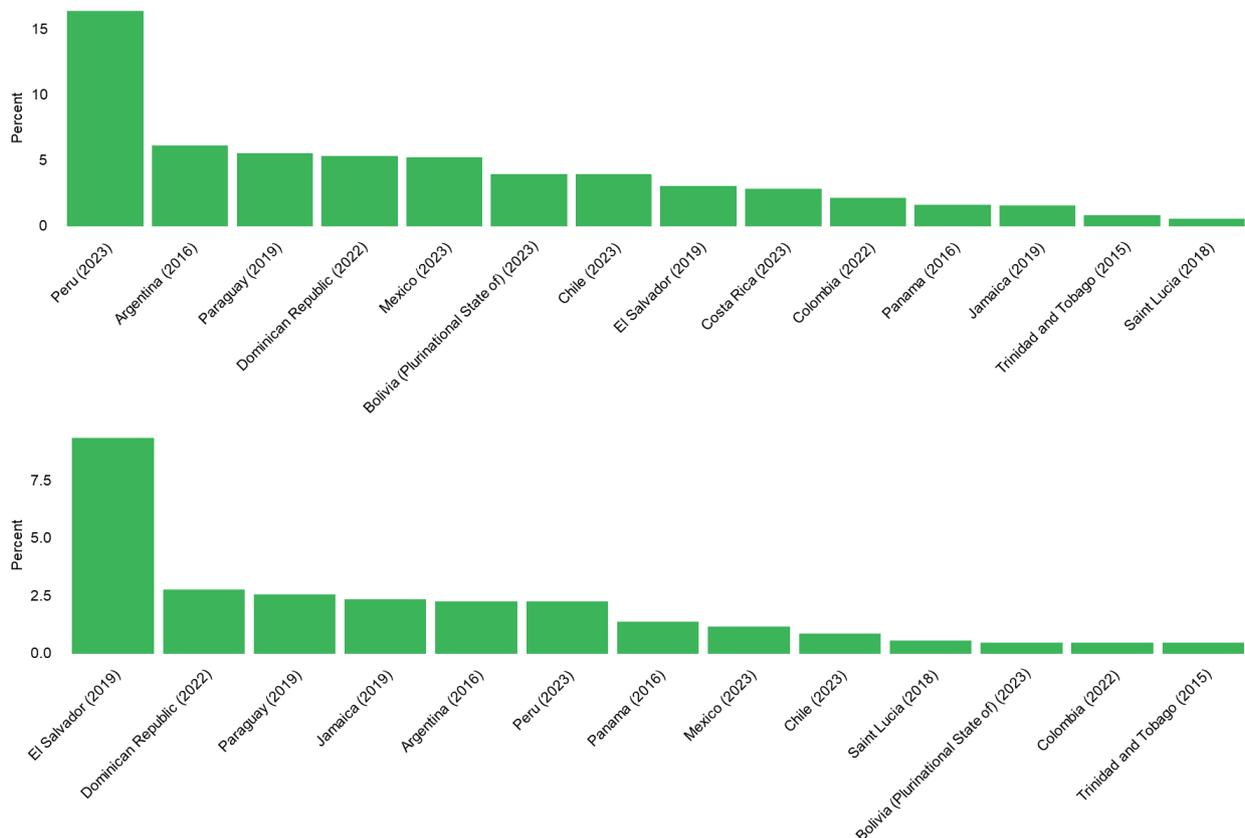**0.6%**
(Median prevalence rate)

Figure 4: Proportion of the population subjected to robbery (top chart) and physical assault (bottom chart) in the previous twelve months, selected countries Latin America and the Caribbean, latest available year since 2015
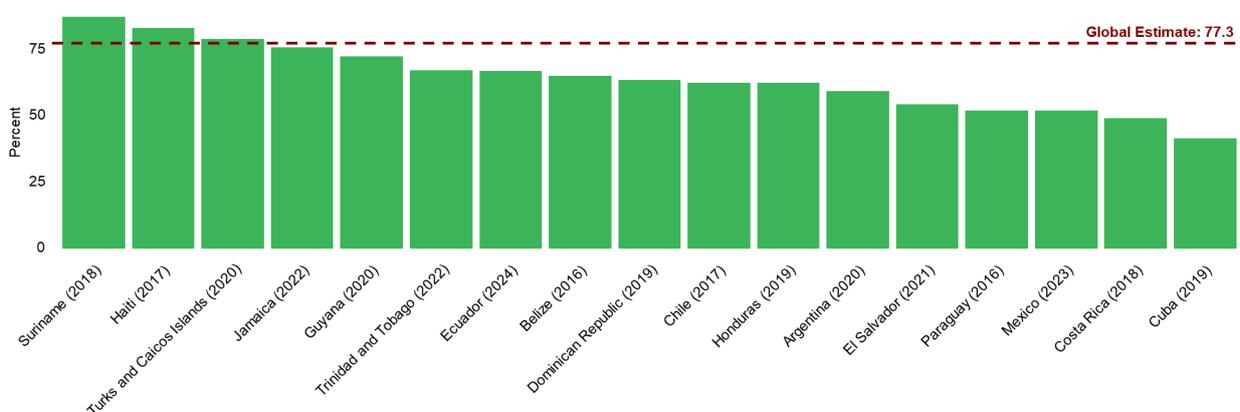

Source: SDG Database. Only countries with data available since 2015 are included in the chart.

Violence against children remains a defining challenge

For many, the experience of violence begins early in life, leaving deep marks that persist into adulthood. 'Violent discipline' at home[8] is the most common and widespread form of violence against children. A large body of evidence confirms that it is ineffective and associated with negative consequences, from immediate impacts to long-term harm. Globally, 1.6 billion children – or two in three – regularly endure violent punishment by caregivers at home.[9] In Latin America and the Caribbean, just over half (51%) of children under age 18 experience violent punishment by caregivers at home.[10] In countries where data are available, the share of children aged 1-14 years who experienced violent discipline at home in the past month varied between 40% and 90%.

Figure 5: Proportion of children aged 1-14 years who experienced physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the last month, Latin America and the Caribbean, latest available year since 2015

Source: SDG Database. Only countries with data available since 2015 are included in the chart. Global estimate refers to 2024.

18% of women report contact sexual violence before age 18
Latin America and the Caribbean

The first global estimates on sexual violence against girls place Latin America and the Caribbean third worldwide, with 18% of women aged 18 and above reporting contact sexual violence before age 18 - well above the global average of 12%.[11] Only Oceania and Sub-Saharan Africa report higher prevalence levels.

Despite the limited availability of data on different forms of violence across population groups, the existing evidence, combined with persistently high homicide and femicide rates, reveals a region where violence, both visible and hidden, continues to shape everyday life.

---

[8] Violent discipline by parents and other caregivers refers to any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression experienced in the month preceding the survey. Physical punishment includes shaking; hitting or slapping a child on the hand/ arm/leg; hitting on the bottom or elsewhere on the body with a hard object; spanking or hitting on the bottom with a bare hand; hitting or slapping on the face, head or ears; or hitting or beating hard and repeatedly. Psychological aggression includes shouting, yelling or screaming at a child as well as calling a child offensive names, such as 'dumb' or 'lazy'.

[9] United Nations Children's Fund, Data Brief on Violence against Children at Home, UNICEF, 2025.

[10] Ibid. Note that this indicator definition differs somewhat from the formulation for SDG indicator 16.2.1 which refers only to children aged 1 to 14 years.

[11] United Nations Children's Fund, When Numbers Demand Action: Confronting the global scale of sexual violence against children, UNICEF, New York, 2024.

Children Account for Nearly 60% of Trafficking Victims in Central America and the Caribbean

60%

of detected victims of trafficking in Central America and the Caribbean are

children

Globally, 38% of all victims of trafficking detected in 2022 were children. This is a significantly larger share of child victims than the 13% detected in 2004, when global data collection began. Central America and the Caribbean are among the 3 regions (in addition to Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa) that recorded the highest share of children out of total detected victims, around 60%. This is in contrast to other regions, such as Europe and North America where most detected victims are adults.

Figure 6: Detected victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, Latin America and the Caribbean, latest available year since 2015
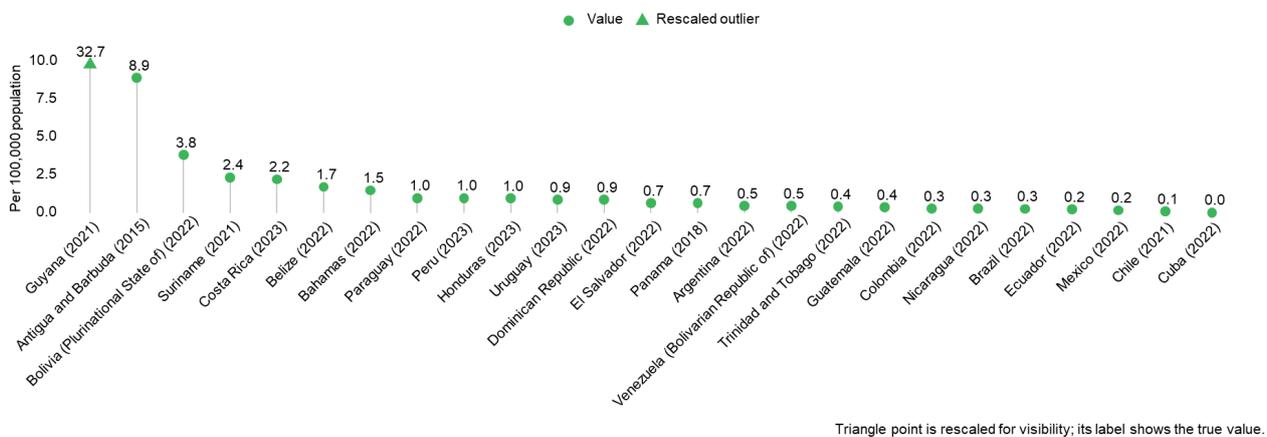
Triangle point is rescaled for visibility; its label shows the true value.

Source: SDG Database. Only countries with data available since 2015 are included in the chart.
Note: The value for Guyana (2021) has been rescaled to improve visual comparability; original values remain unchanged.

The Region with the Lowest Perception of Safety

44%

Feel safe walking alone at night

Peace is not only about the absence of violence; it also includes feeling safe and secure in daily life. Perceptions of safety are shaped not only by people's direct experiences but also by their broader environment, including what they encounter through social media, news, and community interactions. In Latin America and the Caribbean, these perceptions reveal a troubling reality. Between 2021 and 2024, only 44% of people in the region felt safe walking alone in their neighbourhood at night - the lowest level globally - compared to a global average of 70%.
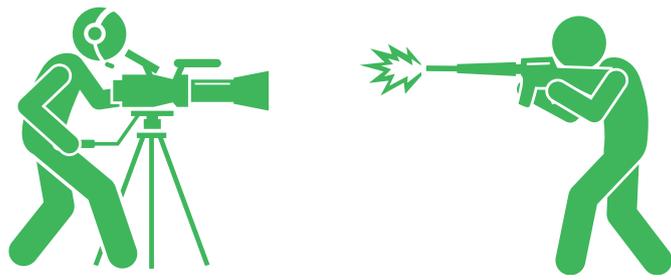
Latin America and the Caribbean is also the region where women feel least safe, with 40% of women reporting that they feel safe, compared with a global average of 60%. These perceptions, even when not directly tied to personal experiences of violence, influence social behaviour, mobility, and public trust, shaping how people engage in daily life and public spaces.

Violence Against Human Rights Defenders: A Threat to Civic Space

In 2024, attacks against journalists, trade unionists and human rights defenders remained alarmingly high: on average, at the global level, at least one defender was killed or disappeared every 14 hours. There were 502 verified cases of killings and 123 verified cases of disappearances recorded globally. Latin America and the Caribbean stood out as the most affected region: at least 260 defenders, including 33 women defenders, were killed in 2024.[12] The share of women among those who disappeared in the region was 46% (13 women human rights defenders), while this proportion was 21% worldwide. The region also recorded the largest numbers of attacks against environmental and Indigenous defenders. Defenders were detained in at least 8 countries (24%) out of the 33 Member States in the region. Of the 14 countries worldwide that reported no major attacks in 2024, none were in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Killings of human rights defenders recorded in

80% of countries of the region*

Latin America and the Caribbean
*among countries in the region where attacks against human rights defenders were recorded in 2024.

Figure 7: Percentage of dissappeared human right defenders who were women, 2024, by region
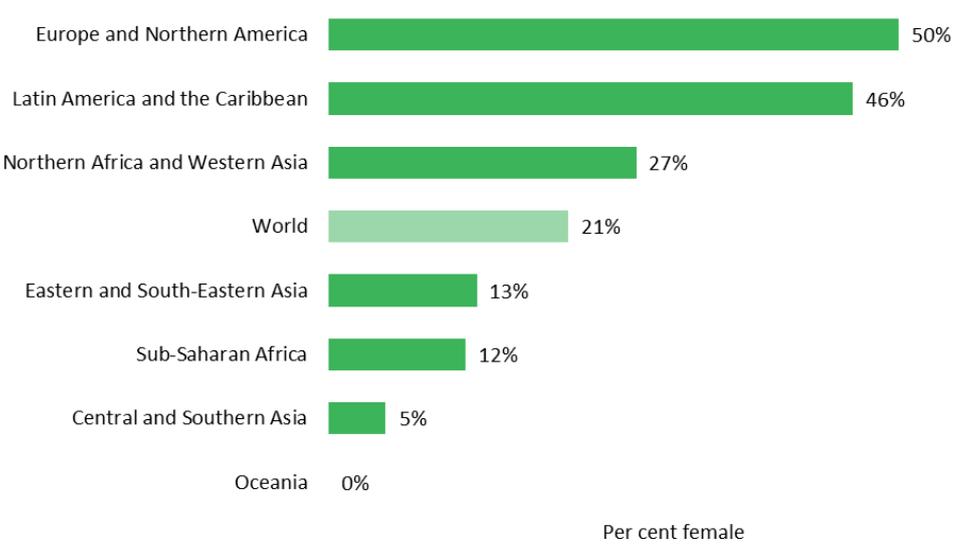
Region	Per cent female
Europe and Northern America	50%
Latin America and the Caribbean	46%
Northern Africa and Western Asia	27%
World	21%
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	13%
Sub-Saharan Africa	12%
Central and Southern Asia	5%
Oceania	0%

Per cent female

---

[12]Among countries in the region where attacks against human rights defenders were recorded in 2024.

Just Societies

Just Societies are a core pillar of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflecting the recognition that sustainable development cannot be achieved without fairness, equal treatment, and institutions that uphold the rule of law. Under Goal 16, a group of interrelated indicators captures how institutions deliver justice, uphold integrity, ensure fairness, and remain accountable to the people they serve. Access to justice, both civil (SDG indicator 16.3.3) and criminal (SDG indicators 16.3.1 & 16.3.2), is a fundamental human right and a key measure of just societies. When justice systems are weak or inaccessible, justice is denied for millions, eroding trust and the legitimacy of institutions, and fuelling inequality. Fragile institutions also enable illicit financial (SDG indicator 16.4.1) and arms flows (SDG indicator 16.4.2), which undermine stability and security. Moreover, bribery in public institutions (SDG indicators 16.5.1 & 16.5.2) corrodes integrity, distorts service delivery, and deepens inequality. The absence of independent national human rights institutions (SDG indicator 16.a.1) further weakens the protection of rights, allowing abuse and impunity to persist.

Together, these indicators provide a multidimensional picture of justice systems and governance institutions - how accessible, fair, and accountable they are in practice. Monitoring them across global, regional, and national levels not only identifies where injustices persist, but also highlights progress toward building societies that are truly peaceful, just, and inclusive.

SDG Indicators

Rule of law and access to justice
- **16.3.1 (Reporting of violence)**
- **16.3.2 (Unsentenced prisoners)**
- **16.3.3 (Access to civil justice and dispute resolution mechanisms)**

Illicit financial and arms flows
- **16.4.1 (Illicit financial flows)**
- **16.4.2 (Illicit arms flows)**

Corruption
- **16.5.1 (Bribery prevalence among the population)**
- **16.5.2 (Bribery prevalence among businesses)**

Protective institutions
- **16.a.1 (Independent Human Rights Institutions)**

Countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean with available data

2015 - 2025
(52 countries and territories)

Reporting of ...

Physical assault
13

Robbery
14

Physical violence
7

Sexual violence
5

Sexual assault
5

Unsentenced detainees
35

Access to civil justice
3

Illicit Financial Flows
4

Bribery population
25

Bribery Business
16

Illicit Firearms
15

Human Rights Institutions
33

Access to Criminal and Civil Justice Remains Out of Reach for Many in the Region

Less than

50%   **50%**   **20%**

Physical assault   **Robbery**   **Sexual violence**

of crimes are reported

Until 2020, the SDG framework monitored access to justice through two global indicators focused on criminal justice: reporting of victimization (SDG indicator 16.3.1) and pretrial detention (SDG indicator 16.3.2). Recognizing the critical gap this left in understanding civil justice, Member States introduced a new indicator (SDG indicator 16.3.3) to capture people's ability to access civil justice mechanisms across a wide range of disputes.

Reporting crimes to competent authorities is the first step for victims to seek justice. Without knowledge of the crime or the injustice people are experiencing, authorities will not conduct investigations and administer justice. Beyond reflecting victims' confidence in the police or other authorities to provide effective redress, and the safety of doing so, reporting rates also help estimate the "hidden figure" of crime, or the proportion of crimes that are not reported.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, data show that, on average, fewer than half of victims of physical assault or robbery report their experiences. Women are generally more likely than men to report physical assault, though sex-disaggregated data remain scarce. Reporting of sexual violence is lower with below 20% on average in the five countries with available data.

Figure 8: Police reporting rate for physical assault (top) and robbery (bottom) in the previous 12 months , Latin America and the Caribbean, latest data availble since 2015
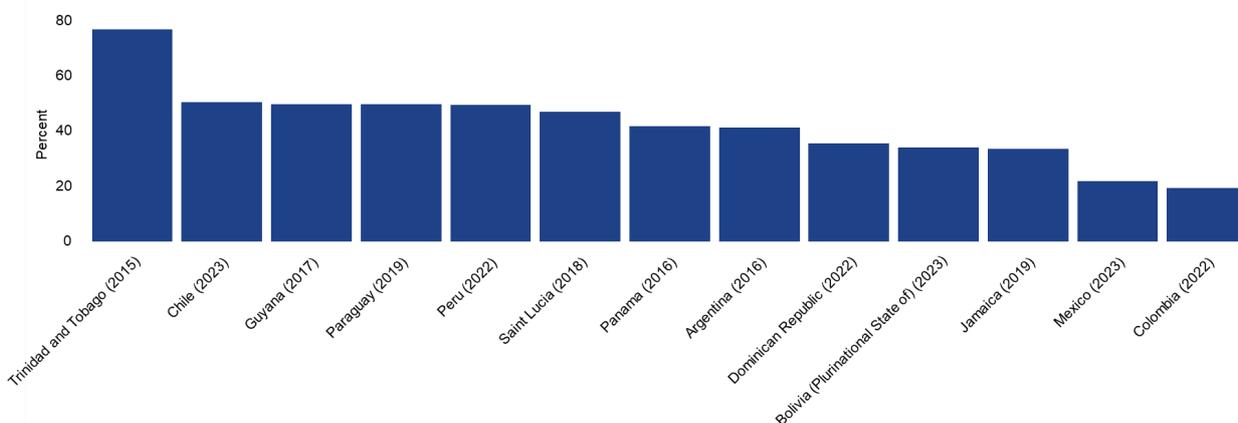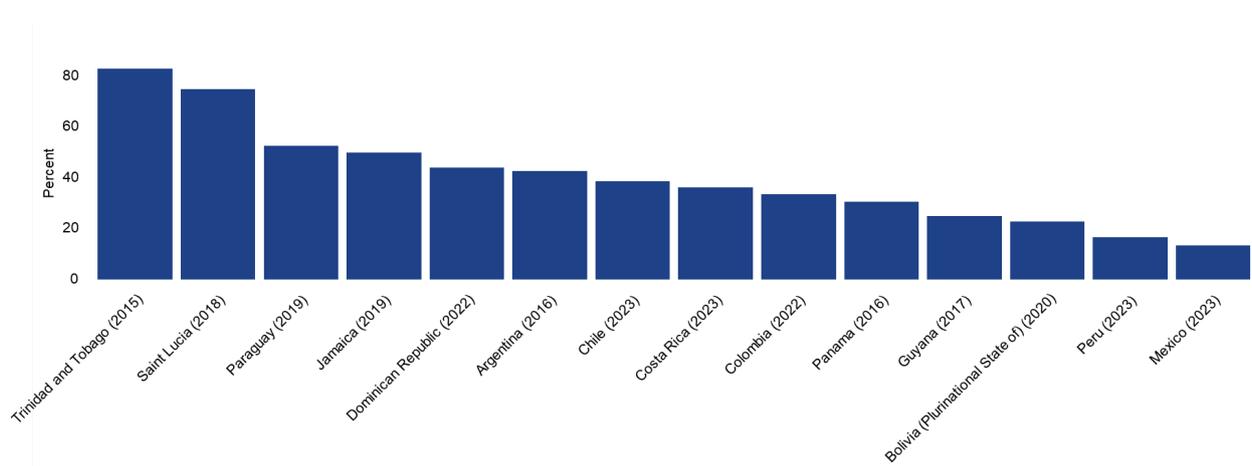
Source: SDG Database. Only countries with data available since 2015 are included in the chart.

Data on access to civil justice in Latin America and the Caribbean remain scarce. As of 2024, only three countries – Peru, El Salvador and Colombia - have reported on this indicator. Where data exist, evidence shows that a large share of people who face civil disputes do not turn to any formal or informal mechanisms to resolve them, leaving many without the justice they deserve.

Only 3 countries have reported data on access to civil justice

No progress in the establishment of Human Rights Institutions

42%

14 countries have NHRIs with A status accreditation

The establishment of independent National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) is a cornerstone of human rights promotion and protection, and a critical enabler of SDG progress in line with international standards. As of 2024, 89 countries worldwide have an NHRI that is fully compliant with the Paris Principles. In Latin America and the Caribbean, however, progress has stalled: only 14 countries (42%) hold A-status accreditation, with no improvement since 2015. Moreover, NHRIs in Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela remain at B status, all having deteriorated from A status in previous years.

The Region with the Highest Prisoner-to-Population Ratio

Latin America and the Carribean

305

259

World

149   **145**

Number of persons in detention per 100,000 population

2015   2023
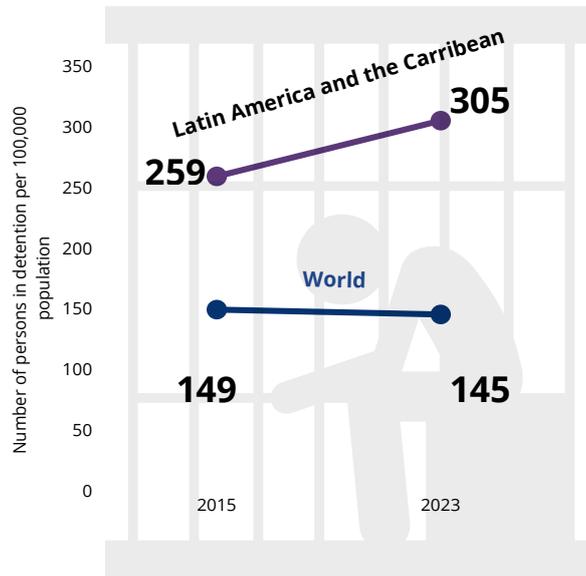
In 2023, an estimated 11.7 million people were held in detention worldwide, 5% more than a decade ago. Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for one third of the global prison population.[13] Across regions, the prisoner-to-population ratio varies, with the highest ratio of 305 prisoners per 100,000 population recorded in LAC. Between 2015 and 2023, the region saw a significant increase in the imprisonment ratio, up from 259 to 305 prisoners per 100,000.

Encouragingly, the share of detainees awaiting trial or sentencing declined over the same period from 41% in 2015 to 30% in 2023 suggesting gradual progress in reducing pretrial detention.

Figure 9: Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison popuation, Latin America and the Caribbean, latest data availble since 2015
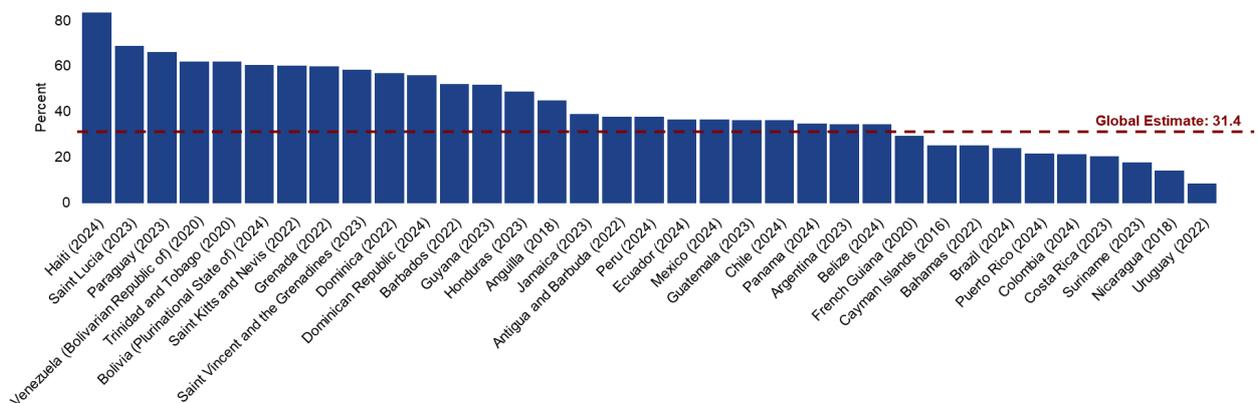
Source: SDG Database. Only countries with data available since 2015 are included in the chart.

---

[13] UNODC, Prison Matters 2025: Global Prison Population and Trends; A Focus on Rehabilitative Environments (United Nations, 2025).

Insights from Latin America's Illicit Financial and Arms Flows Pilots

4 Countries with IFF estimates
Latin America and the Caribbean

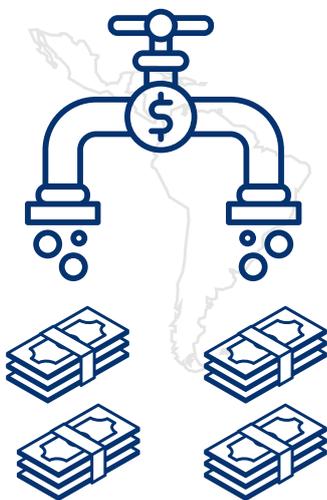Globally, data on illicit financial flows (IFFs) remain scarce, yet anecdotal evidence suggests that they can be substantial. Pilot studies conducted in four different countries in the Latin American region - Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru – shed light on the scale and diversity of IFFs. These studies gathered data from illegal drug markets and exploitation-type activities, revealing wide variations shaped by each country's context.

In Colombia, inward IFFs are generated when cocaine is exported and also may arise when residents derive income from their participation in the international cocaine trafficking supply chain while outward flows are generated from the import of intermediate inputs (mainly chemical substances) required for the production process. Ecuador, largely a transit and origin country for migrants, many of whom make use of smuggling services, has produced IFF estimates linked to smuggling of migrants. Mexico registers IFFs both related to smuggling of migrants and to drug trafficking, whereas Peru, the world's second largest cultivator of coca bush, has IFF estimates primarily tied to cocaine trafficking.[14]

Determining the illicit origin or context of seized, found or surrendered firearms constitutes an important step in addressing illicit arms flows. Effective tracing - as measured through SDG indicator 16.4.2, which identifies how and where firearms are diverted from the legal realm into illicit markets - represents one of the key tools for determining the links between illicit arms flows and organized crime groups. Levels of successful tracing vary widely between and within regions and are partly influenced by the volume of arms seized. In countries where the annual average number of firearm seizures exceeds 10,000 - most of which are in Latin America and the Caribbean – the share of successfully traced weapons falls below the global average of 42%. This gap may partially reflect the considerable efforts required to establish the illicit origin or context of seized firearms, relying on mechanisms such as tracing requests to national and foreign registries or investigative work.

Figure 10: Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments, Latin America and the Caribbean, two-year averages calculated over the latest available years, 2016–2023
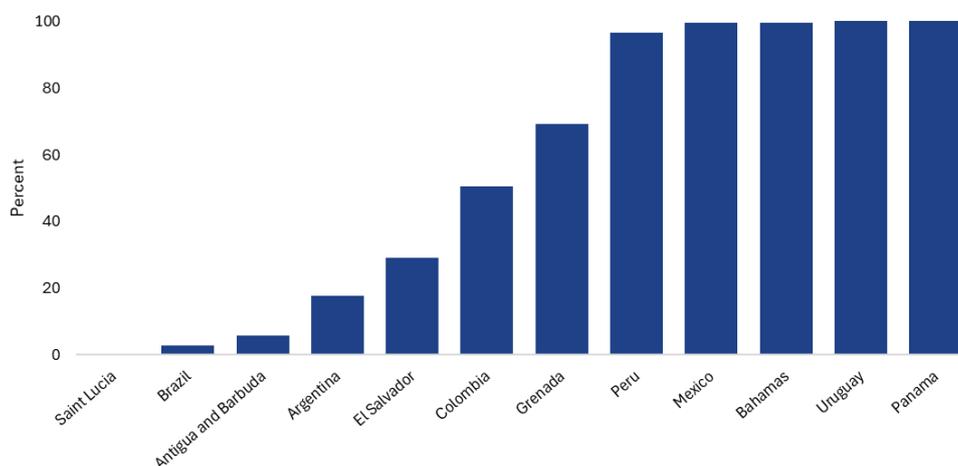
Source: SDG Database. Only countries with data available since 2015 are included in the chart.

---

[14] For in dept analysis on IFFs in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, see: UNODC, Crime-related illicit financial flows: latest progress (United Nations publication, 2023).

Bribery among the population is still very common

Bribery among the population

Region with the 3rd highest average prevalence rate
Latin America and The Caribbean

Globally, 142 countries and territories have at least one data point on population bribery prevalence since 2010. Latin America and the Caribbean ranks 3rd in terms of median prevalence rate when compared to the other six SDG regions. A comparison of the earliest available data point in the period 2010–2016 with the latest available data point in the period 2017–2024 reveals stable global trend in the prevalence of bribery among the general population, with Latin America and the Caribbean recording a reduction in the median prevalence rate. Bribery among businesses in their interactions with public officials is less prevalent than bribery among the population but it remains a challange for many countries in the region.

Figure 11: Prevalence of bribery among the population (top) and businesses (bottom), Latin America and the Caribbean, latest data available since 2015
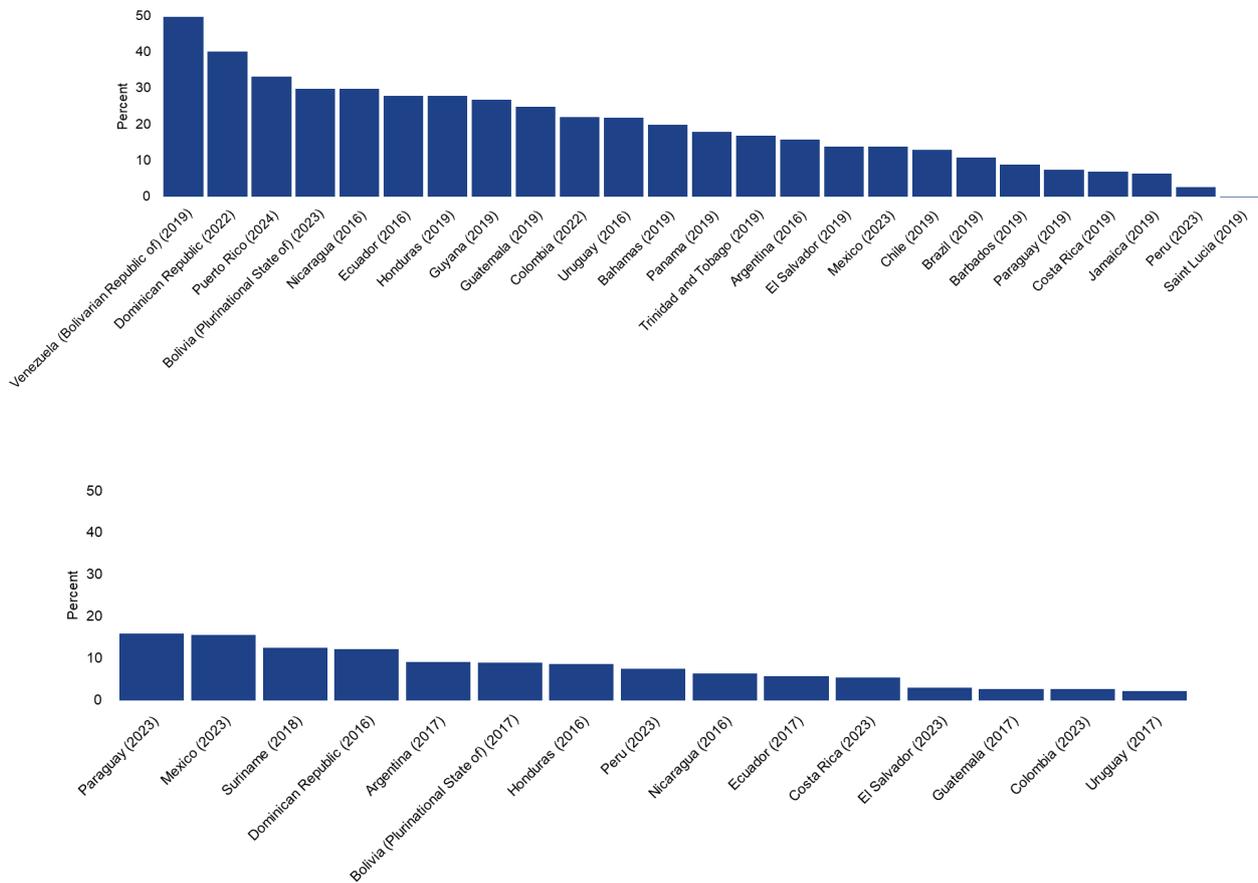
Inclusive Societies

Goal 16 also tracks progress towards building Inclusive Societies where everyone, regardless of background, can participate in decision-making, access services equitably, and have their rights and voices respected. The indicators under this theme show how institutions reflect, serve, and respond to the people they represent.

Inclusion begins at birth, with legal identity (SDG indicator 16.9.1) ensuring every person can claim their rights and essential services. It continues through representation in legislatures, public service, and the judiciary (SDG indicator 16.7.1 a, b and c), which together measure how diverse population groups are represented in decision-making, and ultimately whether they can influence policy outcomes. Perceptions of inclusive and responsive decision-making (SDG indicator 16.7.2) add another layer, capturing whether people feel that public institutions listen to them and respond to their concerns.

Inclusion also depends on quitable access to public services, information and rights protection as well as fair treatment. Satisfaction with public services (SDG indicator 16.6.2) reflects people's experiences when interacting with the state, while protection against discrimination (SDG indicator 16.b.1) ensures equal treatment and dignity for all. Access to information (SDG indicator 16.10.2) strengthens transparency, accountability, and civic participation which are the foundations of an open and inclusive society. At the structural level, inclusion also extends beyond national borders. Representation in international institutions (SDG indicator 16.8.1) ensures that countries have equitable voice and voting power in global decision-making.

Together, these indicators offer a multidimensional picture of inclusion showing who participates, who is served, and who is heard, and illuminate the path towards societies that are truly representative, responsive, and just.

SDG Indicators

Inclusive decision making
- **16.7.1a (Composition of legislatures)**
- **16.7.1b (Composition of public services)**
- **16.7.c (Composition of the judiciary)**
- **16.7.2 (Political violence)**

Effective, accountable institutions
- **16.6.1 (Government expenditures)**
- **16.6.2 (Satisfaction with public services**

Participation in global decision-making
- **16.8.1 (Representation in international organizations)**

Legal identity for all
- **16.9.1 (Birth registration)**

Legal protections for access to information
- **16.10.2 (Public access to information)**

Preventing discrimination
- **10.3.1/16.b.1 (Experience of discrimination)**

Countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean with available data

2015 - 2025
(52 countries and territories)

Political efficacy
11

Satisfaction with public services
21

Composition of public service
5

Composition of legislatures
46

Composition of judiciary
5

Public access to information
46

Birth registration
25

Experience of discrimination
16

Government expenditure
29

Representation in international organizations
33

The Births of 2 Million Children are not registered in Latin America and the Caribbean

2 million
under the age of 5 in Latin America and the Caribbean have not had their births registered

1.3%
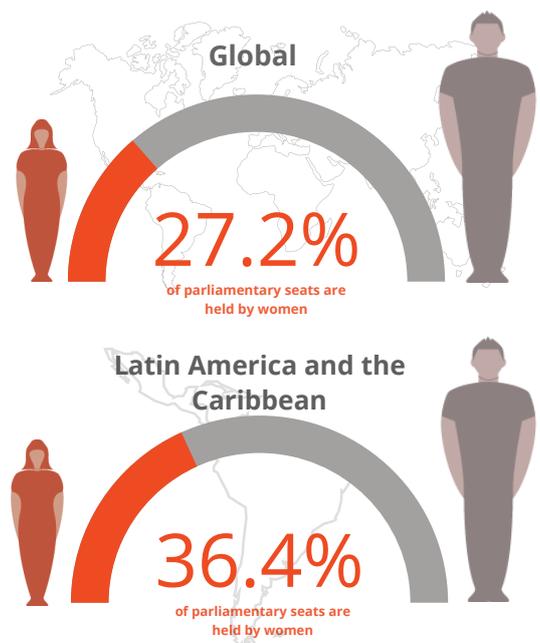of the global total of 150 million children without birth registration

Today, the births of nearly 8 in 10 children under age five – more than 500 million children worldwide - have been registered. This steady progress marks a major global achievement. Yet, an estimated 150 million children remain unregistered, and global progress has slowed over the past decade. In Latin America and the Caribbean, around 2 million children, are still "missing" from official records, representing 1.3% of all unregistered children globally.[15] While several countries in the region have achieved universal birth registration, others continue to fall just below the global average.

Persistent data gaps, with 63% of countries in the region having recent information, highlight the urgent need for stronger and more comprehensive monitoring to capture the full picture of inclusion from birth.

Latin America and the Caribbean shows significant progress for women in parliaments

Inclusion is also reflected in who holds positions of power and influence within public institutions. SDG indicator 16.7.1 monitors representation in public institutions – legislatures, the public service, and the judiciary.

While women and youth continue to be underrepresented in parliaments globally relative to their share of eligible national populations, the Latin America and Caribbean region stands out for its progress. As of 1 January 2025, women hold 36.4% of seats in lower or single chambers, well above the global average of 27.2%. Youth (aged 45 or younger) make up 42.8% of seats in these chambers, surpassing the global figure of 36%. These figures highlight both the region's progress and the remaining gaps in achieving gender parity and inclusive representation.

Global
27.2%
of parliamentary seats are held by women

Latin America and the Caribbean
36.4%
of parliamentary seats are held by women

---

[15] United Nations Children's Fund, The Right Start in Life: Global levels and trends in birth registration. 2024 update, UNICEF, New York, 2024.

Women are underrepresented in public service and the judiciary

As of 2024, only
5 countries
have reported data on women in the judiciary and public service

Latin America and the Caribbean

Women also remain underrepresented in the public service and the judiciary worldwide, particularly at senior levels where decisions are made. Evidence shows that women are often concentrated in lower-level or clerical positions, while men dominate senior government roles and high courts, including constitutional and supreme courts. In Latin America and the Caribbean, data limitations hinder a full assessment of gender balance across institutions. Only about 10% of countries in the region have reported data on the number of women judges, and similarly limited data exist on women's representation in the public service. Strengthening data collection in these areas is essential to understand and advance equality in decision-making institutions.

Less than Half of People Feel they have a Say in Government Decisions or that their Voice Influences Policy Outcomes

Representation within institutions tells only part of the story. True inclusion also depends on whether people feel their voices are heard and their participation matters. This is where SDG indicator 16.7.2 provides critical insight. It measures whether people feel they can influence what the government does, using the question: "How much would you say the political system in your country allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?"
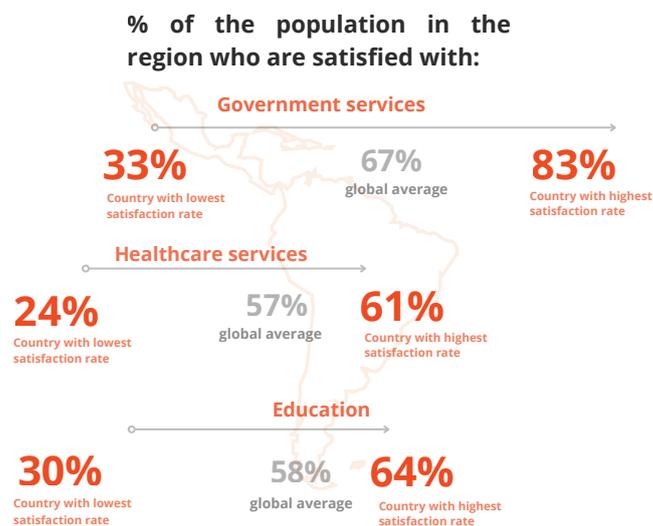
Latin America and the Caribbean

Less than
50%
of the population in the region think they have a say in what the government does

The latest available data from high- and middle-income countries globally show that, on average, fewer than half of respondents believe their political system allows them to influence government decisions or policy outcomes. In Latin America and the Caribbean, less than half of the population feels their voices matter, highlighting a disconnect between institutional representation and perceived inclusion. Data availability also remains limited with only about 24% of countries currently producing data for this indicator. These findings underscore the need for broader and more regular measurement to capture how citizens experience inclusion in governance.

While perceptions of people's ability to influence decision-making capture whether people feel heard in decision-making, inclusion also depends on how institutions respond to their needs in practice. In this sense, satisfaction with public services offers another critical lens through which to assess how inclusive and responsive governance systems truly are.

Despite service delivery being a core government responsibility, major data gaps persist in measuring and monitoring public satisfaction with key public services. On average, across Latin America and the Caribbean, many countries report satisfaction levels below the global average, suggesting that access and quality remain uneven across countries. This is particularly evident in healthcare services, one of the few sectors with comparatively better data coverage. Satisfaction levels in the region vary widely from as low as 24% in some countries to as high as 61%. Despite some countries in the region having satisfaction levels close to the global average, a large share of the population (close to 40%) still feels dissatisfied with the healthcare services they receive.

% of the population in the region who are satisfied with:

Government services

33%
Country with lowest satisfaction rate

67%
global average

83%
Country with highest satisfaction rate

Healthcare services

24%
Country with lowest satisfaction rate

57%
global average

61%
Country with highest satisfaction rate

Education

30%
Country with lowest satisfaction rate

58%
global average

64%
Country with highest satisfaction rate

Meaningful inclusion also means guaranteeing that all people are treated fairly and with dignity in every aspect of life. This is captured by SDG indicator 16.b.1, which focuses on protection from discrimination. Globally, one in five individuals report having been discriminated against on at least one ground prohibited by international law in the past 12 months, with most countries recording prevalence rates between 13% and 26%. However, data for Latin America and the Caribbean remain limited, with only 21.7% of countries reporting on this indicator.

Where data are available, findings show that experiences of discrimination in the region range from as low as 3% to as high as 15%, depending on the country and context. These variations underscore the importance of expanding data collection and analysis to better understand who faces discrimination, on what grounds, and how it affects their inclusion and participation in society.

Figure 11: Proportion of population reporting having felt discriminated against, Latin America and the Caribbean, latest data available since 2015
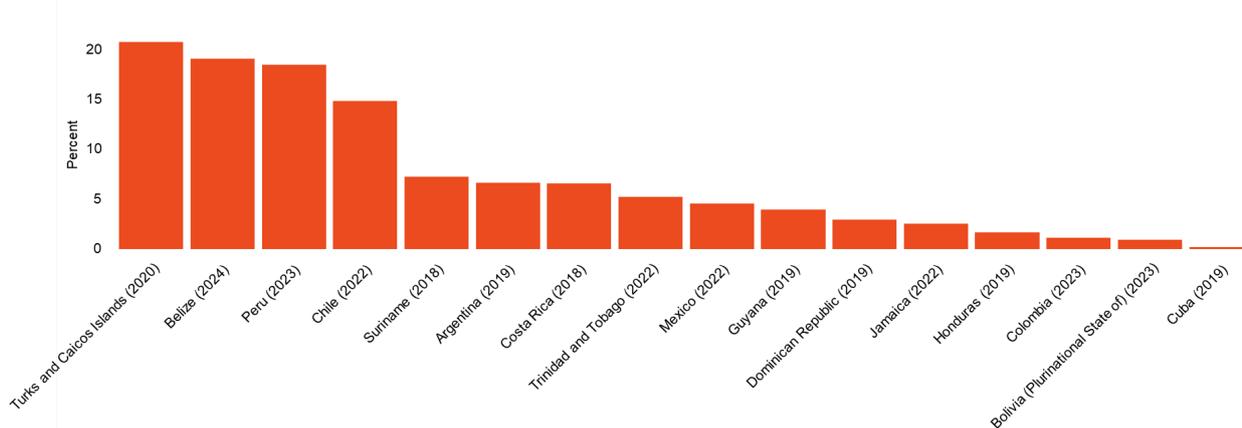
Source: SDG Database. Only countries with data available since 2015 are included in the chart.

There is a growing global commitment to accountability and transparency. SDG Indicator 16.10.2 tracks the number of countries that have adopted statutory guarantees for public access to information. As of 2024, 139 countries had statutory guarantees for public access to information. Out of these, 26 were in Latin America and the Caribbean.[16]

Latin America and the Caribbean (26)			
1. *Antigua and Barbuda*	7. *Chile*	14. *Guyana*	21. *Peru*
2. *Argentina*	8. *Colombia*	15. *Honduras*	22. *Saint Kitts and Nevis*
3. *Bahamas*	9. *Costa Rica*	16. *Jamaica*	23. *Saint Vincent and Grenadines*
4. *Belize*	10. *Dominican Republic*	17. *Mexico*	24. *Trinidad and Tobago*
5. *Bolivia (Plurinational State of)*	11. *Ecuador*	18. *Nicaragua*	25. *Uruguay*
6. *Brazil*	12. *El Salvador*	19. *Panama*	26. *Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)*
	13. *Guatemala*	20. *Paraguay*	

Source: Oversight bodies, access to data and digital tools as essential elements for enhancing access to information: UNESCO's report on public access to information (SDG indicator 16.10.2), 2024

Despite multiple rounds of governance reforms since the early 2000s, Latin America and the Caribbean countries, like other developing regions, have registered only limited gains in representation. Across most major international financial institutions, the region's membership share continues to exceed its voting share, and this imbalance has shifted only marginally since 2000. At the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the region accounts for roughly 8–9% of members but only 6–7% of voting power, with only modest adjustments between 2015 and 2024. A similar pattern of stability is observed within the World Bank Group (at the International Finance Corporation - IFC - and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development - IBRD). Representation is comparatively stronger at the Financial Stability Board (FSB), at around 12–13%, but has also remained broadly unchanged for two decades. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) remains the main exception: Latin America and the Caribbean countries hold around one-third of its membership but more than 45% of voting power, reflecting its regional mandate and ownership structure.

Figure 13: Latin America and the Caribbean membership and voting shares across major international financial institutions, 2024
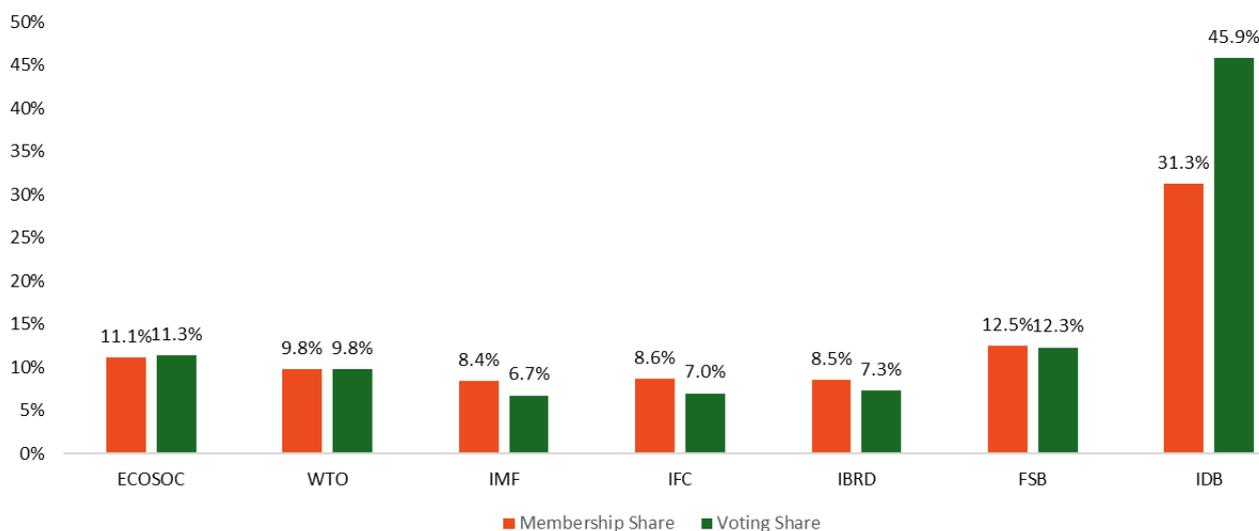
Source: SDG Database.

---

[16] Oversight bodies, access to data and digital tools as essential elements for enhancing access to information: UNESCO's report on public access to information (SDG indicator 16.10.2), 2024

Methodological Annex

Regional Groupings

This Snapshot focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean, using the SDG Regional Groupings as the basis for country coverage. These groupings may not fully align with the country classifications used by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The full list of the 52 countries and territories included in Latin America and the Caribbean and the other SDG regions can be accessed here.

Because this Snapshot is designed to complement the Global Progress Report on Goal 16, keeping the SDG Regional Groupings ensures consistency and allows readers to easily compare the findings for this region with those presented for other regions in the main report.

Data Access

All data presented in this Snapshot are publicly available through the SDG Global Database. Additional references to detailed data and analysis produced by the respective custodian agencies are provided in the footnotes. Further information can also be found in the Global Progress Report on Goal 16.

United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime

UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

UNDP

With contributions from

Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.
1889

unicef
for every child

UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

World Health Organization

United Nations | Office for Disarmament Affairs

UNESCO | unesco

and from UNCTAD and World Bank