



Safe Living Report

Internal Security Conditions

Sustainable Governance
Indicators 2022

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Indicator

Internal Security Policy

Question

How effectively does internal security policy protect citizens against security risks?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = Internal security policy protects citizens against security risks very effectively.
- 8-6 = Internal security policy protects citizens against security risks more or less effectively.
- 5-3 = Internal security policy does not effectively protect citizens against security risks.
- 2-1 = Internal security policy exacerbates the security risks.

Finland

Score 9

According to the 2019 Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) report, Finland continues to be a safe and secure environment for business, tourism and living, having one of the world's most effective police forces. Finland remains among the safest countries in the world, with a very low crime rate. Still, as evident from the 2019 OSAC report, there has been an increase in the incidence of sexual offenses, drunk driving, robberies and narcotics-related offenses. According to polls, Finnish citizens regard the police as one of the most reliable public institutions. Following the establishment of a First Program on Internal Security in 2004, the government in 2012 adopted the Third Internal Security Program, with the aim of reducing citizen's daily security concerns. The program's overall implementation has been monitored by the Ministry of the Interior. Additionally, the government has adopted or is considering national strategies addressing organized crime, the informal economy and terrorism. Involving a collaboration between municipalities, regions, organizations, businesses and the public administration, preparations for a new national strategy outline were initiated in August 2016 and completed in April 2017. An implementation program for Finland's Cyber Security Strategy for 2017 – 2020 has been adopted and measures have been taken to increase national and international cooperation between intelligence and police authorities. In 2020, Finland experienced a far-reaching incident of data security crime when the complete patient list maintained by psychotherapy firm Vastaamo, comprising 33,000 clients, was stolen. The clients were subsequently subject to blackmail. They were required to pay any amount of money to have their private data removed from the data published over the Tor network. The criminal investigation is still ongoing.

Citation:

"Turvallisempi huominen. Sisäisen turvallisuuden ohjelma." 26/2012. Ministry of Interior, Helsinki; http://www.intermin.fi/download/34893_262012_STO_III_fi.pdf; http://www.intermin.fi/fi/kehittamishankkeet/sisaisen_turvallisuuden_strategia;turvallisuuskomitea.fi/index.php/en/materials.

“Finland 2019 Crime & Safety Report,” <https://www.osac.gov/Content/Report/a07de0db-58c6-4954-a485-15f4aeaf1baa>

Japan

Score 9

Japan enjoys a very low crime rate, although it is unclear how much the effectiveness of internal security policies contributes to this. For major crimes such as homicide or hard-drug abuse in particular (950 cases or 0.1% of total crime in 2019), Japan’s good reputation is well deserved. The number of recorded crimes reached a postwar low in 2020, with thefts accounting for 70%, and seniors making up 22% of offenders. In 2019, Tokyo was again ranked by the Economist Intelligence Unit as the world’s safest (major) city, with Osaka ranking third. Low crime rates, however, should not be equated with low levels of violence as crime such as domestic violence is often not accounted for in national crime statistics. Indeed, the number of incidents involving domestic violence in Japan is high. In 2020, it rose to a record level of 132,355, up from 119,267 in 2019.

Terrorism also poses no major discernible threat today. Nevertheless, ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, parliament passed an “anti-conspiracy bill” in 2017 that considerably expanded police power. This bill has been strongly criticized for curbing civil liberties. Unsurprisingly, the massive security system in place for the Olympic Games in 2021 and related mobility restrictions were widely criticized as being overly heavy-handed.

The existence of organized gangs, the so-called yakuza, remains an issue. These groups have moved into fraud and white-collar crimes. Unlike the Italian mafia, yakuza gangs are not forbidden in view of the constitutionally protected right of association. However, the number of their members has declined sharply, from around 90,000 in the early 1990s to an estimated 25,900 in 2020. Aside from police efforts, low unemployment levels have played a major role in reducing the incentive, or felt need, to join a gang.

Citation:

Crime at New Low in Japan, But Seniors Commit 22% of Offenses, Nippon.com, 12 January 2021, <https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-data/h00898/>

Thisanka Siripala, Japan’s Once Powerful Criminal Underworld Hits Record Low Membership, The Diplomat, 16 May 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/05/japans-once-powerful-criminal-underworld-hits-record-low-membership/>

Domestic violence cases in Japan hit record high in fiscal 2020, The Japan Times, 13 January 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/01/13/national/domestic-violence-cases-record-high/>

Fortress Olympics: peak security measures dampen the mood as the games begin, The Independent, 23 July 2021, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/olympics-security-opening-ceremony-tokyo-b1889195.html>

Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Julia Mio Inuma, As Japan’s yakuza mob weakens, former gangsters struggle to find a role outside crime, The Washington Post, 17 October 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/japan-yakuza-crime-gangsters/2021/10/17/556a255c-2b0a-11ec-baf4-d7a4e075eb90_story.html

Thomas Hahn, Stehen die Yakuza vor dem Aus?, Süddeutsche Zeitung, 18 October 2021, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/panorama/yakuza-japan-mafia-corona-1.5442980>

Latvia

Score 9

The Ministry of Interior, the State Police, the Security Police, the State Fire and Rescue Service, the State Border Guard, and the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs are responsible for domestic security policy. They collaborate on some policy issues, notably on immigration policy. The total number of registered crimes fell from 45,639 in 2016 to 38,767 in 2020.

Despite international developments, the threat of terrorism remains low. There have been no criminal offenses associated with terrorism. In late 2015, the security police started a criminal investigation into alleged participation in the military conflict in Syria, which was followed by one conviction. In 2016, two criminal investigations for terrorism threats were launched, another for inciting terrorism, and four for participation in foreign armed conflicts. Similarly, in 2019, criminal proceedings were initiated against one person for unlawful participation in the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, while three people were detained on the grounds of illegal arms trade and money laundering.

Opinion polls from 2019 indicate that public trust in the police remains high and the majority of people feel safe (79% of respondents reported feeling safe or rather safe in regards to the State Police, and 60% indicated they had trust in the police).

Citation:

1. Research center SKDS (2019), Attitude Toward the State Police, Available at (in Latvian): http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/title_file/Valsts_policija_Petijums_2018_Attieskme_pret_Valsts_policiju_0.pdf, Last accessed: 02.01.2022.
2. Central Statistical Bureau (2020), Number of registered criminal offenses: Database, Available at: <https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistics/statistics-by-theme/social-conditions/crime/tables/skg010/number-recorded-crimes>, Last accessed: 02.01.2022.
3. Latvian State Security Service (2021) Strategy for the Prevention of Terrorism Financing for 2019-2021, Available at: <https://www.dp.gov.lv/en/areas-of-activity/counterterrorism/#Threat%20level>, Last assessed: 02.01.2022.
4. Latvian State Security Service (2019), VDD detains three persons for violation of sanctions determined by international organisations, Available at: <https://vdd.gov.lv/uploads/materials/17/en/spft-eng-1.pdf>, Last accessed: 02.01.2022.
5. Latvian State Security Service (2019), VDD calls for criminal prosecution for unlawful participation in the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, Available at: <https://vdd.gov.lv/en/news/press-releases/vdd-calls-for-criminal-prosecution-for-unlawful-participation-in-the-armed-conflict-in-eastern-ukraine>, Last accessed: 02.01.2022.
6. Latvian State Police (2020) Presentation on Crime in Latvia, Available at: <https://www.vp.gov.lv/media/1601/download>, Last accessed: 02.01.2022.

Norway

Score 9

Norway is traditionally a safe country. The number of homicides per capita is among the lowest in the world, and incarceration rates are also small. Police presence is rarely significant, and incidents of police activism are rare. In general, police officers remain unarmed, although during periods of heightened security risks, police officers have carried arms.

Prison sentences are relatively mild, and Norway has relied instead on long-term crime-prevention policies. Theft and petty crimes are relatively infrequent, although there has been some concern over increasing levels of drugs- and gang-related crimes. There is a perception that knife- and gun-related crimes, often involving youth, have risen in frequency and brutality, particularly in certain urban areas. In recent years, various reforms have sought to enhance cooperation between various police and intelligence units, both internally and with respect to cross-border cooperation.

In the aftermath of the 22 July 2011 terrorist assaults on the government compound in Oslo and on the summer camp of the Labor Party youth organization, the police service was severely criticized for not having put necessary precautions in place. This revealed shortcomings in police organization and logistics, including a low capacity for planning and implementation within the central police directorate. Notable improvements have since been made, including efforts to make better use of resources by requiring the police and military to coordinate their resources allocated for anti-terrorism measures and situations requiring special forces.

South Korea

Score 9

Korea remains a very safe country with regard to the risk of violent crime. There have been no terror attacks or terrorist activities in Korea in recent years. Nevertheless, extensive media reports about violent crime, along with rumors spread on social media, have led to an increasing subjective feeling of insecurity. Despite low levels of violent crime, perceived levels of personal insecurity are high and trust in the police is low. This might have to do with a seemingly high level of fraud, including white-collar crimes and cyber-crimes (whose perpetrators take advantage of South Korea's excellent broadband infrastructure and lax online-security measures).

Online sexual exploitation is particularly prevalent. According to a survey by the Korea Communications Commission, nearly 30% of respondents reported having been victims of online violence; while nearly 17% were online abusers. A high-profile case in 2020 in which women and young girls were coerced into producing sexual abusive videos prompted widespread social outcry. This has contributed to

strengthening of laws to authorize undercover investigations of digital sex crime cases and legally punish online grooming of minors. Financial scams (“phishing”) are another growing area of concern. A 2018 survey by Korea Financial Investors Protection Foundation found that almost one in five Koreans has been (or was nearly) a victim of financial fraud. In 2020, the government began an interagency effort to strengthen phishing prevention.

In 2021, the country experienced a remarkably high incidence and prevalence of physical violence against children. In February 2021, the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment, etc. of Child Abuse Crimes was strengthened, so that those who abuse children and unintentionally cause death can face the death penalty or imprisonment for seven years to life.

The external threat posed by North Korea persists, although the Moon administration’s policies of engagement have successfully calmed the situation following recent years’ more bellicose rhetoric.

Citation:

“1 In 5 Koreans Exposed to Financial Fraud: Poll.” Yonhap News Agency, March 21, 2018. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20180321002300320>.

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Kan, Hyeong-woo. “Tighter Regulations on Digital Sex Crime Take Effect.” The Korea Herald, September 23, 2021. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210923000656>.

KOSIS Korean Statistical Information Service. “Statistical Database, Crime and Safety.” Accessed January 18, 2022. https://kosis.kr/eng/statisticsList/statisticsListIndex.do?parentId=C.1&menuId=M_01_01&vwcd=MT_ETITLE&parmTabId=M_01_01.

The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) of the United States. “South Korea 2019 Crime & Safety Report,” 2019.

“2021: Korea’s Year of Child Abuse,” Korea Expose, December 21, 2021, <https://koreaexpose.com/2021-child-abuse-korea-epidemic-jung-in/> (accessed: February 1, 2022)

“Child abuse can now lead to death penalty in South Korea,” Korea Herald, February 28, 2021, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210228000132> (accessed: February 1, 2022)

Switzerland

Score 9

Switzerland has improved its internal security through its integration into the European Schengen/Dublin regime. However, the country’s participation remains domestically controversial, as right-wing populist actors have accused center-left politicians of cooperating in an inefficient European security network.

With the de-facto break-down of the Schengen and Dublin rules in 2015, Switzerland resorted to more systematic controls at its borders.

Internal security policy has developed as a collaborative policy field in which various international and national governmental actors interact with private organizations. Given the country’s comparatively low crime rates, and the public confidence shown in the police and the justice system, internal security policy can be deemed a success.

On the whole, Swiss citizens feel quite safe. In 2021, a survey asking for the five most pressing problems found that issues related to safety were mentioned only moderately: asylum-seekers (19%), social security (11%), personal security (11%), internet security (9%) and terrorism (4%) (GfS 2021: 31-33).

Citation:

GfS 2021: Sorgenbarometer 2021, https://www.gfsbern.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/credit-suisse_sorgenbarometer2021_schlussbericht.pdf

Staatssekretariat für Migration, Asylstatistik,
<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/publiservice/statistik/asylstatistik/uebersichten.html>

Australia

Score 8

Internal security is primarily the responsibility of the states and there is correspondingly some variation in policies and outcomes across them. In most states crime rates are relatively low. Coordination between various policing, enforcement and intelligence-gathering authorities is generally satisfactory.

The issue of violence against women has been receiving increasing attention in recent years. One-third of women in Australia have experienced physical violence. The 2021-22 budget included an additional AUD 1.1 billion for women's safety measures.

Since 2014, a variety of bills concerned with countering terrorism have been passed, including the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill 2014, the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Amendment (Data Retention) Act 2015, the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2016 and the Counter-Terrorism (Temporary Exclusion Orders) Bill 2019.

The most controversial legislation is the Telecommunications and Other Legislation Amendment (Assistance and Access) Act, passed in December 2018, which requires technology companies and telecommunications providers to give reasonable assistance to law-enforcement agencies seeking to access communication content and data. Many experts have argued this act is ineffectual in countering criminal activity, while simultaneously weakening encryption of data and therefore reducing the security of Australians, for example by making them more vulnerable to hackers.

In July 2017, the prime minister announced that the government would establish a home-affairs portfolio bringing together Australia's immigration, border-protection, law-enforcement and domestic-security agencies within a single portfolio. The new portfolio is more similar to the UK model than the U.S. model – a federation of border and security agencies under which the various agencies retain statutory independence.

Citation:

<http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/australian-government-missed-point-with-new-encryption-bill/>

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-46913913>

Austria

Score 8

Internal security is well protected in Austria. All available indicators depict Austria as a rather secure country. Criminal statistics clearly show that the overall security Austrians enjoy is stable and comparatively high. As government reports for 2020 indicate, in many fields, the overall number of crimes committed has been decreasing. This is particularly true for burglaries, with more people working from home as a result of the pandemic. At the same time, cybercrimes increased by 26.3% between 2019 and 2020.

Police budgets and personnel numbers rose again in 2020 and 2021, which indicates that the police are viewed as an appropriate instrument for providing internal security. There has also been a reasonable willingness among recent Austrian governments to engage in cross-border cooperation.

Survey-based research clearly indicates that Austrians felt rather safe in 2020 and considerably safer than in previous years.

Citation:

Stats from the interior ministry: https://bundeskriminalamt.at/501/files/PKS_18_Broschuere.pdf

https://bundeskriminalamt.at/501/files/PKS_2020_HP_20210412.pdf

https://ifes.at/sites/default/files/downloads/sicherheitsmonitoring_2020_keynote_0.pdf

Belgium

Score 8

Belgium has always been a generally safe country and the situation has continued to improve over the last years. Yet, some violence does occur and the country's crime rate is slightly above several neighboring countries. In addition, Belgium has become infamous for having attracted a number of Islamist terror activists, who are producing a new type of threat that the country has found difficult to manage. This is, however, a general issue in Europe and among OECD countries.

With regard to low-level criminality, self-reported rates of victimization are slightly above the OECD average, in part due to an above-average incidence of bullying that has not received sufficient policy attention. Underfunded and overcrowded prisons are another problem, in spite of a scheme to build new prisons with modern equipment. The court system remains slow (due to a huge backlog) and is often

perceived as lenient. This helps maintain a feeling of impunity for misdemeanor offenders. Yet, the country's social stability, neo-corporatist arrangements and limited levels of income inequality have largely insulated it from mass demonstrations or riots of the kind sometimes observed in France or other EU member states.

Crime rates are going down, and the government has decided to increase funding for the police forces.

Citation:

OECD 2015. Better life initiative. How is life in Belgium? October 2015.

<http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/belgium/>

https://www.rtf.be/info/belgique/detail_l-armee-en-rue-a-fait-baisser-la-criminalite-de-30-a-bruxelles-et-anvers?id=8947069

http://www.stat.policefederale.be/assets/pdf/notes/tendances_2016_2017_SPC.pdf

<http://www.stat.policefederale.be/statistiquescriminalite/interactif/graphique-par-categorie-principales-des-infractions/>

Canada

Score 8

Canada's internal security policy has been quite effective in protecting citizens against security risks. Canada has experienced no terror attacks mounted from outside the country, which suggests that the Canadian intelligence services are doing excellent work. Two separate attacks by native Canadians in 2014, resulting in the deaths of two soldiers, prompted the previous government to introduce a number of bills to bolster security and the power of agencies. These laws increased the powers of Canada's spy agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), to share information and operate internationally, criminalized the promotion of terrorism, and provided the federal police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with new preventative arrest powers. The Liberal government has implemented a new bill designed to roll back some of the powers assumed by the previous government. Bill C-59, which removed some of the liberties accorded to the CSIS and the Communications Security Establishment (CSE; the country's signals-intelligence organization) in the past, also established new review bodies designed to increase security-service accountability.

Crime rates in Canada are low from an international perspective and continue to fall. Canadians in general have a high degree of confidence and trust in the police. However, this is not true to the same extent within the Indigenous community. A report released by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 2014 stated that between 1980 and 2013, 1,181 Indigenous women were reported murdered or missing. The UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Canada previously expressed concerns about violence against Indigenous women and girls and Canada's perceived failure to address the problem. The government has launched the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to gather evidence and propose recommendations on the issue. The inquiry has faced

substantial criticism over the past year, with several key members stepping down and victims' families calling for a complete restructuring of the program.

Citation:

UN Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review: Canada, 2013, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/CASession16.aspx>.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview, 2014, <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-national-operational-overview>.

Forcese Craig and Kent Roach, "A Report Card on the National Security Bill" 22 June 2017, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/june-2017/a-report-card-on-the-national-security-bill/>.

Denmark

Score 8

The security forces and police are responsible for internal security, which is under the remit of the Ministry of Justice. Cooperation between the police and defense intelligence services was increased after 9/11. International cooperation with Western allies has also increased.

Denmark is not a violent society. The homicide rate is low, and Danes normally trust the police. However, burglaries are not uncommon and crimes related to drug use, especially in the bigger cities, have increased. Recently, gang crime rates have increased, including shooting incidences. Terrorist events at home and abroad have increased tensions. Denmark has opted out of the justice and home affairs cooperation within the European Union (since 1993), a position that was reaffirmed by referendum in 2015. Subsequent negotiations led to an agreement with Europol, which allows Denmark to take part in police cooperation. It remains to be seen how satisfactory the agreement will be, although there is no broad support for reopening the issue.

Following the large influx of refugees and asylum-seekers in 2015, the government reintroduced border controls, a policy that will be continued by the new government, despite being contested by some groups. Denmark does not support a common EU agreement on the distribution of refugees. The question of continuing national border controls continues to be discussed.

In an opinion poll in November 2015, 27% answered very likely and 54% answered likely on the possibility that a terror attack will occur in the next few years. The same poll showed that an overwhelming majority thought that a fundamentalist Islamic group was most likely to carry out such an attack. Recently, there have been a number of attacks, including bombings, in the Copenhagen area, which have been linked to Swedish gangs. The current Social Democratic government has therefore introduced new temporary border checks at the bridge tunnel that connects Copenhagen and Malmö in Sweden, and ferry connections between the two countries.

Citation:

Eurobarometer, Spring 2015. http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_first_en.pdf (Accessed 21 October 2017).

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Finance Ministry, Finanslovsforslaget 2020. <https://www.fm.dk/publikationer/2019/finanslovspejce-2020> (accessed 16 October 2019).

Estonia

Score 8

Public safety has steadily increased and crime rates have declined over the preceding decade. Multiple factors have contributed to greater public safety. Alcohol consumption – a major cause of severe traffic accidents and violent behavior – has declined as a result of stricter alcohol policy and increased public awareness of healthy living. Increased funding for the police and the border guard has been another positive change, which has enabled better human and technological resourcing, and more efficient policing.

While alcohol consumption has decreased, drug-trafficking and cybercrimes are increasing challenges. Cyber threats are addressed mainly via awareness-raising activities, whereas placing greater emphasis on secure borders is particularly important in combating human and drug-trafficking. In 2020–2021, additional investment has been committed to improving the infrastructure of the Estonia’s eastern border (Siseministeerium 2021). Cooperation between tax authorities, border authorities and the police domestically and internationally with neighboring countries will be key to successfully tackling this challenge. The border guard and police force enjoy high levels of public trust (Turu-Uuringute AS 2021), which helps to address safety problems more efficiently as envisaged in the Internal Security Development Plan 2015 – 2020.

Citation:

Estonia Drug Report 2019. European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addictions. http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/countries/drug-reports/2019/estonia_en (Accessed 14.10.2019)

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Siseministeerium 2021. <https://www.siseministeerium.ee/uudised/valitsus-toetas-siseminister-jaani-ambitsioonikamat-idapiiri-valjaehitamise-plaani>

Iceland

Score 8

Iceland has always been a secure place to live, with relatively few assaults, burglaries, or other crimes. However, some changes have occurred since the 2008 economic collapse. The government in office before and during the 2008 crash was

undermined by a series of protests, which – though largely peaceful – did lead to clashes between protesters and riot police in early 2009. While these events led only to minor injuries and some 20 arrests, they were the first serious riots since the protests against a parliamentary decision to enroll Iceland in NATO in 1949. The main policing priority has been Iceland's internal security. The police force has for a long time suffered from a manpower shortage, exacerbated by low pay. Even so, in 2021, 72% of Gallup respondents expressed confidence in the police.

Drug smuggling and drug use have been on the rise for several years. This trend reflects a related increase in the prevalence of violent attacks by individuals under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, especially on weekends. Organized foreign gangs are considered responsible for the repeated waves of burglaries.

In recent years, Iceland has seen about one murder per year per 100,000 inhabitants, a similar rate as in the European Union on average, and better than the four to five murders per 100,000 inhabitants in the OECD region (although the OECD region includes the United States with nearly six murders per 100,000 inhabitants per year). Iceland's prison population, at 29 per 100,000 inhabitants, is the lowest in the OECD region, lower even than Japan with 37 per 100,000 inhabitants.

Citation:

Interview with criminologist Helgi Gunnlaugsson in *visir.is* 6th January 2018. <https://www.visir.is/g/2018180109266>.

WHO (2022), Estimates of Homicides, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/estimates-of-rates-of-homicides-per-100-000-population>.

World Prison Brief (2022), Prison Population Rate, https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All. Accessed 1 February 2022.

Gallup (2022), Traust til stofnana (Trust in Institutions), <https://www.gallup.is/nidurstodur/thjodarpuls/traust-til-stofnana/>. Accessed 2 February 2022.

Luxembourg

Score 8

In Mercer's 2019 Quality of Living, Luxembourg City was ranked as the safest city in the world in terms of personal security, ahead of Helsinki and the Swiss cities of Basel, Bern and Zurich. In this context, several factors were analyzed: crime rates, law enforcement, security forces, the limits of individual freedom, international relations and press freedom. However, the situation has worsened over the last two years.

According to the 2021 police report, the overall number of crimes in Luxembourg increased by 4% over a year. In 2019, the police recorded 38,800 offenses, the majority of which were crimes against property. The number of crimes against persons increased by 8.9%. Drug-related cases increased substantially. This was particularly true of possession (+35% in 2019), drug use (+51%), and drug trafficking (+21%) offenses. The number of drug seizures carried out in cooperation with the Customs and Excise Agency rose to 1,412 in 2019. Security issues in the

neighborhood of Luxembourg’s central railway station (drug, prostitution, general infractions) remain a recurrent problem. The Luxembourg police force aims to recruit more personnel, but faces recruitment difficulties. However, in recent years, a reorganization of the police force has had positive effects.

Citation:

“Luxembourg City wins 2022 Access City Award for becoming more accessible to persons with disabilities.” European Union (December 2021). <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1141>. Accessed 3 January 2022.

“Climate Change Performance Index, 2022” (2022). <https://ccpi.org/country/lux/>. Accessed 3 January 2022.

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“OECD Better Life Index 2021.” OECD. <https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/#/111111111111>. Accessed 3 January 2022.

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“Fewer burglaries but more offences last year.” RTL today (27 March 2021). <https://today.rtl.lu/news/luxembourg/a/1696050.html>. Accessed 3 January 2022.

“Corruption Perceptions Index, 2020.” Transparency International. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/nzl>. Accessed 3 January 2022.

New Zealand

Score 8

New Zealand has traditionally had a remarkable internal security record. However, the terrorist attack on a Christchurch mosque in March 2019, when a right-wing extremist killed 51 people and injured 49, shook the country’s sense of security. The government responded to the politically motivated mass shooting by passing a new gun law in April that bans military-style semi-automatic weapons and parts that can be used to assemble prohibited firearms. More than \$208 million were set aside for a gun buyback scheme that compensated owners for up to 95% of the original price of their weapons. A second buyback was rolled out in early 2021, aimed at removing firearms and items that were prohibited and restricted through the Arms Legislation Act 2020 (Stuff 2021).

In September 2021, New Zealand lawmakers made it a crime to plan a terrorist attack following a mass stabbing in Auckland earlier that month (carried out by a Sri Lankan national who had recently been released from prison and placed under 24-

hour police surveillance). The new law, which also gives police greater power to conduct warrantless searches, has been criticized for its potential impact on civil liberties (Corlett 2021). Alongside this, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) has been leading work to develop a new government-funded National Center of Research Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. The plan is to build a “hybrid” model run by a director and program manager from a New Zealand-based university or research institute, in collaboration with other universities and organizations; the group would undertake independent New Zealand-specific research on the causes of violent extremism and terrorism, while also assessing possible preventive measures (DPMC, 2021).

While government expenditure on public order and safety is relatively high and growing, crime continues to be a salient issue for New Zealanders. Although recent statistics show a considerable decline in criminal offenses, the 2020 New Zealand Crime & Victims Survey reveals that nearly a third of all adults became victims of crime in the previous 12 months – but that only a quarter of all crimes were ever reported to the police. The survey also found that 76,000 adults were sexually assaulted, but only 8% reported it (Ministry of Justice 2021).

Citation:

Corlett (2021) “New Zealand: rushing anti-terror law could lead to surveillance overreach, minor parties say.” The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/22/new-zealand-rushing-anti-terror-law-could-lead-to-surveillance-overreach-minor-parties-say>

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) 2021. <https://dPMC.govt.nz/our-programmes/national-security/counter-terrorism/national-centre-research-excellence>

Ministry of Justice (2021) The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey: Key Findings. <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-Cycle3-A5-20210611-v1.0-fin.pdf>

Stuff (2021) “Government set to roll out fresh firearms buy-back scheme.” <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/124028255/government-set-to-roll-out-fresh-firearms-buyback-scheme>

Portugal

Score 8

Portugal is signatory to and participant in all relevant Europe-wide programs regarding public security. In addition, Portugal has created a General Secretariat for the Internal Security System, which reports to the prime minister via the minister for internal administration.

Overall, reported crime increased slightly in 2019 relative to 2018 (0.7%), with violent crime also rising (3%). In 2020, however, the country showed considerably lower levels of reported crime, with a decrease of 11% in total crime and 13.4% in violent crime relative to 2019. Undoubtedly, the restrictions caused by the pandemic contributed to this exceptional 2020 result.

Withing this generally positive picture, domestic violence constitutes a black spot. It was the most-reported crime in 2020, and there were 32 deaths associated with domestic violence, a decrease from 39 in 2018 and 37 in 2019.

Portugal remains a relatively safe country in international terms. Furthermore, Portugal has not experienced a terrorist attack of the kind witnessed in many other European countries. Whether this is due to effective intelligence gathering and policing or the priorities and preferences of potential terrorists is unclear.

In a previous SGI report, we noted the failure of civil-protection services during the 2017 forest fires, which resulted in over 100 deaths and over 500,000 hectares of burned land. While Portugal again experienced substantial forest fires in 2020, their impact was considerably more limited, though the total area burned was higher than in 2018 and 2019, and five firefighters died in combating the flames. These improvements are due to a more active policy framework with regard to forest fire prevention, with the government embarking on a number of forest fire prevention initiatives (e.g., strengthening the requirement for landowners to clear shrubbery that could otherwise fuel fires), as well as more favorable weather conditions than in 2017.

Citation:

Moutinho, A. R. (2020), “2020: números da época de incêndios “não foram simpáticos,” mas ficaram aquém do pior cenário,” Público, available online at: <https://www.publico.pt/2019/09/02/sociedade/noticia/portugal-menos-8719-hectares-area-ardida-2018-1885282>

Kotowicz, A. (2021), “Violência doméstica faz 32 mortes em 2020, menos do que no ano anterior. Há menos queixas, mas mais detidos,” Observador, available online at: <https://observador.pt/2021/03/02/violencia-domestica-faz-32-mortes-em-2020-menos-do-que-no-ano-anterior-ha-menos-queixas-mas-mais-detidos/>

Pordata, “Incêndios rurais e área ardida – Continente,” available online at: <https://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Incêndios+rurais+e+área+ardida+--+Continente-1192>

Sistema de Segurança Interna, “Relatório Anual de Segurança Interna 2019,” available online at: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=%3d%3dBQAAAB%2bLCAAAAAAABAAzNDA0sAAAQJ%2bleAUAAAA%3d>

Sistema de Segurança Interna, “Relatório Anual de Segurança Interna 2020,” available online at: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=%3d%3dBQAAAB%2bLCAAAAAAABAAzNDQ1NAUABR26oAUAAAA%3d>

Slovenia

Score 8

Actual and perceived security risks in Slovenia are very low. Slovenia’s accession to the Schengen group in December 2007 has resulted in a substantial professionalization of the Slovenian police force and border control. A six-month police strike, which ended in June 2016, brought substantial increases in wages as well as a commitment by the government to increase future spending on basic police equipment, and both the Šarec and Janša governments have lived up to this commitment in the period under review, as police received new equipment, such as radars and vehicles, to replace older models. While public trust in the police is 13 points below the EU average, it improved by seven points in last Eurobarometer measurement and is higher than public trust in political institutions. According to latest Landgeist research, Slovenia ranked as the safest country in Europe.

Minister of Interior Aleš Hojs and the police president resigned in June 2020, claiming that police investigations against the minister of economy, who was suspected of abusing his office when interfering in the procurement of ventilation equipment during the pandemic, were guided by political motives. Hojs claimed that parts of the police were controlled by the former governing party and the Communist-era intelligence service. Since his resignation was rejected by the prime minister, Hojs stayed in office and initiated a legislative amendment that enabled him to replace the police leadership.

Critics argued that his interventions were aimed at creating a politically loyal police force.

Citation:

European Commission (2021): Standard Eurobarometer 95. Brussels (https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2532_95_3_95_eng?locale=en).

Landgeist (2021): How safe do people feel to Walk Alone at Night in Europe. (https://landgeist.com/2021/11/26/how-safe-do-people-feel-to-walk-alone-at-night-in-europe/).

https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/upheaval-in-slovenias-police-force-as-new-legislation-kicks-in/

<https://sloveniatimes.com/hojs-dismisses-allegations-of-politicisation-of-police/>

<https://www.total-slovenia-news.com/politics/6524-interior-minister-police-commissioner-resign-move-linked-to-procurement-scandal>

United Kingdom

Score 8

Objectively speaking, citizens of the United Kingdom have enjoyed improved security over the last 15 years as the crime rate has dropped significantly and consistently (although it continues to be relatively high in absolute terms when compared to other OECD countries). This is not reflected, however, in increased subjective perception of security, since British citizens (probably influenced by media reporting) perceive crime to be on the rise. The issue thus remains in the public spotlight, and cuts in the budgets of the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice – in line with overall budget cuts to fight the deficit – have therefore been politically contentious. The most recent figures do, nevertheless, suggest a further fall in crime, although questions have been raised about whether “new” crimes like cybercrime are being adequately recorded. Moreover, even in higher crime areas, there are few signs that citizens consider the environment to be unsafe. However, there has been some concern about the impact of the substantial reduction in police numbers on the ability of the police to respond. Doubts have also surfaced about the effectiveness of elected Police and Crime Commissioners.

The coalition government abolished some of the harsh counterterrorism laws introduced by earlier Labour governments in an attempt to correct the balance in favor of civil rights. A new National Crime Agency started work in the autumn of

2013 as a central body for crime fighting. Certain high-profile revelations of police malpractice, including the recently exposed falsification of records in the Hillsborough football disaster of 1989, have led to disquiet about police behavior, but have not conspicuously undermined confidence. There is some concern about inadequate responses to cybercrime, with significant increases reported in crime statistics.

The 2015 Conservative government – and its Home Secretary Theresa May – reformed the police disciplinary and complaint system to improve trust between citizens and the police. Furthermore, it has made the Police Federation subject to the Freedom of Information Act to improve transparency in the police force. Criticisms of the police have been voiced, not least after a heavy-handed response to people demonstrating against the abduction, rape and murder of a young woman in London.

There is continuing concern about terrorist threats, accentuated by the renewed difficulties in the Middle East and the evidence of the involvement of UK-born jihadis and, as in many other EU member states, sporadic terrorist attacks. There is concern about the threat posed by returning fighters from the Middle East, which has led to an increase in resources for the security services. There are occasional briefings from these services about “plots disrupted.” The Nationality and Borders Bill, currently before Parliament, aims to improve security by inter alia increasing the home secretary’s powers to strip suspects of their British citizenship.

Citation:

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06820/SN06820.pdf>

Croatia

Score 7

In Croatia, crime represents no significant threat to public safety or security. The homicide rate per hundred thousand inhabitants is slightly below the EU-27 average and has been trending downwards since 2010. However, the incidences of family-related violence, rape and sexual violence have increased since 2019. On the positive side, given the number of burglaries and thefts, Croatia remains one of the safest EU member states. In addition, with regard to subjectively perceived security, relating to the safety felt Croatia has the second-highest share in Europe of people who feel safe in walking alone in the streets during the night (77.4%; based on Numbeo data). The country has also been spared from any large and violent forms of protest.

The internal security is maintained by the Croatian police forces, and their effectiveness has improved over 2019. When compared to 2019, the crime resolution rate increased from 66.2% to 70.5%. Even higher crime resolution rates were seen in the categories of homicide and rape (102.8% and 98.8%). The Croatian police are quite effective in their work, especially given the fact that field officers are generally poorly paid and often overtaxed. However, the recurrence of certain crimes and recidivism has more to do with the way how the Croatian judicial system works, since verdicts often lack a powerful deterrent effect.

Croatia has the fourth-largest number of police officers per 100,000 inhabitants in the EU, but almost one-third of these police officers are deployed to protect the country's borders, the bloc's longest external land border. The problem of too much administrative staff as compared to police officers remains a constant challenge.

The police and national prosecutor's office collaborate effectively with international organizations such as INTERPOL and EUROPOL, countries in the southeast European region, the EU, and other international peers. Intelligence services cooperate with their counterparts within NATO and the EU, and act within an integrated security system.

Cyprus

Score 7

Generally considered a safe environment, Cyprus ranks as the fifth safest country worldwide, according to a survey by French insurer Insurly. Its relatively vulnerable points are the zone dividing the government-controlled areas and Turkish-occupied north, as well as sections of one of the UK military bases in the north.

The country is a trafficking destination for forced prostitution and labor. It is not part of the Schengen area.

Incidents of serious crime are rare. Burglaries and robberies are by far the most common crimes, while digital crimes have gradually increased. Law enforcement is largely deficient in cases of minor wrongdoings. However, violations of the driving code (a large-scale offense) often lead to deaths. Illegal drug activity is comparatively low overall, but a sustained increase in illegal drugs confiscated at entry points has been noted.

The COVID-19 crisis led police to assume many more responsibilities related to enforcing compliance with restrictions.

Citation:

1. Holidays: Safest country in world for 2020 revealed – is it where you're going on holiday? Express, 14 February 2020, <https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/1245837/holidays-2020-safest-country-in-the-world-switzerland-safe-travel-news-latest>

Czechia

Score 7

Crime figures in Czechia are unremarkable. The police have recorded a drop in crime rates for the fifth consecutive year, and more than half of all cases are cleared up. The COVID-19 pandemic led to lowest overall crime level in Czech history, mainly because of the restrictions imposed on people's mobility. At the same time, domestic violence increased and the shift of crime to cyberspace has continued. Citizens feel secure and mainly indicate satisfaction with the performance of the police. Levels of trust in the police and the army are high and stable. In September

2019, 69% of citizens indicated that they trusted the police; in September 2021, it was 70%. However, regional differences in criminal activities are increasing, and there are tensions in regions featuring a relatively high concentration of marginalized groups.

France

Score 7

Although the police have a reputation for efficiency (sometimes being too efficient, as the institution is granted significant powers and discretion vis-à-vis the citizenry), concerns over domestic security are high. Attention has focused on repeated outbreaks of urban violence in the suburbs or other areas. Following a rising level of petty crime and several terrorist attacks on French territory and abroad, citizens have been more and more vocal about the need to be better protected by enforcing “law and order” measures. There is a clear relationship between the economic and social crisis and this increasing sense of insecurity. This situation has also had a decisive impact on protest votes in favor of the extreme-right party, the National Rally.

The terrorist attacks of 13 November 2015 elevated the topic of security to the top of the political agenda, triggering real concerns as well as political polemics driven by the populist and extreme right. The government has reacted to this with new security measures, giving more powers to the executive and police to prevent terrorist acts. The Macron administration terminated the emergency legislation in November 2017, but this came at the price of bringing the controversial rules into the flow of “normal” law with the introduction of an anti-terrorism law in October 2017. A side consequence of the focus on terrorism has been a distraction from the fight against petty crimes, particularly in large cities, a fact that has contributed to some citizen dissatisfaction. Moreover, local police forces have grown, and all police officers are now entitled to use a firearm, in contrast to past practices.

The Yellow Vest uprising and its repression, stretching from November 2018 to June 2019, also helped transform the relationship between police and citizens. Faced with protests exhibiting rarely seen levels of violence (exacerbated by black bloc activists), the government reacted strongly to the social mobilization, triggering accusations of overreaction by parties and groups of the left. Once again, the French tradition of preferring protest and violence to participation and compromise was seen at work here.

Germany

Score 7

In general, residents of Germany are well protected against security risks such as crime or terrorism. Following an increase from 2014 to 2016, the total number of recorded crimes has since fallen again. The total number of recorded crimes decreased from 6.4 million cases in 2016 to 5.3 million in 2020. While the year 2020 was unique due to lockdowns and mobility restrictions that strongly decreased the

opportunity for crimes such as burglaries, numbers had already reached the low level of 5.4 million in 2019. The downward trend is thus real and has not been driven by the exceptional circumstances brought on by the pandemic (all data from BMI 2021).

The influx of nearly 900,000 refugees in 2015 and the years following fostered a heated discussion about a potential rise in crime. Crime rates differ significantly across migrant communities (Bundeskriminalamt 2019). The share of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq among crime suspects is far below these countries' shares in the total refugee population. Conversely, refugees from the Maghreb and other African countries, as well as from Serbia, comprise a disproportionate share of criminal suspects. In general, the higher crime rates among refugees compared with the native-born population can be explained by the much higher share of young men with low levels of education who are without employment, a group that tends to exhibit higher crime rates in general.

Several terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists have occurred since 2016 with the most severe attack taking place in December 2016, when Anis Amri killed 12 people and injured 62 by driving a truck into a Christmas market in Berlin. Right-wing terrorism is another significant threat with severe attacks in 2019 when an extremist targeted a synagogue in Halle and in 2020 when 11 people lost their lives in a right-wing attack in Hanau.

Politically motivated crimes are increasing (BMI 2021): The total number increased in 2020 strongly by 8.5%. Politically motivated violent crimes are more frequent from the left (1,526 in 2020) than from the right (1,092) and the recent increase of violence in 2020 is higher for criminals from the left (+45%) than from the right (+11%). For all kinds of political crimes, including non-violent incidents such as hate crimes and demagoguery ("Volksverhetzung"), the numbers for the right (23,604 in 2020) more than double those for the left (10,971). Political crimes related to foreign ideologies have fallen sharply in the first year of the pandemic (-46.6% in 2020) and are relatively infrequent overall (1,016 in 2020).

Citation:

BMI and BKA (2021): Politisch motivierte Kriminalität im Jahr 2020, Bundesweite Fallzahlen, Bundesministerium des Inneren, für Bau und Heimat und Bundeskriminalamt.

BMI (2021): Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik 2020, Ausgewählte Zahlen im Überblick, Bundesministerium des Inneren, für Bau und Heimat.

Bundeskriminalamt (2019): Kriminalität im Kontext von Zuwanderung, Bundeslagebild 2018.

Ireland

Score 7

Overall, Irish crime rates are relatively low by international standards. However, property crime rates have risen in the last few years and over the past decade there has been an increase in "gangland" crime, including murders involving firearms. Notably, rates for most crimes fell during the pandemic, although offenses against

the person, including assaults and sexual crimes, increased in Ireland as COVID-19 restrictions were eased in 2021 (Lally, 2021).

The main police force remains unarmed and, despite a fatal shooting of an on-duty police officer in 2020 (Gallagher & Bowers, 2020), there is no widespread clamor to arm the force. It enjoys a good relationship with the majority of the population.

Cross-border policing cooperation between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland remains good, although the existence of a long land border is an inherent obstacle to effective law enforcement. It is widely acknowledged that paramilitary crime and racketeering are unacceptably high in the Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland border areas. The sensitivities around policing the border and cross-border crime have increased in light of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union (Colfer & Diamond, 2022).

Citation:

Colfer, B. & Diamond, P. (2022) 'Borders and identities in NI after Brexit: remaking Anglo-Irish relations', *Comparative European Politics*, forthcoming.

Lally, C. (2021) Assaults and sex crimes spike to previous highs as Covid-19 restrictions eased, *The Irish Times*, 02 November, available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/assaults-and-sex-crimes-spike-to-previous-highs-as-covid-19-restrictions-eased-1.4717537>

Gallagher, C. & Bowers, S. (2021) Det Garda Colm Horkan 'epitomised' what members of force should strive to be, funeral told. *The Irish Times*, 21 June, available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/det-garda-colt-horkan-epitomised-what-members-of-force-should-strive-to-be-funeral-told-1.4284667>

Italy

Score 7

With the exception of some regions of southern Italy where mafia-type organized crime can have a serious impact on the security of certain sectors of the population (for instance entrepreneurs and shop owners) internal security is sufficiently guaranteed. Homicide rates have generally declined, and are today among the lowest in Europe. According to official statistics, the same applies to crimes such as thefts and robberies (ISTAT). In spite of this, feelings of insecurity are significant, particularly in some city peripheries.

The public has a moderately high level of confidence in the security forces. However, the segmentation of security forces (Carabinieri, Polizia di Stato, Guardia di Finanza, Polizia Municipale) might result in some inefficiencies and accountability issues. Italian security agencies have to date been fairly successful in preventing terrorist attacks.

Citation:

ISTAT official crime statistics: http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCCV_DELITTIPS (accessed 5 January 2022)

Lithuania

Score 7

Lithuania's internal security has improved in recent decades, in part thanks to Lithuania's accession to the European Union in 2004 and to the Schengen zone in 2007. These relationships improved police cooperation with the country's EU peers and allowed the public security infrastructure, information systems and staff skills to be upgraded. Crime rates remain high compared to other countries in the SGI report, but have declined significantly over time, which is also reflected in surveys about feelings of safety. Road accidents have also declined substantially, whereas several years ago, one of the major policy problems was the so-called war on the roads. Another positive trend has been increasing levels of popular trust in the police and the legal system. In November 2021, 66% of respondents in Lithuania expressed confidence in the police (Vilmorus). The same amount of trust was expressed regarding the national military forces, and 54% trusted the border control services.

As a share of GDP, government expenditure on public order and safety has been gradually declining in the last decade, from 1.8% in 2011 to 1.4% in 2019 (below the EU average of 1.7%). Observers say that motivation, competence and stability within the police force (and other internal-security organizations) are among the most pressing challenges to improving public safety. The annual report of the Lithuanian Security Department highlighted threats linked to the activities of external intelligence services from neighboring non-NATO countries. The country has reconsidered its internal-security policies due to increasing threats associated with Russia's intervention in Ukraine. A new long-term Public Security Development Program for 2015 – 2025, which aims at increasing public safety in the country, was adopted by the parliament in May 2015. In addition, in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and increase in its Baltic Sea Region military exercises, Lithuania reintroduced compulsory military conscriptions in 2015. Budgets now consistently contain funding for defense that equals 2% of GDP, sticking to the NATO pledge; moreover, calls to increase this spending to 2.5% of GDP were made after Russia started its war against Ukraine. The government also faced a very significant and multifaced challenge of dealing with the migration crisis, but eventually managed to control it, although arguably at the expense of breaching certain conventions on human rights. Threats from Russia, including its heavily militarized Kaliningrad region, and from Belarus, which hosted an estimated 30,000 Russian troops, thus acting as a base for their invasion of Ukraine, are currently by far the most important dangers to the country's security.

Poland

Score 7

Crime and homicide rates in Poland have fallen and have been relatively low for some time. However, trust in the police and the secret services has suffered under the PiS government. The effectiveness and proportionality of the new Anti-Terror Law,

introduced in June 2016, has been a subject of debate. Another critique is the weak oversight of secret services. The parliamentary committee for control was reduced from nine to seven members, and the chair no longer alternates between the government and opposition. Since 2015, Poland's secret services have been coordinated by Mariusz Kamiński, a controversial figure who was found guilty by a court in 2015 of producing false evidence against a political opponent in his previous position as head of the Anti-Corruption Office (CBA). Poland has been the target of security threats, especially by Russian hackers and intelligence or Belarussian intelligence. In June 2021, several politicians, including the prime minister faced email and social media attacks that obviously came from Russia.

Slovakia

Score 7

Although government spending on public order and safety is among the highest in the European Union, and the actual levels of crimes against rank-and-file citizens is low, internal security has been one of the major political issues in Slovakia for some time. The subjective feeling of security in private or public space has decreased due to several factors. First, from the beginning of the EU refugee crisis, almost all politicians, headed by then-Prime Minister Fico, fueled fears by painting negative consequences of the migration crisis. Second, the inefficient or reluctant persecution of criminal action or problematic linkages between politics and business and the murder of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová have dramatically reduced trust in the police and security forces. Among OECD countries, only Mexico scores worse than Slovakia in this regard.

Internal security has featured prominently in the government manifesto of the new center-right government. The latter has announced its plans to develop a new security strategy and to strengthen trust in the police. So far, however, progress has been limited. Initial proposals to reform the police forces have fallen victim to struggles within the governing coalition. In the summer of 2021, conflicts among the police erupted. In January 2022, several prosecutors with demonstrated success in battling corruption were appointed to high-level positions in the police force, a step which may help mitigate these conflicts.

Spain

Score 7

Compared with other OECD countries, Spain performs quite satisfactorily in protecting citizens against security risks and public confidence in the police force is high. The official data shows that violent crimes rate is one of the lowest in the world, although the figures are somewhat higher for assaults or muggings. As the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and Barcelona in 2017 showed, the government of Spain and its citizens are a principal target of jihadist extremism.

Although the share of police officers per capita is among the highest in the world, and the intelligence and police communities have demonstrated their capabilities in

terms of fighting terrorism, poor coordination mechanisms among the police forces at the local, regional and national level, as well as politicized intergovernmental relations, reduce the efficiency of the system. During the Catalan conflict, questions of loyalty and trust in the Catalan regional police force were raised. In addition, the police services have experienced increasing politicization since Vox began promoting the idea that the left-wing executive is tightening control over police forces.

The Organic Law on Citizens' Security (Organic Law 4/2015), also known as the "gag law," contains a number of open-ended provisions that entrust the police with broad powers but do not indicate in which situations these powers may or may not be used. The law also defines certain administrative offenses in an equally vague manner. Most of these issues have been addressed in two judgments of the Constitutional Court of Spain, rendered on 19 November 2020 and of 28 January 2021. In 2019, the PSOE-government announced a reform of the "gag law." In January 2022, the reformed law, which incorporates lessons from the coronavirus pandemic and eliminates some of the measure's most contentious parts, was still being negotiated in the parliament. For example, the article that banned protests in the immediate vicinity of Congress or Senate buildings had been eliminated. The reform proposal also included a removal of the ban on taking photos of law enforcement personnel while they are performing any action.

Citation:

Council of Europe (2021), Opinion on the Citizens' Security Law, Adopted by the Venice Commission at its 126 th Plenary Session – <http://www.cepc.gob.es/docs/default-source/comisionveneciadoc/20210407citizens-security-law.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Euronews (2021), Spanish police protest plan to reform unconstitutional "gag law" <https://www.euronews.com/2021/11/27/spanish-police-protest-plan-to-reform-unconstitutional-gag-law>

Chile

Score 6

Domestic security policy is in general quite effective. While organized crime is not apparent to the average citizen, there are some disturbing trends: selective acts of terrorism (or acts classified as such) based on ethnic or political grounds, and a slightly rising incidence of drug-trafficking (and related crimes). Especially in southern Chile, and particularly in the Araucanía region, the number of recorded terrorist attacks with alleged ethnic motivations has increased significantly in recent years. As a response to the rising tension and increase in the number of violent incidents, the government declared a state of emergency in October 2021, restricting the right of assembly and the freedom of movement in the most affected parts of that region.

Homicide rates in Chile are among Latin America's lowest. Common crime rates have not shown any significant changes since 2012. Still, public perceptions of criminality tend to overestimate the statistical reality. Private security services are widespread in the wealthier urban areas, especially in Santiago. According to a poll

released in August 2021 by the Chilean survey institute Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP), insecurity remains the overriding public concern (42%), ahead of pensions (41%) and healthcare (38%), despite the fact that crime rates, especially those reflecting serious crime, have been relatively stable during the last few years.

Chile has an extremely high incarceration rate among the younger population in particular. Prevention measures are not well developed. The last two governments each launched anti-crime programs focusing on detection and repression rather than on prevention. These had very mixed results. Crime-control programs such as the Plan Cuadrante and the marked increase in the numbers of police officers have significantly reduced crime rates. Reforms of the Penal Code and their implementation over the last 10 years have also significantly raised the efficiency of crime detection and criminal prosecution.

In July 2018, President Piñera received the final report of the working group on security (Mesa de Trabajo por la Seguridad), which included 150 recommendations across five topic areas including modernizing the police, fostering an “intelligent state system,” tightening controls on the circulation of firearms, stressing the key role of municipalities in the realm of public security, and improving the coordination between actors in the criminal prosecution system. This represented a further step on the way to a new national public security agreement, one of President Piñera’s stated goals. Some of these recommendations were included in the draft laws that the executive presented to Congress in November 2018, and which were still being negotiated in Congress by the end of the period under review.

In response to the social unrest of October 2019, President Piñera declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew that lasted over a week, deploying police and military forces to restore social order. Although social tensions had been noticeably growing for several years, the scope of these protests overwhelmed the government and surprised political analysts. In the context of these protests, state security forces – primarily the police (Carabineros) – were alleged to have committed massive human-rights abuses.

According to statistics from the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the National Institute for Human Rights (INDH) compiled by Amnesty International (AI), as of March 2021, more than 8,000 victims of state violence and more than 400 cases of eye trauma had resulted from police actions during the protests that began in 2019. Furthermore, the protests had claimed the lives of at least 23 people, and upwards of 5,000 were detained.

Former president of Chile and current High Commissioner of the United Nations Office for Human Rights (OHCHR) Michelle Bachelet sent a team to Chile tasked with investigating the incidents. The subsequently released report concluded that certain human rights violations, in particular the improper use of “less lethal” weapons and cases of ill treatment had recurred repeatedly, and had involved the same alleged perpetrators and victims. One indicator of the violent reaction of the

police during the mass protests were 400 people who ended up with eye trauma as a result of projectiles fired by the security forces.

Denouncing the declaration of a state of emergency and the imposed curfew as a violation of the public's fundamental rights, the opposition filed a "constitutional accusation" against the minister of the interior in November 2019, which was approved by the Senate by confirming the minister's political responsibility for the human rights violations. At the same time, total damages to public and private property caused in the context of the social unrest are estimated at \$1.4 billion dollars, and an estimate of related job losses exceeded 140,000.

Citation:

On the progress of draft legislation and implementation of public policies:

Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente, <https://deldichoalhecho.cl>, last accessed: 13 January 2022.

On insecurity as the chief public concern:

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Greece

Score 6

In Greece, there was an overall increase in crimes between 2013 and 2019, with over 2,000 crimes per 1,000 population per year (data of the Hellenic Statistical Authority). Partly owing to movement restrictions, imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, criminality declined in 2020–2021. Moreover, according to the Minister

of Public Order, compared to 2018–2019, criminality declined by 30% in the last trimester of 2021.

The decline in crime may be attributed to several converging factors. First, family ties remain strong in Greece, and were further strengthened during the economic and pandemic crisis. Thus, the unemployed and poor relied on family members for social protection. Second, with the exception of a few regions (e.g., the island of Crete), the circulation of firearms is very small and restricted. Third, compared to previous years, in 2020–2021, police were very visible in city centers, patrolling the streets.

The decrease may also be partially explained by the relatively high levels of government expenditure on public order and safety (constituting over 2% of GDP, among the highest such levels in the EU-27. EU-27 average: 1.7%). Expenditure was primarily channeled to sustain a large police force.

Feelings of personal insecurity may be attributed to the fact that trust in the police is comparatively low. In many encounters, protesters have been hostile to the police. Active anarchist groups regularly attack policemen during demonstrations and police stations, too. Police also respond violently, sometimes exceeding the limits prescribed by law.

The police have not offered sufficient protection to refugees and migrants against attacks by racist groups. The trial and imprisonment of the leadership of the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn in October 2020 led to the demise of that anti-migrant party. In the past, Golden Dawn had put the safety of refugees and migrants at risk. Moreover, compared to the period up to 2019, in the period under review, violent riots in central Athens and Thessaloniki were less frequent.

In summary, in the period under review, safety increased. Compared to the pre-2019 period, public order was gradually restored. Nevertheless, there was broad public uneasiness regarding security in Greek city centers. Crimes against private property were frequent, while there was sporadic violent activity by uncontrolled left-wing radical political groups.

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Hungary

Score 6 Despite the social disturbances during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the closure of many SMEs, unemployment and impoverishment, public order has been maintained at the usual level. Both Budapest (the only big city) and the entire country have remained safe. The number of crimes committed registered by the Hungarian Statistical Office decreased from 199,830 in 2018 to 165,648 in 2019 to a long-time low of 162,416 in 2020. There are, however, some regional differences in the decline of crimes committed. The highest drop was recorded in the capital city of Budapest. In the countryside, numbers are a bit better in the west of the country than in the east. This fits with economic performance data for Hungary, with Budapest and the western part of the country developing much faster than the east.

Israel

Score 6 The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) is the main body that manages the internal security policy, including crime prevention, prisons, gun control and fire prevention policies. Counterterrorism is mainly handled by the Shin Bet. The Israel National Cyber Directorate is responsible for cybercrime security.

Notwithstanding occasional acts of terrorism, Israelis still report that they feel generally secure. According to the most recent crime-victimization survey, 70% of people claim that they feel safe walking alone at night. Israel's homicide rate (a more accurate indicator of safety in a country) is 1.8 per 100,000 inhabitants in contrast to 3.8 on average in OECD countries.

Nevertheless, this seems to hold mainly for Jewish municipalities. Arab communities suffer extensive crime and violence. Arab citizens make up about a fifth of the Israeli population, but are involved in 93% of shooting incidents, 64% of murders, 61% of arson incidents, 56% of weapons offenses and 47% of robberies. The year 2021 was characterized by a major effort by decision-makers and other stakeholders to raise awareness and implement concrete measures to tackle the "violence epidemic." Major funds have been allocated for policing, welfare and the educational needs of the Arab-Israeli population.

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Malta

Score 6

Malta is generally considered a safe place to live. A CrimeMalta 2021 report noted that crime rates had decreased during 2020, partly due to the exceptional pandemic-related circumstances.

Nonetheless, cases of fraud have increased, and conflicts between criminal organizations involved in drug-trafficking and money laundering occur from time to time. Femicide is also a concern in a society still underpinned by patriarchal societal notions. Malta ranked 36 in the Women's Peace and Security Index. A report by the Women's Right Foundation stated that, though Malta had implemented the Istanbul Convention in 2018, the laws in place do not fully protect women who experience domestic violence. Only one in three sexual assaults are reported to the police in Malta, and between 2010 and 2015 25% of murders committed were related to domestic violence and femicide. The car bombing of a well-known Maltese journalist in 2017 has since garnered intense international attention, but the arrest of the alleged murderers and the alleged mastermind has enabled police to resolve other murders and high-profile robberies.

The state faces few external security threats, making it difficult to assess local readiness or the state's ability to protect citizens if such threats were to materialize. This is particularly significant given Malta's geographic location and open borders with other Schengen-area members. Numbeo recently ranked Malta 53rd worldwide on its Safety Index, based on data compiled in mid-2021.

Malta is affiliated with Interpol and is party to several cross-border security cooperation efforts, particularly those coordinated by the European Union. Frontex operations in the Mediterranean area are also of pivotal importance to the island, particularly within the context of irregular migration and drug smuggling.

Malta's Secret Service is small, and depends heavily on intelligence from foreign intelligence services. The country has the fourth-highest number of police per 100,000 inhabitants in the European Union. Four police commissioners have resigned over a five-year period. In 2020, one of the first moves of the new prime minister was the removal of the current police commissioner. Changes to the process of selecting the head of police, with the goal of enhancing oversight were introduced. A policy revision that no longer requires police officers to have demonstrated clean conduct for the purposes of rehiring and promotion was not received well. A transformation strategy for the island's police force is ongoing. Nonetheless, a 2021 Eurobarometer survey highlighted the fact that trust in Malta's police forces is below the EU average. Nonetheless, 71% say that they trust the army. A total of 19 murders have remained unsolved in the last 10 years. Overall, the institutional capacity for dealing with organized crime has not kept pace with the rapid change in Malta's economic and social structures. A 2021 Council of Europe report highlighted the fact that prosecutions in the area of human trafficking have typically resulted in acquittals and proceedings are lengthy.

Meanwhile, the annual World Risk Report found Malta to be the second-safest country in the world when it comes to natural disasters.

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Netherlands

Score 6

Since 2010, opinion polling has shown that confidence in the police is consistently high and satisfaction regarding policing performance is fairly high (28% of those polled express that they are "very satisfied"). Research shows that this is independent of the actual conduct and performance of police officers. In the last 10 years, self-reported crime has consistently decreased. Crimes registered by police decreased by one-third, and the number of crimes as estimated by citizens decreased even more, by approximately 40%. At the same time, the percentage of resolved cases remains steady, at about 25%. A recent CBS report called this "the mystery of the

disappearing crime.” However, this decline came to a grinding halt during the review period, with a rise in sexual offenses, probably related to human trafficking particularly of underage subjects. The types of crime reported shifted in 2020 from more “traditional” crime toward organized crime and digital/cybercrime.

Cybercrime rates have increased and the types of crimes have diversified – from harassment to organized attacks on vital public systems. Recent studies have concluded that the Dutch police lack the technical expertise to effectively tackle cybercrime. A new study warned in 2019 of the dangers of “digital dependency” and the possible resulting havoc. Since 2011, the Dutch government has been implementing an EU-coordinated National Cybersecurity Strategy that prioritizes prevention over detection. Regarding terrorism threats, the intelligence services (Nationale Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding, established 2004) appear able to prevent attacks. The Dutch Safety board concluded in a report from 2020 that the Netherlands’ approach to digital safety and security needs to change rapidly and fundamentally to prevent Dutch society from being disrupted by cyberattacks. The newly formed government included a cybersecurity paragraph, and for the first time has a designated minister for digitalization.

There is deep concern about the infiltration of organized crime into local politics, business and police forces, which has resulted in an unwanted seepage of the illegal economy into the formal economy, and has undermined the credibility of the public administration. Recently, a number of reports drew attention to the scale of illegal-drug production and distribution in the Netherlands and beyond. Synthetic drugs with an estimated street value of over €18 billion and marijuana production have become a structural part of Dutch economy, thereby creating a constant danger of spillover into the mainstream economy. In an attempt to tackle the problem, a number of municipalities have begun experimenting with the legalization of soft drugs. However, the issue is increasingly hard drugs. Over the last decade, the Netherlands, as has been made clear from recent court cases involving murders among criminals, has become a crucial distribution center for cocaine and synthetic drugs in Western Europe.

In the 2022 budget, an additional €24 million is allocated to enlarging police capacity and building social resilience. The police forces have indicated that this is not sufficient to bring about structural change.

Two recent attempts (one successful) to assassinate lawyers are considered to be extremely alarming, as they expose the true reach of organized crime and their very violent practices. The assassination of the investigative journalist Pieter R. de Vries was a shock, and revealed the alarming degree to which organized crime has infiltrated Dutch society. Other high-profile cases, such as a hostage situation in Amsterdam and violent robberies in broad daylight, have generated feelings of insecurity, even if overall levels of crime are down. The coronavirus crisis also led to the intimidation of scientists and politicians, thereby creating an overall feeling of an unsafe, more perilous and harsher society.

Members of the police rank and file are expressing decreasing confidence in their leaders, due to scandals related to racism, discrimination and bullying. Police spokespeople maintain that the citizenry's confidence in the police forces remains high. Following debates about more aggressive standard police equipment, incidents of disproportionate police violence are growing, and the government has gone to great lengths not to sanction the perpetrators. The trend is a reason for concern.

The policies of the present government focus on cost reduction, and the centralization of the previously strictly municipal and regional police, judicial, and penitentiary systems. Recent reports indicate serious problems in implementing reforms, with police officers claiming severe loss of operational capacity. Meanwhile, there is profound discontent and unrest inside the Ministry of Justice and Safety. Judges, prosecutors, lawyers and other legal personnel have voiced public complaints about the "managerialization" of the judicial process and the resulting workload, which critics contend have led to "sloppy" trials and verdicts. Efforts to digitize the judicial process, intended to reduce costs, have resulted in a massive operational failure and a cost overrun of approximately €200 million. The coalition agreement announces more money for paying fees of social lawyers in an effort to help citizens (re)gain more access to legal procedures. But government policy is also attempting to relieve part of the burden on the judicial system by introducing intermediation procedures. The coronavirus crisis had significant influence on the way prevention, law enforcement and the court system functioned. During the lockdowns, some tasks were discontinued or significantly delayed. Particularly for prevention and youth detention centers, the delays were significant. The already overburdened courts started working online to prevent even further backlogs, inevitably impacting the quality of verdicts.

According to research for Transport & Logistiek Nederland, the police have been neglecting transportation crimes for years. Precise number of criminal activities are difficult to quantify, but it seems that organized crime uses transportation frequently and with a very low risk of being caught. The reasons are, again, shortage of personnel, insufficient funding and decentralization. One high-level administrator has characterized the situation as "organized crime facing an unorganized state."

Environmental crime is also growing in impact and frequency. The Dutch court of audit concluded that the whole chain of response is not functioning well. Information and data on environmental crimes are insufficient and unreliable. What is needed is risk-oriented action, instead of sporadic reactions after the fact. The Dutch court of audit recommended making all the information on environmental hazards public, to increase transparency and to increase the pressure on companies to comply.

The overall picture from the safety and security, and judicial institutions of the Dutch government is one of increasing stress and challenge, lack of enforcement capacity, and an inadequate response to organized crime in the drug sector, human trafficking, ecological crime and cybercrime.

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Romania

Score 6

The coronavirus lockdown has led to a drop in the overall crime rate in Romania, but domestic violence calls have increased. Romanian police data shows that, in March 2020, the number of reported crimes was 14.6% lower than the same period in 2019 – 20% fewer cases of thefts and robberies, a 27% drop in violent crime, and almost a third fewer cases of attempted murder. Much of the decline in overall crimes stems from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the restrictions and lockdowns that were implemented. However, while crime on the streets of Romania fell substantially, crimes in the home increased by 2.3%.

A European Commission report from October 2020 found that Romania had the highest rate for human trafficking in the European Union, at 74 victims per million inhabitants. Most of the victims were women who were subjected to sexual exploitation. NGOs consulted by the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) warned that official statistics are most likely to have been underreported, particularly “the scale of trafficking of foreign nationals” for their exploitation in Romania, which is believed to be “much larger than the limited number of identified foreign victims... suggest.” In turn, Romania’s Chamber of Deputies voted in favor of removing the statute of limitations for crimes ranging from human trafficking, forced labor and slavery to rape and the sexual abuse of minors. The legislative change coincides with the publication of a report by GRETA and EU standards on the prosecution of perpetrators of said offenses.

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Sweden

Score 6

The rate of violent crime, and specifically homicides involving firearms, have been on the rise for a decade in Sweden (Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2021a). The daily news is full of such incidents, which mostly take place within a few urban areas and are tied to organized crime and criminal gangs. The item is high on the political agenda, though not all political parties agree on how to fix the problem.

In the 2018 election campaign, law and order-related issues played a major role. It seems clear that many people living in cities now feel increasingly unsafe. This means, for instance, that they will be less inclined to be outdoors after dark and less assured of the police’s capacity to guarantee safety and solve crimes. The response

time, particularly outside metropolitan areas, is today longer than what many people find acceptable.

The trend in Western European countries has been that crime rates increased in the period 1960 to 1990, followed by a decrease continuing through today. In Sweden, there has been an upward trend since the middle of the 2000s. In Europe in 2017, 8 people per 1 million were victims of violent crime compared to 11 per 1 million in Sweden for that year and 12 per 1 million in 2020. The rate of violent crime involving firearms paints an even bleaker picture. Since 2013, homicides involving firearms have increased dramatically. While the rate of 1.6 deaths per 1 million inhabitants is on the descent in Europe, in Sweden the rate of four deaths per 1 million people is on the ascent. Finally, if one looks at violent crime among people between the ages of 20 and 29, that number goes up to 18 deaths per 1 million inhabitants. However, the occurrence of violent crime is rare outside the context of organized crime and certain urban areas, and researchers have not yet found the exact causes and, consequently, appropriate solutions (Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2021b). There is a growing understanding that some share of the rising crime levels in metropolitan areas reflect a failure of integration programs.

In 2015, regional police districts and core national staff were merged into one central police authority. A recent evaluation by the Swedish Agency for Public Management (Statskontoret, 2018) found that the organizational reform has not improved performance and that the organization remains fragmented.

The red-green coalition government and the center-right parties agreed that recruiting more police officers is an important component of the response to this situation. The goal for the years 2016-2024 was to hire 10,000 additional police officers. In 2021, the government indicated that the program was about halfway complete, with 5,000 recruitment positions yet to be filled by 2024 (Regeringskansliet, 2021).

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Bulgaria

Score 5 Most citizens live in relative safety, and crime statistics have improved. Citizens and private providers of security services are addressing the risks. Since the mid-1990s, private guards have outnumbered police staff three or four to one. Compared with most of its neighbors and other new EU members, Bulgaria performs relatively well in terms of its violent crime and suicide rates. According to the Global Terrorism Database, Bulgaria also ranks relatively well compared to its neighbors.

In 2020 and 2021, internal security policy focused primarily on ensuring a stable environment for the various elections to be held. A late summer 2020 demonstration against Borisov's cabinet was subject to unprovoked police brutality. The caretaker cabinets of 2021 sanctioned most of the officers who had reacted with violence.

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United States

Score 5 The United States invests massively in efforts to protect citizens against security risks such as crime and terrorism. In the years after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the United States built an extraordinarily large security establishment centered in the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

The government has had less success dealing with two other kinds of violence. First, a number of large cities are plagued by homicides, primarily in inner-city black and Latino neighborhoods. New Orleans, St. Louis, Baltimore, Detroit and Chicago all number among the world's 50 cities with the highest homicide rates. Second, there are repeated instances of individuals conducting large-scale violent attacks on civilians in public spaces, killing large numbers of people. Hate crimes have increased, with Jewish and Muslim persons frequently targeted.

Under pressure from the National Rifle Association and its massive membership, Congress has failed to pass legislation tightening weapon regulations. In 2018, a massive national protest – led by students from a Florida high school that had suffered an attack – increased the pressure on lawmakers to introduce tighter restrictions on the sale and acquisition of guns and other weapons. Yet, amidst strong Republican opposition, federal gun control initiatives have stalled. Yet, in the absence of legislative progress, the Biden administration has unveiled a new strategy to reduce gun crime in the United States, notably by providing “funding for community violence intervention, or CVI, programs that have been shown to break cycles of violence by connecting high-risk individuals to wraparound social

services” (Ward, 2021).

The issue of violence in predominantly black communities has remained highly controversial and the recent emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement has moved the issue of police abuse toward Black people onto the agenda. Whereas some studies have suggested that when apprehending a suspect, police are no more likely to use lethal force against blacks than whites, these studies have been criticized for methodologies involving conceptual bias. There are several other studies, however, showing that black men are much more likely than white men to be affected by police brutality. In terms of actual casualties and loss of life, the frequency of inner-city violence, which involves mostly black perpetrators and black victims, is by far the greatest failure to provide safe living conditions (see 2016 FBI data “Crime in the United States”).

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Turkey

Score 4

The Turkish National Police (TNP) has introduced an e-government infrastructure in many of its divisions, and initiated several projects intended to bring operations into harmony with the EU acquis. The 2020 UNDP Human Development Report ranked Turkey in the top group of countries (i.e., countries with a score of above 0.8), as Turkey scored particularly well for life expectancy and standard of living. In a 2018 OECD survey, 60% of Turkish respondents stated that they felt safe walking alone at night, slightly lower than the OECD average of 68%. Turkey’s homicide rate is 1.4 per 100,000 inhabitants, lower than the OECD average of 3.7 per 100,000 inhabitants. Moreover, 77.4% of respondents to the TURKSTAT 2020 Life Satisfaction Survey expressed satisfaction with the security services.

Based on TURSTAT figures, however, the opposition draws a completely different picture. Most strikingly, from 2009 to 2019, theft increased by a factor of seven, smuggling by a factor of nine, murder by a factor of six, and sexual crimes by a factor of 10. Consequently, Global Initiative’s Global Organized Crime Index ranks Turkey 12th among 193 countries.

The Ministry of Interior Affairs also initiated a joint border control project with Georgia in 2021. The Turkish National Police (TNP) collaborates extensively with domestic partners and international organizations such as INTERPOL, EUROPOL, SECI, AGIT, BM, CEPOL and FRONTEX.

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Mexico

Score 2

Mexico has been among the most dangerous countries in the world and there has been no substantial improvement in recent years. If anything, the situation is worsening. The main reason for the high homicide rate is that Mexico has become a major center for the transit of illegal drugs to the United States. In brutal competition with one another, Mexico's criminal gangs or cartels, have carried out horrific acts and killed thousands. Moreover, violence has become increasingly intertwined with local, regional and national politics. From a regional perspective, Mexico has only a slightly lower homicide rate than Honduras and Venezuela, and the worst homicide rate of any OECD country.

Mexico has improved the bureaucratic efficiency of some of its crime-fighting operations, but there are still huge problems. These problems include a lack of bureaucratic cooperation, rampant corruption within the security apparatus, the immense scale of criminal activity in Mexico and the infiltration of law enforcement agencies by organized crime. The National Security Commission has argued that the low wages paid to the security forces is one reason for this situation. Thus, one can say that internal security policy does not effectively protect citizens. This explains the proliferation of self-defense groups throughout the country and a lack of trust in the authorities, which are – especially at the local level – frequently infiltrated by organized crime.

More worrying still, the judicial system is not designed to convict powerful and wealthy criminals. It is too difficult to convict criminal suspects in Mexico who can afford expensive lawyers. Additionally, Mexico has suffered several public scandals which have further damaged public confidence in the authorities. These scandals include prison escapes by high-profile criminals and unexplained massacres in rural areas. In at least part of its territory, Mexico is a failed state.

One of the most important promises made by President López Obrador was to reduce the militarization of the fight against the drug cartels. Nevertheless, in November 2018, López Obrador announced a plan to create a national guard, which was to number 150,000 armed men at the end of his term in 2023. It is supposed to act as an “interinstitutional coordination body” between the military and police. However, it seems that despite the reform, the security situation under López Obrador has not improved, and may get even more out of control in the near future.

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