Violen Dea h d e o Legal In er en ion

Research Notes

small arms survey

ment agencies, the legitimacy of certain state actions, and potential avenues for security sector reform. Furthermore, they draw attention to the overall availability of data pertaining to the lethal consequences of legal interventions.

This Research Note summarizes key findings of the research on legal interventions conducted for the 2011 and 2015 editions of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence*, with a view to advancing the debate on the coherence, comprehensiveness, and comparability of relevant data within and across countries.

Statistics on violent deaths by law enforcement officers

The data used in both the 2011 and 2015 editions of the *Global Burden of Armed Violence* shows that the number of people who were killed by police and the number of police officers killed while on duty accounted for a steady average of 4 per cent of all violent deaths—and that despite the overall decrease in non-conflict killings during the same time period (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 80; 2015, pp. 4, 51).

The *Global Burden of Armed Violence* estimate relies on data from 31 countries for which information on legal interventions is available. Among these, only seven include the category in their homicide statistics, while some count related deaths under separate rubrics, or exclusively in public health records. These inconsistencies make it extremely difficult to compare data and to get a clear picture of the global magnitude of the problem. Statistics from Venezuela are a case in point. Records show that in 2012, 3,387 individuals were killed by law enforcement officers for resisting arrest, while another 4,598 deaths registered that year remain under investigation; the human rights organization Provea argues that neither of these figures has been included in Venezuela's homicide statistics (Provea, 2012, p. 406). If they

were to be included, the national homicide rate for 2012 would jump from 51 to 78 per 100,000 population (p. 407).

The potential for the use of lethal force by law enforcement officials in the course of police operations exists in all countries. There are, however, significant variations across the globe. In the eight countries that provide information on legal intervention via the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10), a total of 20 individuals were killed by police or other law enforcement agents between 2005 and 2012 (WHO, n.d.).[1]

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