UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

CRIME TRENDS IN THE CARIBBEAN AND RESPONSES

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The Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), at its Twenty-Second Meeting held in Nassau, The Bahamas in July 2001 expressed concern over the new forms of crime and violence that continue to pose threats to public safety as well as the social and economic well-being and security of the people of the region. The Prime Minister of Belize, Hon. Said Musa, summarized the concern of Heads as follows:

> We must bring our attention to bear on two of the most urgent issues that are wreaking havoc on our populations: the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the intolerable increase in the incidence of crime that have made personal security the overriding concern of all our peoples (see *Focus on Drugs* 2002:1).

This is the first time that public safety has been put so high on the policy agenda of the Heads of the region, indeed at the centre of their concerns as a group.

In order to advance their work, the Conference agreed to establish a Task Force, comprising representatives from each of the Member States, the Regional Security System (RSS), the Association of Commissioners of Police (ACCP), and the Regional Secretariats, to study the issues and develop recommendations for the consideration of the Heads. The Regional Task Force was charged with the responsibility to isolate the fundamental "causes" of the worrying levels of crime and the security threats in the Region and to develop recommendations for a coordinated response at the sub-regional and/or regional levels which would enable CARICOM Member States to provide the requisite level of security for their populations and visitors.

The objectives of this project are to:

♦ Provide an analytic description of the trends in crime in the Caribbean
♦ Examine the causes of crime in the region
♦ Evaluate existing strategies and make recommendations.

There are some notable imitations on this effort. In many countries of the region, reliable data on recorded crimes are not readily available. In others such as Haiti, recoding systems are just being established. The study therefore focuses on those countries with the best data systems, that is, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. It should also be noted that some Caribbean countries have different methods of classifying crimes which makes regional summaries and comparisons within the region somewhat problematic. These kinds of operations, which will be done in this report, should therefore be taken with a measure of caution.

This report relies heavily on the existing literature and is not based on new primary research. As it was intended to form part of a larger report, the ideas and data drawn from the work of others as well as my own work are not consistently cited in the traditional manner. A bibliography is however attached and it is hoped that this provides satisfactory recognition of the sources on which this work relies. Moreover, many of the ideas, especially in the third section of this report (on strategy) are products of collective discussion and indeed lobbying by members of the CTF who represent the interests of the different law enforcement agencies and state bureaucracies across the region.

The work of the CTF was not a purely disinterested rational exercise and this is perhaps as it should be. In any discourse about crime control policy and the future of the region, voices of experience and of the various institutional interests within the security establishments ought to have a perfectly legitimate place. The CTF provided the opportunity for valuable exchanges on important crime control and security issues.

SECTION 1

TRENDS IN CRIME

In this section, a descriptive analysis of the trends in crime across the Commonwealth Caribbean region is presented. This analysis seeks to engage some of the major concerns of the Caribbean Task Force (of which the author is a member) and will therefore emphasize (a) recent trends in violent crime, (b) crimes against visitors (c) trends in drug crimes (d) the emergence of new crimes. There was also great concern regarding the use of firearms in criminal offending, but at the time of writing, too little data was available to properly treat with this issue.

Taking a long view (the last 20 years), crime trends in the CARICOM countries have demonstrated stability with respect to some categories of crime and change with respect to others. The picture is not a totally negative one, although significant negative developments have occurred and worrying trends have emerged. For the CARICOM region taken as a whole, general or aggregate crime rates were lower in the 1990s than in the 1980s. And with a few exceptions, the homicide rates for most countries seem to exhibit a remarkable stability during the period under review – although in some countries, there was a resurgence of the homicide rate at the end of the 1990s and continuing to the present.

There are some important issues of concern. In some countries, violent crime tends to demonstrate considerable volubility (St. Kitts, Grenada, Trinidad), and over the two decades, a number of countries have been subject to periods of sharp increases in violent crime including homicide. This is usually strongly associated with drug trafficking activity. A dramatic shift has occurred in drug trafficking with cocaine eclipsing ganja as the primary drug. In some countries, the rates of youth crime have been increasing, new crimes have been introduced such as kidnapping and more complicated fraud. These matters are elaborated below.

Total crime including crimes against visitors

There is considerable variation in crime rates, the structure of crime, and the complexity of the crime problem across the different countries of the region. In 1998, for example, the rate of total crimes ranged from a high of 10,177 incidents per 100,000 citizens in Grenada to a low of 1170 per 100,000 in Trinidad. Using the available data for 1998, the exact ranking of countries from highest to lowest crime rates is as follows:

Table 1: Rates of total crime for selected countries in 1998 (Per 100,000 citizens)

Countries	Rates
Grenada	10 117
Dominica	8845
The Bahamas	3779
St. Kitts and Nevis	5543
Barbados	3779
Jamaica	1870
Guyana	1355
Trinidad and Tobago	1170

It should be emphasized that these are the rates for reported crimes. It is expected that they reflect the ranking of the *true crime rates*, but this cannot be claimed with absolute confidence as the proportion of crimes reported in the different countries may vary significantly. It is known that in Jamaica only 20% of all crimes are reported to the respective police services, but little is know about the level of reporting in the other countries of the region. Data from a recent victimization study should allow for estimates for Barbados to be made but these data are not yet available to the author.

Table 2: Rates of Total Crime for Selected countries 1981-2000 (Per 100,000 citizens)

Year	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Trinidad
2000	4116	-----	1509	-----
1995	3779	1053	2183	1382
1990	4519	-----	1926	5334
1985	3031	1979	2121	3599
1981	3490	-----	2277	1790

As noted above, the general crime rate was lower in the 1990s than it was in the 1980s. From the mid-1990s to the end of the decade, the region as a whole experienced a decline in the general crime rate. The volubility experienced by Barbados, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago is representative of the general pattern for total crime for the region as a whole (see Table 1).

Crimes against visitors

Tourist victimization in the countries for which there are readily available data, has largely conformed to this tendency for the aggregate crime rates to decline (in the mid to late 1990s). During the 1990s, there was a steady decline in visitor victimization rates in Barbados and Jamaica.   The risk exposure for tourists, expressed as the proportion of visitors victimized, has generally tended to be fairly low. For example, in 1999, only 0.01% and 0.07% of all visitors to Jamaica and Barbados respectively were reportedly victimized. Tourist victimization rates also tend to be lower than that of the local populations - even if the comparisons are made using victimization rates that standardize the data for the length of stay of the visitors.

The pattern of crimes against tourists tends to be similar to the pattern of crimes against locals. Thus for example, in 1999, while the general rates of victimization of both locals and visitors are lower in Jamaica than in Barbados, the rate of violent victimization is much higher in the former, with 43% of all crimes against tourists being violent, while the proportion for Barbados was 25%.   A significant proportion of all visitor victimizations are violent, but for the region as a whole, the murder of visitors is rare. During the period 1980-2000, in Barbados, there were, for example, only 2 visitors were homicide victims, and in Jamaica for the period 1990-2000, when that country received approximately 1.5 million visitors per year, there were 18 such victims.

Violent crime

As in the case of visitors, for Caribbean populations, the central concern is not the general crime rate, but rather the rate of violent crime. Over the last two decades, there have been significant increases in the rate of violent crimes in every Caribbean country for which data is available (that is, ten countries). Primarily for this reason, the ratio of violent to property crimes has also tended to increase. This may not be true for all countries, but holds for a significant number of Caribbean countries including Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados. In 1975, Jamaica, and both Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago had violent to property crimes ratios of 0.4 and 0.2 respectively. Twenty five years later, in 2000, these ratios had changed to 2.3 in the case of Jamaica, 0.46 for Barbados.[1] As I have noted elsewhere (Harriott 2000), these data suggest that perhaps significant shift from the traditional pattern of criminal offending may be occurring.

The traditional pattern of criminal offending in the Caribbean has been characterized by low rates of violent crime and relatively high rates of property crimes. Thus generally in most states of the region, the ratio of violent to property crimes, tend to vary between 1:5 and 1:10. This is similar to the pattern in the developed countries. This pattern has already changed quite dramatically in Jamaica where in 2000, violent crimes accounted for 41% of all crimes. Other countries need not experience this outcome but as noted above, the trajectory of the data seems to be in this direction. The Bahamas, St Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and even St. Lucia and Barbados have all at various times experienced "waves" of violent crime. The instability of the old crime patterns and the hint of change are most evident in the movement of the homicide rates.

Since the mid-1980s, at least four Commonwealth Caribbean countries have experienced periods of very high homicide rates. These are the Bahamas, Jamaica, St Kitts and Guyana. A rate of 20\100,000 may be regarded as being high by Latin American standards and *very high* by Commonwealth Caribbean standards given that the mean rate for the region is rarely above 10\100,000.

Table 3: Homicide rates for selected Caribbean Countries 1980-2000

Year	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Trinidad	St. Kitts
2000	7.5	----	38.9	9.1	12
1995	5.3	19.1	31.2	11.7	31.1
1990	11.7	26.0	20.9	8.4	8.9
1985	6.3	15.6	17.4	10.1	----
1981	----	----	22.5	7.8	----

Very few countries have however experienced long periods of steady increases in their homicide rates. In most instances there have been periods of reversals and a lowering of the rates. This suggests that it is still possible to effectively control this problem by sound policy measures.

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[1] At the time of writing, the comparable data for Trinidad and Tobago were not available.

Use of Firearms

This problem is however compounded by increasing access to firearms. During the last decade, and continuing to the present, a number of Caribbean countries have experienced fairly high and steadily increasing incidence of gun use in the commission of violent crimes. This problem is particularly acute in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, but is not restricted to these countries. It is truly a regional problem that is in many ways associated with the developing drug trade. In the case of Jamaica, during the four year period 1997-2000, 2361 reported murders, 6,812 robberies, and of course 4,642 shootings were committed with the use of firearms. This represents 65% and 62% of these categories of these crimes respectively. Relative to the beginning of the 1990s, these data represent significant increases in the use of firearms in the commission of these crimes. Whereas in 1990, 50% of all reported murders and 57% of all robberies involved firearm use, in 2000, these proportions had increased to 61% and 68% respectively.

In Trinidad, a similar pattern appears to be emerging. In 2000, some 61murders, or 50% of all cases of murder, were committed with the use of firearms. For most of the 1990s, the proportion of homicides committed with the aid of firearms more or less approximated this figure. In Guyana, the picture is not very different. And even in Barbados, which has consistently had one of the lowest rates of violent crime in the region, during the period 1997-2001, there were 1243 firearms offences. Of these, there were 36 murders, and 444 robberies and assaults with the intent to rob. Thus 35% of the murders and 58% of all robberies during this period were committed with the aid of firearms. These figures represent a significant increase over the previous five year period and reflect a more general trend in the region for the increased use of firearms in criminal offences.

This trend in gun crimes is having a significant negative impact on different aspects of life in a number of territories. Economic development is usually impeded by the insecurities associated with high levels of violence. The economic costs to society may involve loss of investments, reduced productivity, a diversion of resources from developmental projects into law enforcement and health care for the victims of gun crimes. In Jamaica for example, the economic cost of violent crime is estimated at approximately 6% of GPD per capita (Francis et. al. 2002).

Drug Defined Crimes

The demand for firearms and the supply of them is closely linked to the trends in drug crimes. The homicide trends indicate a strong association between drug trafficking-dealing and this form of violence. The period of rapid acceleration in the murder rate corresponds with the period of greatest expansion (and competitiveness) in the cocaine and cocaine derivatives business and its transshipment via the region, and associated with this, a mushrooming of organized crime in some territories.

During the period under review there was a significant shift in drug trafficking trends. There was a marked increase in cocaine trafficking and the development of local cocaine markets fuelled by increasing demand for the substance. On the other hand, there was a similarly sharp decline in the exportation of ganja.

One should be very careful in the use of data on drug production and interdiction as there may be double counting of volumes transshipped via more than one Caribbean country thereby inflating the regional totals (the same shipment may be moved via Trinidad and Jamaica and counted as a part of the total volume transshipped via Jamaica, and Trinidad, and then again summed as parts of the total volume moved via the Caribbean), controlled shipments are also added to the totals. For these reasons different sources may yield different estimates and even different trend lines. These difficulties and others associated with the methods of estimation make it difficult to determine the meaning of the data. They are however the best that we have, and until better quality data is available, we use them – but with some skepticism.

The basic trends in drug trafficking and use within the Caribbean region are described in a recent CCM report on *Illicit Drug Markets*. These trends are captured in the data (taken from this report and) presented below:

- The illegal drugs market in the Caribbean generates an estimated income of 3.3 billion U.S. dollars. This represents 3.1 percent of the registered Gross Domestic Product in the region.

- Cocaine accounts for 85 percent of the drug market in the region. The amount of 3 billion U.S dollars cocaine generates in the region represents 2 percent of the global cocaine market.

- More than 90 percent of the cocaine that enters the Caribbean countries, or 240 metric tonnes, continues its passage in the direction of other consuming markets.

- Cocaine's share in the drug market of the region increased during the past decade from the 72 percent of the market in the early 1990s at the expense of cannabis.

Heroin and amphetamine-type drugs each represent 1 percent of the regional drug market. It is estimated that the Caribbean is the transhipment area for 10 percent of the total estimated production of heroin out of Colombia, which is the source of 5.5 percent of the American heroin market.

These hard drugs are displacing cannabis.

- The ganja market, which now only accounts for 13 percent of the Caribbean's illicit drug market in 2000 has been almost halved during the past decade.

- Total traffic of illegal derivatives of hemp in the Caribbean amounts to 375 MT. Locally cultivated ganja totals 330 MT, which is grown in 485 hectares. Ganja, therefore, covers 0.003 percent of the cultivated area in the region. Caribbean marijuana hardly represents 4.2 percent of the global production, an abrupt reduction from the region's share of 18 percent in the 1980s. In the year 1980, Jamaica and Belize alone had an estimated area cultivated with ganja that was five times the present size – 2,650 hectares. Some sources indeed point to Jamaica as the top ganja producer in the world between 1968 and 1981; yet in 2000, Jamaica did not make the list of the top ten producers in the world.

- The region is used as a transhipment point for the importation of European ecstasy, primarily coming from the Netherlands and Spain, to the United States. However, the increased role of the Caribbean in this transatlantic trade is insignificant – less than 1 percent of the American demand is met by ecstasy transiting the wider Caribbean region (CCM 2002).

Drug–related Crimes

Drug trafficking and drug use, that is, drug defined crimes tend to stimulate various other types of crimes, that is, drug-related crimes. There is a strong association between the drug problem and gun use in criminal activity. The need to protect drug production, trafficking, and local distribution operations, has given impetus to illegal gun acquisition and violent crimes. Drug trafficking provides established channels and systems for moving all types of contraband, including guns, and the funds to purchase them.

Drug trafficking and drug use not only stimulates other types of street crimes such as murder, but also drug-related "white-collar" crimes such as money laundering. There have been some aborted efforts by the World Bank and IMF to measure the money laundering problem. This is a complex problem and there is a lack of reliable instruments for measuring the problem.

New crimes

More generally, some Caribbean countries are confronted by increasingly complicated crime problems – with the emergence of relatively new crimes such as extortion, kidnapping, computer-aided crimes, sophisticated forms of white-collar and corporate crimes. Accompanying these developments are also new forms of criminal organization such as transnational networks that derive the impetus for their formation primarily from drug trafficking.

Alongside the problems posed by these forms of criminality is also the emerging problem of juvenile criminality. The available data on juvenile criminality shows that juveniles commit a very small proportion of all crimes – usually less than 5% of all crimes. But in a number of countries including Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago, the proportion of violent crimes committed by juveniles has been increasing. The case of St. Kitts is exceptional as in 1990, only 1.2% of all crimes were committed by juveniles, but by 1998, this had increased to 17%. The problem is also reflected in the growing concern with school violence.

These new problems affect the different territories to varying degrees but as no country in the region exists in complete isolation, in general, they present new challenges for law enforcement and policy makers in the entire region. Having described the basic trends in criminal offending in the region, in the next section an attempt is made to explain, or at least highlight some of the problems associated with explaining them.

SECTION 2

CAUSES AND SOURCES OF CRIME

In the previous section, some of the most important changes in the patterns of crime and criminal offences were described. These changes include: increasing violence and gun use. For most countries, homicide rates have been remarkably stable for the last three decades. Additionally, drug-trafficking and drug use emerged as major problems allied with new types of crimes such as kidnapping and carjacking. Caribbean societies, it would seem, are becoming more violent and generally more criminogenic.

In this Section, these changes are partially explained. These explanations are limited by the inability to undertake the kind of rigorous empirical investigation that should inform this report (but which will be done later), and the existing state of knowledge on crime in the Region (which is characterized by very limited empirical work and the existence of very few studies that are truly regional in scope).

The membership of the Task Force on Crime tended to attribute the crime problem to the following factors -

- ♦ Poverty;
- ♦ Unemployment;
- ♦ Social marginalization and inequality;
- ♦ The Illegal Drug Trade;
- ♦ Corruption;
- ♦ The Trafficking of Firearms;
- ♦ The Deportation of Criminals; and
- ♦ The ineffectiveness of the existing criminal justice systems and consequent waiving of sanctions.

The Task Force is composed of highly experienced security professionals from across the Region including Commissioners of Police, intelligence analysts, and other competent public sector officials and experts. The above is largely based on their considerable personal experiences as well as the collective experience of their respective organizations.

These ideas reflect the general intuitive conclusions on the crime problem and conform to a large measure with conventional wisdom. Traditionally, crime is thought of in terms of motivations, opportunities, guardianship and means. Among the factors accounting for crime that are listed above, are:

- ♦ The motivating forces (unemployment, immiseration, relative deprivation, etc;
- ♦ The opportunities (the affluence that is one side of the coin of inequality, etc.);
- ♦ Poor guardianship (weak and ineffective law enforcement, weak informal control by disorganized communities and families, etc.);
- ♦ The means and facilitators (firearms, corruption).

In what follows, the above factors are discussed, with the exception of the trafficking in arms and the deportation of criminals, which are discussed elsewhere (see Report of the CTF).

Poverty

The discourse on crime in the Caribbean has been centrally concerned with its association with economic deprivation and various forms of social disadvantage. Although a number of Caribbean countries are classified as MDCs and in some instances per capita income is by the standards of the developing world relatively high, poverty levels are also fairly high. It is not unusual to find countries with some 20-30 percent of their populations living below the established poverty line. It is widely believed that poverty has some impact on crime, at least some types of crime. Some empirical studies have found strong associations between levels of immiseration, which includes unemployment, and some types of violent and property crimes including robbery, burglary and larceny. These results do not however hold for all Caribbean countries.

If there are mixed results and controversies regarding the direct impact of poverty and unemployment, it is generally accepted that the impact of immiseration may not be direct. Poverty may impact on crime via a number of mediating variables or factors. It is the presence or absence of these mediating variables that explains why in some settings (for example, rural versus urban, or in different countries) there may be high levels of poverty yet low crime rates. One of these mediating variables is the organization or level of disorganization of the family.

Low family income may lead to the separation of some children from the family, or to one or both parents migrating to another country in search of better opportunities. These forced changes may in turn lead to poor supervision of the children and delinquent behaviour that may mature into criminal careers - especially where there are no other support systems such as an ably extended family or community support systems. Research conducted in the Jamaican environment, where a high proportion of households are female headed, suggests that the absence (usually migration) of a mother tend to have a devastating impact on young boys and is a good predictor of delinquency and youth crime. Where parental contact is reduced to occasional material provision and is characterized by an absence of nurturing and contribution to the emotional development of the child, these cases may become problematic.

Another mediating variable may be access to quality education or the ability to make the best of the opportunities that are available. Poverty levels may, for example, influence the quality of school attended and regularity of school attendance and thus educational outcomes and life chances. Poor life chances may in turn weaken the commitment to conventional means of acquiring valued social and economic goods.

Poverty levels may also influence the social organization and vulnerability to crime of whole communities. In poor communities, the more successful persons may migrate to higher status neighbourhoods thereby depriving the young people in these neighbourhoods of conventional models of success and of authority figures. These processes in turn lead to reduced informal social control in these communities, the formation of youth gangs, and perhaps a more general disorganization of the community and disinvestment in it by citizens and businesses. In general, social disorganization affects the regulatory/control capabilities of communities resulting in conditions that are favorable for criminality. Sharp residential segregation may develop whereby poor individuals reside in poor neighbourhoods. In conditions of marginalization, processes of sub-cultural adaptation may develop that serve to further reinforce unconventional behaviour and criminality.

These are not "natural" processes. They may evolve in a context of official neglect or may even be facilitated by poor public policy, poor urban planning and poor enforcement. Countries with low crime rates have largely avoided these processes, that is, the geographic concentration of poverty, poverty-related syndromes and the development of ghettoes. Public policy matters.

Poverty may shape these processes, but they have less to do with the direct impact of poverty and more to do with the responses to poverty by at the level of the individual, community, society and state. This shift in explanation to focus on the response to poverty rather than poverty itself is perhaps best systematized in the idea of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation is said to arise when someone "desires a social good, feels entitled to it, but deprived of it." This construct shifts the focus of the explanation to the realm of the subjective, to the feelings of the individual. These feelings are however not unrelated to the objective realities. Feelings of relative deprivation may be based on different reference points. Thus someone may feel deprived relative to their own position in better times when the economy may have experienced a boom and they were employed or employed in a better job, or they may be deprived relative to peers who have a similar level of educational accomplishment but who are more successful. Conditions of great economic inequality may foster prevalent and intense feelings of relative deprivation.

Economic inequality

International research has consistently reported a positive relationship between economic inequality and crime. This relationship does not hold for all types of crime, but is especially true for violent crimes including homicide.

A high level of inequality is usually an indicator of other imbalances and social difficulties in a society. It is usually associated with the presence of large excluded sub-populations, or dislocations associated with the early stages of transition from traditional agricultural economic structures to more modern industrial or service economies, and perhaps with a syndrome of other social problems that give rise to high levels of social violence.

While a number of international studies have reported a positive relationship between inequality and homicide, preliminary empirical work suggests that Jamaica conforms to this general international pattern; but there is no consistent pattern within the Caribbean.

Drugs

High levels of inequality may indicate differential group access to opportunities. Elements of marginalized sub-populations may respond to this by creating alternate opportunities such as engaging in the production and distribution of illegal drugs. This should not be taken to mean that the drug problem in general is simply a function of inequality, but rather that this factor may influence the development of large drug economies.

Drug-trafficking and drug use is associated with significant increases in crime. The former is usually associated with increases in violent crimes, especially murder, and the latter, with various types of petty property crimes. Drug trafficking is itself a crime in need of explanation. It does not explain crime. It may however, explain increased rates of particular types of crime, and/or important changes in the patterns of crime.

A recent CCM report (2000), which was cited earlier, estimates that the illegal drug market in the Caribbean generates an estimated income of US$3.3 billion. This it states represents 3.1 percent of the registered GDP of the Region. Cocaine generates most of this income as it accounts for some 85 percent of the drug market in the Region. The report does not state the methodology used in making this and other estimates. It is therefore difficult to pass judgement on the soundness of these estimates. But even making allowance for considerable error, this is a fairly large drug market that must be expected to have a significant impact on social and economic activity in the most affected countries.

The successful transshipment of large quantities of illicit drugs is usually a complex business requiring international coordination of many activities and transactional arrangements.

Transactions in this market are regulated by violence or the threat of violence. Ganja growers tend to arm themselves in order to protect their produce and to ensure that the exporters or middlemen who conduct business with them do not rob them. Drug trafficking networks use violence, usually lethal violence, or the threat of it, to control their members and to settle conflicts with competitor groups. Control measures may also include kidnapping. In Jamaica, it appears that traffickers, in order to ensure that drug couriers do not steal their drugs, have used kidnapping. A family member of the courier may be held hostage until the drugs is delivered to the determined destination, or may take place after the courier has failed to deliver the drugs. Of course, once these crimes are introduced, they may be copied for other purposes, as may now be occurring in Trinidad and Tobago. Police services in the most drug affected countries report that significant proportions of the homicides that they investigate are drug-related. In the case of Jamaica, for example, the official statistics indicate that this proportion is currently 14 per cent, but it has at times been greater than 30 per cent.

Drug income provides the resources to sustain criminal networks. It contributes to the professionalization of the criminal underworld, that is, to the development of groups of professional criminals whose only source of income is crime and who are able to engage in criminal activity on a fulltime basis. The drug bosses provide negative models of success as persons who are able to amass great wealth and who are in some settings able to openly display their wealth and to continue their criminal activities with impunity. Their life styles serve to effectively communicate the idea that crime pays. Drug dealing networks may corrupt whole communities via treats for the young and the aged, and various forms of assistance to the poor thereby fostering more tolerant attitudes to criminal activity. Drug income may also be used to corrupt law enforcement and public officials.

Corruption

Corruption serves to facilitate crime and to weaken the institutions that are responsible for public safety.

Where there are weak systems of accountability and high level of corruption in the public and private sectors, and endemic corruption in law enforcement, there is likely to be serious problems with crime. Corruption may affect crime in various ways including the following -

- ♦ As is the case with the drug "dons", corrupt public officials serve as models for criminal accumulation.
- ♦ Where it is endemic, as in cases where the bureaucratic, political and economic elites are involved, at times in interconnected ways, others in lower locations in the social hierarchy tend to feel justified in doing likewise. The moral authority of the institutional leaderships is undermined and moral justification for criminality is provided.
- ♦ Corrupt functionaries may provide direct services to criminals.

The CCM report, which was cited earlier, estimates that drug corruption provides Caribbean civil servants with some US$ 320 million in income annually. This is not an insignificant problem.

It is important to recognize that the crime problem is not just the outcome of deep structural arrangements, but also that public policy and the active interventions of the state institutions are key determinants of the outcomes.

The criminal justice system is primarily responsible of controlling the crime problem. With some exceptions, these systems are regarded as not being sufficiently effective. Where arrest and conviction rates for some crimes are fairly low, it may be argued that this effective waiving of sanctions contributes to the crime rate.

Interactive Processes

Crime is too complex a phenomenon to be reduced to any single causal factor. Some of the factors discussed above may independently coexist with low crime rates. They may also not show any independent effect on crime rates below certain magnitudes. For example, in certain countries, unemployment may not have any independent effect on crime rates below a certain level.

The impact of a particular factor may vary considerably with the different types of crime. If the researchers and research methodologies employed are not sensitive to these issues, erroneous conclusions may be drawn. Even if the independent effects of these factors are unclear, they may however, precipitate processes that mature into conditions that are facilitative of high crime rates. These processes usually involve the interaction of a number of factors. It is this interaction of various factors, including the ones discussed above, that often results in the conditions that give rise to high crime rates.

Societies are perhaps most vulnerable to these problematic outcomes during processes of rapid change. Since independence, some Caribbean societies have experienced fairly rapid social change. There has been considerable urbanization. The Caribbean reality is that urban areas are more criminogenic than rural areas. Kingston accounts for 26 percent of Jamaica's population and over 70 per cent of its violent crime. Similarly, County St. George accounts for some 30 per cent of Trinidad and Tobago's population but almost 60 percent of its crime. Moreover, in contrast with the social stationariness of colonial society, the rates of upward social mobility are today quite high. With these changes, the expectations of our people and the pressures to succeed as measured by the standards of material acquisition have also increased. In the context of globalization and cultural diffusion of the values of the more individualistic and consumer oriented countries, the expectations and values of Caribbean populations are increasingly influenced not just by internal developments but also by external influences.

Development usually brings with it the breakup of traditional normative controls (extended family, religious beliefs and ascribed status). Some Caribbean researchers have argued that in some of the most crime affected countries of the Region, modernization has resulted in strong strivings for upward social mobility replacing acceptance by the poor of their poverty, "rampant individualism" has weakened family and community bonds and money is becoming the most valued good. These profound changes, in context of weak institutions, are likely to contribute to increased crime rates.

This period of change and development may present considerable difficulties with crime but these are challenges that may be successfully met by sound public policy that addresses the crime problem *as a developmental issue* and not narrowly as a law enforcement issue.

The challenges

♦ To develop innovative strategies and programmes that will effectively control and prevent violent crime and the drug problem in the region and which are integrated with broader development planning.

♦ To strengthen the capacity of the responsible institutions of the state and regional organizations to respond to the crime problems.

♦ To properly fund these efforts and the associated social crime prevention programmes without compromising long-term economic development and other vital developmental goals.

♦ To better understand the crime problem and to develop the level of knowledge of the specifics of the crime phenomenon in the region that will better inform public policy.

Recommendations

♦ The formation of a research unit that would collaborate with the UWI and other regional institutions with adequate research capabilities.

♦ The recording of data on crime within the region should be standardized. The UN system could be adopted, as this would better allow for cross-national comparisons. Moreover, they may be willing to assist us with this.

♦ The capabilities of the government departments that are responsible for urban planning should be evaluated with a view to improving their capabilities. Special attention should be given to urban slums or potential slums. Jamaica has had considerable experience with this. Such experiences may be useful in helping to avoid these developments in other territories.

♦ Increased allocations to drug treatment and education programmes.

♦ Reinforce anti-corruption measures including a general strengthening of the systems of accountability.

♦ Strengthen and modernize law enforcement and other criminal justice institutions.

These and other measures that follow from this discussion are further elaborated in the next section.

SECTION 3

CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGIES

As indicated earlier, the structure of the crime problem varies considerably across the Caribbean. For example, Jamaica is troubled by violence while Grenada has a very high rate of property crime. Most countries are however worried about the emerging violence, drug-dealing, and the formation of transnational trafficking networks, gangs and juvenile crimes. And all countries are concerned with crimes against tourists. The existence of these common problems and concerns provides a basis for the consideration of general strategies and strategic collaboration within the region. In this section, some broad crime reduction strategies are outlined – with emphasis on matters that may be pursued at the regional and sub-regional levels.

Broadly, crime control and prevention strategies may be designed to (a) systematically treat the root causes of crime (b) make populations more resilient to criminality (c) strengthen the ability of the responsible institutions to respond to crime in all of its various expressions. In the language of the public health officials, the first would represent a kind of primary prevention. Programmes designed to reintegrate marginalized high crime communities and to create legitimate opportunities for high risk populations are examples of this. This is a long-term project and is usually not enough to deal the problem. Crime is often about how people and whole societies respond to the set of objective conditions that are often described as root causes of crime. Some individuals and groups may be more resilient to such criminogenic conditions than others. Perhaps they have cultural assets that others do not. Thus a second line of strategic interventions may seek to reinforce this resilience by pulling on those cultural assets. Such programmes may include very simple things such as systematic efforts to improve parenting skills. This may be though of as a kind of secondary prevention. It is also not enough. A third strategic line may entail improving the effectiveness of the institutions responsible for responding to crime. A holistic approach ought to involve the integration of all three. While at the national level there is scope for responses that integrate all three aspects, at the regional level there is greatest scope for the third.

Alternatively, response strategies may be structured in terms of treating the root causes and motivations for crime, reducing the opportunities for crime, and restricting access to the means and nullifying the facilitators. This would be consistent with the schema introduced in Section 2. There is considerable overlap between the two, but they provide a good way of ensuring comprehensiveness.

If a multifaceted strategy is an appropriate response, especially where the problem is very complicated and seemingly intractable, then this raises the issue of how to establish priorities, or weather the idea of establishing unitary priorities is an appropriate one. An alternate approach is parallelism where a number of objectives and programmes have to be simultaneously pursued in a coordinated way. This tends to produce the best results but presents great administrative and political challenges.

Key Issues

♦ Defining the crime control problem as developmental issue that should be integrated with broad developmental policy.
♦ Institutional strengthening and extending regional collaboration in this sphere.
♦ Creating new regional institutions.
♦ Prioritization or parallelism.

Challenges

- Devising coherent strategies for a holistic response to the crime problem at the national level.
- Consensus building on crime control issues and strengthening the links between parliaments, citizens and police services.
- Where applicable, how to better integrate the marginalized subpopulations that live in highly criminogenic conditions.
- Developing new legislation to facilitate crime control strategies without unnecessarily doing violence to the basic rights of citizens.
- Emphasizing clusters of simultaneous activities within programmes, and prioritizing by clusters of activities rather than issues. Resolving the planning and administrative difficulties associated with "parallelism."
- Improving planning and institutional responsiveness based on data more effective use of available data and improving data recoding and analysis systems.
- Resolving the problems of inter-agency coordination required for effective holistic treatment of the crime problem.
- Modernizing the Criminal Justice Systems of the Region including juvenile justice.

Recommendations

As indicated earlier, the differences in the nature of the crime problem across the region make it difficult, indeed imprudent to try to elaborate recommendations that are applicable at the national level. Neither was the work of the CTF sufficiently detailed and studied at the national level, to allow for this. These recommendations therefore focus on the possibilities at the regional level. The recommendations that apply at the national level are, as should be expected, restricted to measures that are sufficiently general so that they may be taken by most countries.

These initiatives include: improving crime control planning and systems of accountability; institutional strengthening; and police/criminal justice modernization. As the drug problem is a major driver of the crime rate, efforts to control it must occupy a central place in any crime control strategy.

Restricting the means to commit violence is another cardinal issue. In order to highlight the importance and centrality of these issues, they are discussed in separate sections, which will follow this one. The recommendations presented in this section are limited to the main concerns of the members of the CTF.

Planning and Participation

- Develop National Crime Control Master Plans that would integrate law enforcement, social crime prevention, legal issues and regional and international cooperation. These Master Plans may be modeled on the Master Plans of the National Drug Council.

- Establish National Crime Commissions with appropriate secretariats to drive implementation of the Crime Control Master Plans. A multi-sectoral commission is considered a key element towards the realization of a holistic approach to addressing crime. It will combine the contributions of the public and the police in developing policies and programmes, which represent a balanced approach to crime prevention and law enforcement. These can also be strong platforms for the mobilization of popular support for anti-crime policies. They may assist in national consensus building around key policy initiatives. Such models are currently exemplified in St Kitts and Nevis and becoming even more deeply rooted in Saint Lucia;

Institutional strengthening

This involves modernizing the Criminal Justice Systems. The CTF was primarily concerned with police and prison reform.

Modernizing the Police Services

The primary justification for police reform is to improve public safety and within the democratic tradition. Despite the differences in crime patterns across the region and the difficulties confronting the various police services, there are some common challenges

Modernization is an ongoing process that entails: the application of new technologies to policing in the region, especially information technology and forensic sciences; more advanced training and higher educational requirements for police officers and investigators; the application of more modern management tools with greater attention to planning and using results-oriented instruments to ensure accountability. It also means modernizing the relations between police and citizens.

Emphasising the Use of Technology

Caribbean police services are likely to encounter more computer aided and technologically sophisticated crimes and more complex criminal networks and patterns of criminal offending. In order to effectively respond to these developments, their efforts will have to be better aided by the available technology.

   ♦ Improvements in technology to deal with passport fraud essentially in view of the increased use of the Caribbean as a drug transshipment point and the threat from terrorism.

   ♦ The sourcing of necessary equipment for the building and/or strengthening of regional databases should be given priority.

   ♦ That the local databases of Member States be improved where they already exist using a format that allows easy management.

   ♦ Establishment of NJHQs with databases in 12 Member States.

   ♦ Need for a Database to improve information and intelligence sharing capabilities

Improving Training

Associated with the application of more advanced technologies and more complex methods of criminal investigation is the need for more advanced training and higher educational requirements for police officers and investigators. Toward this end, the following are suggested:

   ♦ That a Regional Coordinating Training Centre should be established to look at Training needs and examine capacity of institutions/territories.

   ♦ Maximizing the use of the new Regional (firearm) Search Training Centre in Jamaica together with the provision of appropriate equipment at the national levels to facilitate effective and efficient development of firearm search teams.

Application of effective management tools and strengthening accountability

Modernization also includes the application of more modern management tools, greater attention to planning, target setting and using these results-oriented instruments to ensure improved accountability.

- ♦ All countries in the region work together to set common standards for policing in the Region. This could be achieved via the creation of a regional inspectorate. This Inspectorate would not only set standards but also monitor their implementation. It would allow for a regional pool of experts who would not be attached to the police services that they are evaluating thereby minimizing any bias in the process of evaluation.

- ♦ Establish Parliamentary Oversight Committees to oversee law enforcement.

Modernizing police-citizen relations

In some countries, a basic obstacle to improved police effectiveness is poor police-citizen relation. This problem may be resolved by improved police responsiveness and accountability. Community Based Policing is a good way of practically resolving this set of problems as at its core are the principles of responsibility and citizen participation in their own security, partnership with the police and other stake-holders, problem-solving, and direct police accountability to the citizenry. The Task Force strongly supported the implementation of the model of Community Based Policing being advocated by the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP), and which was launched in May 2001.

Reform of the Correctional Services

Like the police services, the Correctional services, including juvenile corrections are in need of modernization. It is suggested that:

- ♦ States initiate steps towards appropriate policies for reform and modernization of prisons in order to reduce the rate of recidivism.

- ♦ Examine alternatives to imprisonment.

Policy and Research Support

At both the national and regional levels there is a need for improved research and policy support for crime control efforts. Systematic evaluation of existing efforts ought to be undertaken to extract key lessons and stimulate innovation and greater effectiveness. Toward this end, the CTF proposed that a network of experts be established with the focal point being the UWI, or, that a virtual Regional Crime Research and Policy Unit be created.

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