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**World crime trends and emerging issues and
responses in the field of crime prevention and
criminal justice**

Statement submitted by Campus Watch, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following paper, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.15/2024/1.

** Issued without formal editing.



After studying the different ways in which each country names their so-called *Priority Districts*, we have already noticed that they use various terms: in France: *Zones Urbaines Sensibles* (Sensitive Urban Zones), in the United Kingdom: *Neighbourhood Renewal Areas* (NRAs), in Germany: *Soziale Brennpunkte* (Social Hotspots), in Mexico: *Zonas de Atención Prioritarias* (ZAP), in Brazil: *Disadvantaged Urban Zones*, in India: *Priority Development Zone*, and many other appellations for other countries. Each of these appellations is defined by specific criteria such as:

- Unfavourable socioeconomic indicators;
- Urban deterioration;
- High crime/delinquency rates;
- Limited access to basic services;
- Poverty and social exclusion;
- Needs identified by local stakeholders;
- High rates of social housing;
- High levels of poverty and marginalization.

In these specific geographical areas around the world, we find inequalities on the social scale of their respective countries. We ask the commission to define a common denomination for all these geographical areas and these so-called priority districts. In order to create useful standards for statistics and work carried out by member States, civil society organizations, and United Nations agents.

We strongly believe that an educational project aimed at positioning groups of citizens from these priority neighbourhoods on social and humanitarian missions abroad, such as meeting with other civilizations and/or contributing to the development of certain villages in less developed countries, will facilitate cultural exchange, discovery of other ways of life, promote awareness and autonomy, allow a break with criminal environments, and socially elevate the beneficiaries.

The lack of education related to socio-professional precariousness and the inaccessibility to so-called intellectual professions in these areas have repercussions on social and economic development over several generations. The hijacking of the new modus operandi of this emerging crime paralyzes the inhabitants. To go further in efficiency, we have noticed that several countries had similar criteria for defining Priority Zones of their country, therefore, we can gather data to conduct comparative analyses and identify common trends.

- Identification of good practices: Identifying innovative, practical, and effective approaches to addressing similar problems in different contexts;
- Evaluation of policy effectiveness: Evaluating the effectiveness of policies and programmes implemented in different countries that meet the needs of priority neighbourhoods;
- Identification of common challenges: Identifying common challenges faced by priority neighbourhoods in different geographical contexts can help with development programmes;
- Information on decision-making: Providing information to guide decision-making by intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, and other actors involved in urban development and poverty reduction;
- Strengthening international collaborations: Sharing data, analyses, and best practices can promote the development of international collaborations;
- A non-exhaustive list of new criminal trends: Studying areas with the same initial denominators of emerging violence.

To allow better work, we propose to the members of the commission a category in emerging violence called “*Settlement of scores under the guise of drug trafficking*”, which would differ from other types of homicides. It would be desirable for this emerging crime to be thoroughly addressed at the next organized crime congress hosted by the United Arab Emirates.

According to *La Croix* newspaper, in Sweden in 2021:

- 335 shootings;
- 46 homicides;
- 112 injured;
- 30 days without guns being fired;
- 23 years old, the average age of homicide victims.

According to *L’Echo* newspaper, in Belgium, in, 2022:

- 22 shootings in 6 months;
- The impossibility of prosecuting all crimes due to lack of police;
- Requires 35 million euros in investment to fight organized crime.

According to the local newspaper *Objectif Gard*, in France, in Nîmes since 2019:

- More than 30 shootouts with war weapons;
- More than 20 voluntary homicides;
- More than 10 collateral victims including 4 minors, among them a 10-year-old child;
- More than 10 wounded;
- The latest one dates back to April 14, 2024, with a burst injuring 4 individuals.

In the category of score settlements under the guise of drug trafficking, we can sincerely count a new modus operandi which consists of terrorizing rival gangs as well as residents, with a stolen car prepared in advance and duly prepared by modifying license plates, loaded and ready-to-fire war weapons, a group of armed men with masked faces, and drugs ingested by the latter to give them the strength to carry out their mission. Another equally tragic point is that the groups of armed men with masked faces are simple youths who for the majority do not exceed 23 years old, completely idle and influenced, with their own recruitment method on “Telegram” groups which promise several thousand euros after committing the crime and “street credibility” (being seen as in line with the codes of the underworld), or integration into cartels or the mafia.

It is through the amateurism of these murderers, most of whom have never held weapons in their hands, that so many collateral victims succeed one another. Also, this modus operandi is rarely seen in certain European cities, but we notice a rapid spread in recent years in cities that show only signs of average delinquency.

During our fieldwork, we were able to accompany the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods in Nîmes, France. On February 20, 2024, a man was coldly shot down by a burst of automatic rifle in front of his 8-year-old son, in the midst of a neighbourhood besieged by drug trafficking-related score settlements due to a territorial war. The violence experienced by the deceased’s son, who tried to revive his lifeless father lying on the ground next to his vehicle. After this tragic event, we attended a gathering of families and local civil society organizations. The objective was to provide psychological assistance to these families. We were very moved by one of the exchanges, which I will transcribe for you:

“I live at the level of the point of sale, where this man was shot dead in front of his son. I am so terrified that I dare not go out even to go to my medical appointments, despite the fact that at my age my health is failing me. So, I stay

locked up at home, I don't go out anymore, and to tell you the truth, I have rooms in my house that overlook the road, even these rooms I have closed off, I am so afraid of being in them and that a stray bullet enters my house. I am a retired woman living alone, and I feel like I'm ending my days isolated in a small part of my home."

On February 8, 2024, a double shooting erupted in a Nîmes neighbourhood, in broad daylight at 4 p.m. just outside a primary school in Nîmes. Two noteworthy events that day. First, a woman driving her vehicle with her two children receives a stray bullet that lodges in the headrest. A nameless tragedy is narrowly avoided by miracle. Then, a bus with children returning from a school outing is stopped at the sight of a group of armed men with masked faces. Testimony from a teacher accompanying the school outing:

"We were returning from a school outing, the bus was full of children, we were almost back to school and suddenly we heard shots, we looked out the window and saw a group of masked and heavily armed men opening fire. We were terrified and asked the children to duck under the seats.

We feared they would want to target us, I spoke to the children to reassure them and tell them that everything would be fine. The police told us upon arrival that we should not move until they arrived. Everything returned to normal, but you know, there is one thing that struck me, it's that among these children, some of them were not at all shocked, as if this kind of thing had become normal to them..."

These striking facts following this new upward trend in crime, and we count alarming markers:

- The feeling of total impunity and power of the criminals;
- The too weak response in terms of protection by the authorities;
- The helplessness of the inhabitants who are held hostage in this spiral of violence;
- The number of completely innocent collateral victims of the conflicts in question;
- The ability of younger people to incorporate these new types of violence into their normalcy;
- Criminals are increasingly younger;
- Recruitments are increasingly open;
- A new market for contract killers;
- A total violation of the "codes of banditry" or perhaps a redesign.