
PUBLIC SECURITY IN GEORGIA

Crime victimisation, Fear of Crime, Fraud, Corruption & Policing

*Based on a nation-wide public survey, with a focus on four districts
of the Samegrelo Region*

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The findings and conclusions of this report are independent and, aside from the authors', do not reflect anyone else's opinion.

Summary of the major findings (refer to the report for statistical figures)

- The level of criminality depends on the urbanisation rate. Cities of 10'000 inhabitants and more concentrate the bulk of the criminality in Georgia:
 - > Tbilisi knows the highest rates for violent crimes (assaults/threat and robbery), theft from cars and simple thefts.
 - > Other cities ranging from 10'000 to 200'000 inhabitants experience the highest rate in the thefts of vehicles.
 - > Apart from burglary, for which rates are similar nation-wide, rural areas distinctively suffer from less crime.
- The most widespread crime in Georgia is the burglary, followed by theft from vehicles (for those who own a car). Violent crimes (robberies and assault) are much lower.
- The victimisation rates for the offences studied in Georgia are similar to those observed in Switzerland. Only vehicle-related crimes (theft of and from vehicles) are significantly higher.
- Public disturbances (drunk/addicted people, youth gangs, reckless drivers) clearly concern Tbilisi in the first place, amongst which the problem of reckless drivers dominates.
- Road traffic insecurity is an important problem in Tbilisi, less acute in smaller cities and rural areas.
- The four districts of the Samegrelo region studied experience less crime than the national average and come close to the level of rural areas. But the city of Zugdidi seems to suffer from rates of burglary and theft of vehicle (over five years) exceeding the national average.
- The feeling of insecurity is low *on average* (similar to the one prevailing in Switzerland). But it is much higher and problematic in Tbilisi.
- The feeling of insecurity is lower in the Samegrelo region (people feel safer there).
- Females and those victims of crimes and public disturbances experience higher feelings of insecurity than the average.
- The general image of the police and the level of satisfaction within the population are good, also compared to Switzerland.
- In the Samegrelo region, the situation in terms of image of the police is even more favourable.
- The victims report very few crimes to the police. The satisfaction with the police is much lower amongst the victims that reported a crime.
- Fraud rates are high, both compared to other crime rates (violence and property-related crimes) and to international fraud standards.
- Fraud rates are similar in Samegrelo, except in Zugdidi, where they are higher.
- The perception that the corruption is common exceeds the actual experience of corruption. The health sector and customs appear as the most corrupted (both at experience and at perception levels).
- The police do not suffer from high corruption rates. In addition, a majority of the population thinks the police corruption decreased compared to 5 years ago.
- Fraud and corruption cases are virtually not reported to any kind of organisation, causing a serious lack of sound information for policy planning on the part of authorities.
- The corruption rate is similar in Samegrelo, except for Zugdidi, where it is lower.

1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives of the survey

1.1.1 General objective

The general and most strategic aim of this report is to provide UNOMIG, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the international organisations and the general public with an objective and impartial view on the public security, corruption and policing nation-wide, based on reliable statistics. Thanks to the method of the survey, issues that do not always get reported to the police or other authorities, such as certain forms of crime or corruption, can be assessed thoroughly.

The results and analyses should help local and international actors adapt their strategies to the nature of public security as the population experiences and perceives it.

In the light of the UNOMIG specific mandate, a sub-sample was set up in four districts of the Samegrelo region (see 1.2.1), in which Zugdidi is the main city. At the end of all the different chapters, we specify the situation prevailing there. It is then possible to analyse the Samegrelo region in full coherence with the Georgian context and assess whether there is or not a local reality different from the national one.

1.1.2 Operational objectives: the indicators

There are numerous elements highlighted in this survey. They should have operational consequences for the organisations concerned, at their respective levels of competences. We list them here as “indicators” of public security, fraud, corruption and policing. They will constitute the core of this report:

- Most common crimes and crime profile of the different types of areas
- Access to the “grey count” of crime, i.e. crime afflicting the public but for whatever reasons not reported to the police
- Nature and impact of public disturbances (“incivilities”, “anti-social behaviours”)
- Insecurity feeling and its causes
- Relationship between the public and the police: reporting patterns and satisfaction
- Expectations in terms of police services
- Fraud related issues
- Corruption by public officials, both at objective and subjective (perception) level
- Benchmark with similar surveys abroad
- Benchmark with the 2000 survey (in Tbilisi only)
- Specific view on the situation prevailing in the Samegrelo region

Based on these indicators, we will establish recommendations in four distinct fields: the police reform, the Samegrelo region, the police role in the combat against the fraud and corruption, and a potential survey in Abkhazia.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1 Samples

This report is based on a public survey conducted on a sample of 1400 inhabitants aged 16 and more, in all regions of Georgia except South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The sample was randomly selected and allows drawing statistics that are representative of the whole population.

A specific sample of 250 interviews has been set up in the Samegrelo region to emphasise possible specificities existing in the region bordering Abkhazia and falling under UNOMIG mandate¹. The over sampling was applied to four districts of Samegrelo: Tsalenjikha, Chkorotsku, Khobi and Zugdidi. We will refer to these four districts as the “Samegrelo region” for convenience.

1.2.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire that was used is based on a standard form of the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS), as implemented by most European countries. The survey was administered “face to face”, during the months of January and February 2006. The figures obtained thus concern the year 2005.

Some questions have been reformulated, and other added in order to fit the Georgian context more closely. Nevertheless, more than 90% of the questions are similar to those asked in surveys Europe-wide, and therefore statistically valid comparisons can be carried out.

It has to be noted that a similar survey has already been conducted in Georgia in 2000, although limited to the Tbilisi area. In a few cases, we will attempt to draw conclusions on the evolutions that can be observed. These comparisons should however be taken with caution, due to the lack of information on the quality of the data collection process and analysis of the previous survey.

1.2.3 Comparisons and significance levels

In the tables and the analysis below, the results are presented in different formats:

- Almost everywhere, we differentiate between at least five areas: rural areas (villages of less than 10'000 inhabitants), small and mid-sized cities (10'000 to 200'000 inhabitants), Tbilisi, the Samegrelo region and Georgia as a whole.
- When appropriate, we differentiate between social groups, by gender, age, etc.
- At the end of the chapters, we also compare the results obtained in Georgia with those of Switzerland². These comparisons intend to give a context to the

¹ In addition to the interviews in Samegrelo carried out randomly from the national sample of 1400.

² We compare with Switzerland because all the most up-to-date data (of the 2005 Swiss national survey) were available at the time of the writing of this report. See Killias, M., Lamon, P. & Haymoz, S. (to be published) « La criminalité cachée en Suisse et ses répercussions sur l'opinion publique : Situation actuelle et évolution des 20 dernières années. Etude basée sur l'enquête suisse de victimisation de 2005 », Université de Lausanne.

results obtained, which otherwise might somewhat look like abstract, hard-to-interpret figures.

When comparisons between areas or in time are carried out and a difference is observed, a symbol indicates the *statistical significance level* of the difference. The level shows what probability we have to make a mistake when generalising the difference observed to the whole population. The statistical significance of a difference between two groups informs about the degree to which the result is "true" (i.e. being representative of the population) and not due to chance or to the profile of the sample. In the report, it should be read as follows: a significance level symbolised with (*), indicates that we only have 5% of probabilities, or less, to erroneously state that there is really a difference between two groups compared. Most significance levels are calculated against the Georgian average.

The statistical tables presented have been prepared under the supervision of the Institute of Criminology of the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, in order to ensure the highest standards of quality and reliability.

2. Crime victimisation

2.1. Scope of the survey

Six crimes commonly representing the most frequent offences have been studied:

- theft of vehicle (car, van, truck, owned for private use and calculated not for a person but for a household)
- theft from vehicle (either parts of the vehicle or something left inside a vehicle)
- burglary (includes attempted burglary)
- robbery (theft with the use of force)
- simple theft (theft of personal belongings without the use of force, e.g. pick pocketing)
- assault/threat (all types of physical assaults and threats, with or without the use of a weapon)

It should be noted that the questions have been asked in terms that can be understood by all, with full explanation of what type of offence was meant. No legal jargon was used.

As its name indicates, the survey is mostly concerned with the degree to which the population is victimised by several forms of criminality and other disturbances (questions always start with “*Have you been victim of...*”). Thus, the survey does not allow studying homicides, for obvious reasons (no victim can be interviewed!), or complex crimes such as financial or economic crimes, since those generally don’t make direct victims. Smuggling cannot be analysed neither. Some street-level economic crimes may nevertheless be founded in the chapter on the fraud.

Usually, victimisation rates obtained through surveys, and Georgia is no exception, exceed crime rates obtained via official police statistics, for the simple reason that all crimes are not reported to the police, and thus not counted in official figures.

2.2. Victimisation by types of areas

We differentiate here the victimisation rates between rural areas, small and medium-sized cities and Tbilisi. We do so because urban density usually represents one of the most robust correlate of crime victimisation.

Table 1: percentages of respondents having been victim of an offence in 2005 (prevalence rate), on one year

	Theft of a vehicle	Theft from a vehicle	Burglary	Robbery	Simple theft	Assault/Threat
<i>Rural areas</i>	1.0	6.4*	6.5	0.5	1.4*	0.7
<i>Small/medium cities</i>	4.4*	10.0	9.6	1.4	3.8	1.5
<i>Tbilisi</i>	1.8	14.4*	6.1	2.0	4.9	1.8
<i>Samegrelo region</i>	0.0*	7.1	7.5	0.3*	1.7	0.9
GE average	1.8	9.2	7.1	1.1	2.8	1.2

* Significant differences of proportions between the different areas and Georgia; $p \leq 0.05$

Highest victimisation rates are scattered over the cities ranging from 10'000 inhabitants to 1 million, without following a linear pattern.

- Except for burglaries, the rural areas are systematically less victimised than the small/medium cities and Tbilisi, at a significant rate for the theft from vehicles and simple theft.
- Small and medium-sized cities significantly experience more thefts of vehicles than the Georgian average. For the other offences, rates are not significantly different from the national average.
- Offences involving physical violence (robbery and assault) as well as theft from vehicles and simple thefts are more frequent in Tbilisi. Only the theft from vehicle is significantly higher when counted over one year. For robbery and simple thefts, the rates are also significantly higher than the national average when counted over five years instead of one ("Have you over the past 5 years been victim of...")³.

About assault/threat in general, an important point should be noted, which emphasises the very local nature of such deeds. Nearly 50% of the victims know by name or by sight their offender, implying that violence occurs frequently within a close network (family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, etc).

Regarding drug related problems (not in the table 1), we could not analyse them in the same way as the other offences, since asking a respondent whether he uses drugs or not is not feasible. We formulate the question so as to ask whether the respondent personally knew an individual or more doing any kind of drugs. At national level, 9.9% of respondents answered affirmatively. This rate however is significantly higher in cities ranging from 50'000 to 99'000 inhabitants, where it reaches 19.7%, and Tbilisi, where it reaches 16.6%.

Samegrelo region is analysed in-depth in chapter 2.5.

2.3 Victimisation typology and comparison with Switzerland

Apparently, the most common offence amongst those studied is the theft from vehicles, at 9.2% in 2005. However, this offence should be put into perspective. It concerns only those households that own a vehicle, and since vehicles' ownership is low in Georgia (circa 30% of the respondents declares having a vehicle), this offence has an impact on a smaller portion of the population than what comes out of table 1. Interestingly, 50% of respondents having been victim of this offence declare having suffered from it two times or more during the last five years. We then find a high rate of *repeated victimisation* here.

Table 1 shows 7.1% of the respondents being a victim of burglary at national level in 2005. As this offence does concern the whole population, it should be considered as the most frequent crime in Georgia. It is less common in Tbilisi than in small and medium-sized cities and even than in rural areas (although not significantly). This fact

³ We also asked the question of victimisation over five years, in order to neutralise potential annual specificities in 2005. The results so yielded confirm those obtained over one year, only accentuating the differences observed between areas and offences.

is often observed in surveys, and is explained by the physical proximity typical of dense urban settings that might keep burglars from operating quietly.

Offences involving violence (robbery and assault/threat) show the lowest rates amongst the offences studied, with respectively 1.1% and 1.2% of victimisation.

We also addressed the issue of extortion (not included in table 1), in the sense of asking money or resources to someone in exchange of protection, be it by public organisations acting illegally or by criminal networks. Results show virtually no sign of victimisation by such practices at national level, even over five years (<1%).

Those rates in Georgia have been compared to Switzerland (CH).

Table 2 Comparison of victimisation rates between Switzerland (2004) and Georgia (2005), over one year

	<i>Theft of a vehicle</i>	<i>Theft from a vehicle</i>	<i>Burglary</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Simple thefts</i>	<i>Assault/Threat</i>	<i>All offences</i>
CH	0.2*	3.7*	(1.1 ⁴)	0.7	5.9*	2.5*	13.1
GE	1.8	9.2	7.1	1.1	2.8	1.2	13.5

* Significant differences of proportions between Switzerland and Georgia; $p \leq 0.05$

Globally, all crimes considered (i.e. when we add the victims of all offences studied), we obtain that on one year duration 13.1% of the Swiss respondents have been victim of any kind of offence, against 13.5% in Georgia. Global victimisation is then similar in both countries. But:

- In Switzerland, there were significantly less crimes related to vehicles (theft of and from) than in Georgia.
- But simple thefts and assault/threat were significantly more committed in Switzerland than in Georgia.
- Several hypotheses can be made on this distribution: due to widespread protection devices in Switzerland, crimes against vehicles are more “difficult” and rates tend to decrease; for simple thefts and assault/threat, higher rates may be induced by the fact that the population is more inclined to spend time outside home in leisure activities, including night-life where victimisation booms.

This comparison provides a first view of the good level of public security prevailing in Georgia, regarding the six offences studied.

2.4 Disturbances in public spaces

In addition to criminal offences, we selected three forms of disturbances that may have an impact on the day-to-day life of the population. The focus on such disturbances - or anti-social behaviour, or incivilities, as they have been coined in Western Europe - is a common trend of current research into policing and public

⁴ In CH, the figure concerns only the effective burglaries, whereas in GE, attempts are also counted, making the comparison for burglary difficult.

security. It is assumed, and most of the time proved, that those have an effect on the feeling of security, quality of life and on the way people judge the police job. It has been observed in many European countries that a wide range of problems encountered by the population tends not to be criminal *strictu sensu*, but nevertheless provoke a contact with the police to get help. While police traditionally overlook these kinds of issues, as they do not fit into their “law and order” agenda, there are often strong social demands that something is undertaken to reduce them. We then decided to address them here as a component of the daily security of citizens.

Table 3: Percentages of respondents having been afflicted by disturbances in 2005

	<i>Drunk/drug-addicted people</i>	<i>Youth gangs</i>	<i>Reckless drivers</i>
Rural areas	2.8	0.6*	4.4*
Small/medium cities	1.9	0.7	6.3
Tbilisi	5.4	3.6*	15.3*
Samegrelo region	1.4*	0.2*	1.0*
GE	3.3	1.4	7.6

* Significant differences of proportions between the different areas and Georgia; $p \leq 0.05$

Rates of disturbances vary greatly. Reckless drivers clearly come clearly first, followed by drunk/drug addicted people and youth gangs.

Disturbances in public places are significantly more frequent in Tbilisi than in other areas, especially for reckless drivers (15.3%). These are in Tbilisi much higher than any other offences studied before, highlighting the impact of such anti-social behaviours on citizens.

Rural areas are clearly less concerned by public disturbances, but the least area is the Samegrelo region, with significantly fewer disturbances, all types considered, than the national level.

This result is consistent with what the research addressing public disturbances have found in Europe: traffic issues are largely mentioned as the first disturbances encountered, above all in urban areas.

2.5 Traffic accidents

Road safety is also an important element of the general public security and quality of life. As with public disturbances, it is sometimes neglected by the police.

According to the survey, traffic accidents are more common in Tbilisi than in any other region: 4.1% of the respondents report having been victim as a driver, passenger or pedestrian in a traffic accident in 2005. The national average is of 2.3%.

In 30% of the accidents, people have been injured as a result, in all areas.

Taking into account that only one third of the population owns a vehicle in Georgia, these accidents rates on the roads are important. As a comparison, there were 32 accidents with fatalities for 100'000 vehicles in Georgia, against 13 for 100'000 in Switzerland in 2005. In perspective with the disturbances implied by reckless drivers analysed above, traffic problems should be taken into consideration by the police as an urgent public security issue.

2.6 Samegrelo region

Table 1 shows that for most of the cases, victimisation rates are lower in Samegrelo than in Georgia as a whole, at a significant level for theft of vehicle and robbery. Only the burglary rate is higher than the national average, but not significantly. Even by rural standards the Samegrelo region then appears, with regard to the offences studied here, as a safe place to live.

A point needing further study and attention is the use of weapons in committing crimes. Although violent crimes are rare in Samegrelo, there appears to be a higher of them committed with the use of a weapon there than in the rest of the country⁵.

Public disturbances appear as systematically lower than the national average. Traffic accidents are similar to the national average without Tbilisi.

Homicide rates could not be calculated with this survey, for the reason mentioned above (chapter 2.1). These, as well as abduction with or without ransom, are sometimes assumed to be higher in the Samegrelo region, due to the territorial conflict and smuggling routes.

However, figures obtained from the Ministry on Internal Affairs do not attest of such particularities⁶.

Table 4: number of offences per 100'000 inhabitants in 2005

	Homicide	Abduction (all)	Abduction (with ransom)
<i>Samegrelo region</i>	4.2	4.6	1.7
GE average	8.8	9.4	1.9

Source: Statistics from the MIA

The rate for homicides is two-times lower in the Samegrelo region (here considered as the administrative entity, not only the four districts mentioned in introduction). Same is valid for abduction (all), while abduction with ransom is closer to the national average.

⁵ This is reflected in the answer on weapon ownership. At national level, 5.8% of respondents confirm having a weapon at home, against 8.1% in Samegrelo.

⁶ For homicides, unlike for other offences, police statistics should be considered reliable: homicides are brought to the knowledge of the police or detected in virtually all the cases. At the international level, these rates appear high compared to those in Western Europe, but in line with those prevailing in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

Furthermore, we analysed the city of Zugdidi. We can only mention tendencies, due to the small number of persons interviewed in the city itself⁷:

- All victimisation rates are higher than in the rest of the Samegrelo region, which is commonsense due to the urban character of Zugdidi.
- In general Zugdidi rates are similar to those of other cities. We however draw the attention to the theft of vehicles and burglary, where a tendency of higher victimisation can be detected (over five years).
- An additional element is the existence of extortion in the city of Zugdidi, where 3.4% of respondents report having been victim of such practices over the past five years, between 2000 and 2005 (compared to less than 1% at national level).

3. Insecurity feeling (fear of crime)

3.1 Introduction

Apart from actual victimisation, an important dimension of security relates to the feeling people have about crime in their environment: do they feel secure where they live? This subjective dimension has been a major source of debate amongst criminologist and police strategists in the past decades. In some cases, surveys have indeed shown that subjective security feelings were not correlated with the fact of being victim of crimes. In other words, people who are victimised are not always the ones that fear crime the most, and vice versa. So, do the police have to take care of a mere “feeling”? A consensus has gradually been built to stress the urgency, for the government and the police, to alleviate it. The reasons were quite clear: insecurity feelings reduce the well-being of people, as they have to modify their behaviours (avoid certain places; stay home at night, etc.), and may assume that authorities do not have the control of the public spaces. In extreme cases, insecurity feeling may incite communities to hire private security firms to protect them, engage in vigilant activities, or ask for aggressive policing methods. In general, those “externalities” of insecurity feeling do not help create a favourable context for the reform of the police.

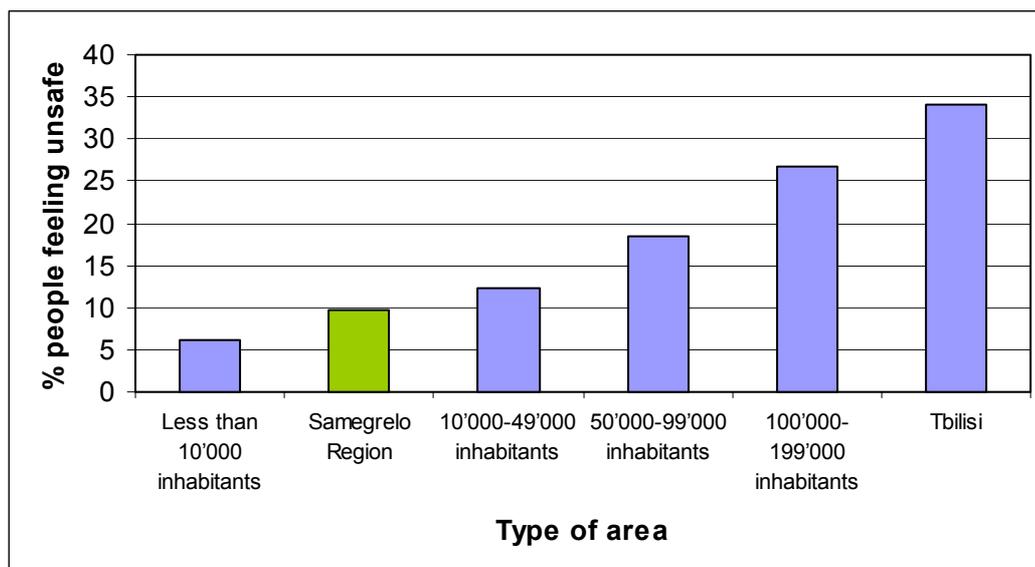
3.2 Insecurity feeling and types of areas

In Georgia, when asking people how safe they feel, when they are outside at night, in their neighbourhood, we find that 82.2% answer feeling very or rather safe, 16.2% a bit or very unsafe, and 1.6% don't know. This is undeniably a good result, in line with most European countries (17.1% feel a bit or very unsafe in Switzerland).

However, insecurity feeling must be put into context. It largely depends on factors such as the urban density and the type of neighbourhood people live in, and may vary significantly from an area to another.

⁷ The number of interviewed persons in Zugdidi is too small (n=80) to systematically draw significance rates, but nevertheless help identify general tendencies of differences.

Graph 1: Insecurity feeling and urbanisation: % of people feeling a bit or very unsafe



We observe that insecurity feeling is significantly higher in Tbilisi and in other cities of 100'000 inhabitants or more than in the rest of the country. In the capital city, more than one third (34%) of respondents reports feeling very or a bit unsafe outside at night. In comparison with Swiss cities, this rate is nearly 15% higher.

Another indicator of the importance of crime issues in Tbilisi is the fact that 32% of respondents acknowledge having discussed this issue during the two weeks preceding the survey, within their families, with friends or colleagues, a rate that is higher than the national average (21.7%).

In 2000, the survey showed a portion of 39% of the respondents in Tbilisi feeling unsafe. A slight decrease can then be observed, but the current situation remains unsatisfactory.

3.3 Variables linked with the insecurity feeling

A range of variables are linked with insecurity feeling (in all areas):

- We found that in Georgia, unlike in most of the surveys in Europe, victimisation is related with the security feeling. People having been victim of any type of offence feel unsafe at a rate of 24.4% nationally, against 15.1% for those having not been victim during the last year.
- In addition to crime rates and urbanisation, insecurity feeling may also be explained by social factors, such as the anonymous and relative lack of solidarity that characterise big cities. In fact, we find that in Tbilisi only 51% of respondents think that people care for, and help each others. In the rural areas, this rate reaches 81.9%.
- Female, as observed in all countries, feel significantly more unsafe than male, with a rate of 18.6% of female feeling a bit or very unsafe against 13.8% of male at national level.
- Those respondents who said they were afflicted by disturbances in 2005 show a rate of insecurity feeling of 26.9% against 15.2% for those not reporting disturbances. This emphasises the necessity for the police to address public disturbances as security issues.

- Age is not linked to the security feeling, which is at odds with what is found in most surveys, where elderly consistently present higher rates of insecurity feeling.
- Finally, those with higher incomes (>300 GEL/month) tend to feel less secure than those with lower incomes: 19.8% against 13.9%. This, again, is at odds with the general tendency of less advantaged people feeling less secure observed in Europe.

3.4 Samegrelo region

The insecurity feeling in the Samegrelo region is significantly lower than the national average: only 9.8% of respondents say they feel a bit or very unsafe and 90.2% very or rather safe (see Graph 1). This is another good result for the region.

If we focus on the city of Zugdidi, we find a higher portion of the respondents feeling a bit or very unsafe at 21.3%, and 78.7% feeling rather or very safe. This level is consistent with those observed in other cities, and most probably linked to the urban character of Zugdidi rather than to local conflict settings.

4. Citizens and the police: reporting, satisfaction and expectations

4.1 Reporting or not reporting offences to the police: rates and reasons

The level of offences reported to the police differs from an offence to another, but is in general very low.

Table 5: percentages of offences reported to the police (by the victims or relatives), 2005

	Theft of a vehicle	Theft from a vehicle	Burglary	Robbery	Simple thefts	Assault /threat
<i>Reported</i>	57.1	9.7	32.7	19.4	13.1	16.5

Reporting rates are the highest for the thefts of vehicles, with more than half of the victims having reported the crime to the police, and for burglaries, with one third having done so. It is disturbingly low for all other offences.

But even in these cases, the rates are lower than international standards. In Switzerland, the following reporting rates are observed in 2004: 100% for the thefts of vehicles, 68% for burglaries, 31.3% for robberies and 22.4% for assaults/threats. Offences involving violence, as shown, are more similar between Georgia and Switzerland than those involving property only.

One explanation comes from the quasi inexistence of insurance against property-theft in Georgia (1.3% declare having contracted such an insurance). Knowing that in Western Europe, victims of property crimes generally report offences in order to have an official warrant allowing the compensation by the insurance company, the difference finds its logic.

More details on reporting reasons in Georgia are presented in table 6.

Table 6: percentages of the different reasons to have reported crimes to the police⁸

	Theft from a vehicle	Burglary	Robbery	Assault
<i>To recover property</i>	80.6	66.4	61.3	0.0
<i>For insurance reasons</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Crimes should be reported / serious event</i>	0.0	7.1	19.1	0.0
<i>Wanted offender to be caught / punished</i>	0.0	14.5	3.9	81.9
<i>To stop it happening again</i>	10.5	2.5	7.8	18.1
<i>To get help</i>	0.0	9.5	7.8	0.0
<i>Other</i>	8.9	0.0	0.0	0.0

⁸ Theft from vehicles and simple thefts were not included in these questions, in order not to prolong the interview session too much.

Property-related crimes induce a report mostly to get the stolen belongings back, while assault/threat to have the offender punished. Unlike in countries where reports are mostly made for insurance reasons, in Georgia, victims reporting to the police really expect a service from them.

When analysing why the victims *did not* report the case to the police, reasons once again differ greatly from an offence to another. The main answers being expressed are: the lack of seriousness of the offence, the lack of proof/evidence, and finally the perception that the police would not do anything about it. The fear of the police has virtually never been mentioned as a cause for not reporting. Nevertheless, there is still a perception, amongst the victims, that the police are not responsive to their needs (“Police would do nothing about it”). This perception is confirmed by those who did report (cf. chapter 4.3).

4.2 Satisfaction with the police: general picture

We study here the image the police have in the general population, in terms of crime control capacities and readiness to help.

Table 7: percentages of people thinking that police are good in controlling crime and police are of service:

	Yes	No	Don't know
<i>Police are good in controlling crime</i>	74.7	14.4	10.7
<i>Police do whatever they can to help people and be of service</i>	77.5	13.9	8.6

The results suggest that the police enjoy a very good image within the population, and match or even exceed those obtained in most of the European countries. In Switzerland for example, the rates of positive assessment of police job in controlling crime is of 68.5% only.

Such high rates might create a certain degree of perplexity. One could argue that people are not confident enough to be critical about the police and, instead, simply tell they do a good job. However, as will be shown with results on the police image amongst those having reported a crime (and thus having been in contact with the police), respondents dare voice against police performance when needed. The behavioural explanation of fear or reluctance of being critical does not seem to function.

Furthermore, in 2000, in Tbilisi, the survey found that only 32% of the respondents thought the police did a good job at controlling crime. The improvement is impressive. We make the hypothesis that over the last years, police have been so quickly transformed that a sort of consensus on their new quality has emerged within the general population, *as long as not in contact with the police to lodge a complaint* (see below).

4.3 Satisfaction of victims having reported an offence

The picture is indeed much bleaker in terms of satisfaction with the police amongst those who have been in contact to report a crime⁹.

Table 8: percentages of victims satisfied with the police handling of complaints

	Theft from a vehicle	Burglary	Robbery	Assault /threat
<i>Satisfied</i>	45.3	34.0	10.8	63.3
<i>Not satisfied</i>	54.7	63.0	81.4	36.7
<i>Do not know</i>	0.0	2.9	7.8	0.0

Satisfaction rates fall to less than 50%, except for assault/threat. The most worrying situation prevails with robberies, where only 1 respondent on 10 found the police good.

It should be noted that a “satisfaction gap” between those who reported a crime and those who have not is systematically observed in surveys Europe-wide. In Georgia, this gap is however particularly dramatic and require corrective measures.

The principal cause of this dissatisfaction is the lack of interest the police officer in charge has shown to the case, followed by the fact that the police did not catch the offender.

For the assault only, we find that the late arrival of the police when called on emergency was an additional source of dissatisfaction.

4.4 Public expectations

Regarding the types of services that the respondents expect from the police, we have the following ranking:

Table 9: percentages of the respondents being in favour of different types of services

Type of service	Respondents in favour
<i>More foot patrols and contacts with the community</i>	40.8
<i>Come quickly when called on emergency</i>	28.2
<i>Maintain a police station in the village/neighbourhood</i>	17.9
<i>Don't know</i>	13.1

⁹ Satisfaction of those having been in contact for other reasons (when asking information, stopped by police, reporting an emergency, interviewed as a witness) is similar to that of the general public. In other words, their satisfaction does not fall as it does for those who filed a complaint.

The respondents in Georgia clearly expect more foot patrols and contacts with the community. The pattern is similar in rural areas, small and medium-sized cities and Tbilisi, but not in Samegrelo (cf. chapter 4.5).

Foot patrolling, traditionally emphasised by community policing methods, allows a better and more direct contact between the police and the public. Instead of being isolated within their cars, police officers patrolling on foot tend to interact more with citizens and create a feeling that the police are not separated from them.

The last expectation in the ranking (the maintenance of police stations in villages/city neighbourhoods) shows that the public does not put a high priority on a permanent police presence. This result offers some perspective in terms of more targeted policing: instead of maintaining stations that have a high financial burden, police forces should adjust their activities according to regular crime analysis and social demands.

The same question on the priorities of the police services has been asked in Switzerland. The emergency function has been mostly emphasised, instead of the foot patrol, which came second. The maintenance of police stations in all villages and city neighbourhood, as in Georgia, came as the last priority.

4.5 Samegrelo region

The result obtained in the Samegrelo region in terms of police effectiveness in controlling crime shows a higher rate (at a significant level) than Georgian average, with 86.1% of the population considering that the police perform well in controlling crime (74.8% nationally). The result in terms of police readiness to help citizens and be of service is also higher with a rate 90% of respondents agreeing (77.5% nationally).

For those who have been in contact, the satisfaction level in Samegrelo falls in the same measure as at the national level.

In terms of the type of services expected from the police, the results are significantly different only for the maintenance of a police station in villages and neighbourhood, which comes second receiving 31% of respondents demands, compared to only 17.9% at national level.

No particularity was noted for Zugdidi.

(For reporting and reasons for reporting, the analysis could not be broken down into different areas due to the small number of people having reported crimes.)

5. Fraud

5.1 Fraud rates, typology and reporting

We find that 24.3% of the respondents have been, in 2005, victim of a commercial transaction they considered as a fraud. This result is similar in all types of areas. Compared to victimisation rates studied earlier, the probability of being victim of a fraud is then significantly higher than that of property crime or violence.

By international comparison, Switzerland shows a rate of 7.3% of respondents being victim of fraud (in 2004). This difference between the two countries is therefore more pronounced than that observed for criminal offences (chapter 2).

Compared to the 2000 survey, these rates have nevertheless dramatically decreased: at that time, 57% of the respondents reported having been victim of a fraud.

When asked, how this fraud took place, respondents are quite unanimous pointing at the shops or markets, which concentrate 96.2% of fraud practices. Other sectors, such as construction or garage, do not appear as being fraud-prone.

Regarding the reporting, only 2.7% of the cases are brought to the knowledge of the police. All areas show similar patterns in that regard. Furthermore, there seems to be no public or whatever form of organisation to which the respondents tend to report fraud cases. Only families and relatives are mentioned as people informed about such experiences.

Thus, without the use of public surveys, fraud, although being widespread, risks to remain an illegal activity massively escaping authorities' knowledge and control.

5.2 Samegrelo region

The results obtained in the Samegrelo region in terms of fraud level, typology and reporting do not differ significantly from those obtained at national level.

But, when we focus on Zugdidi, we find that 45.7% of respondents answer having been victim of fraud in 2005, which is significantly higher than in the rest of the country.

6. Corruption

6.1 Corruption rate

We focus here on the corruption taking place between a service provider (mainly of the public administration) and the final recipient, the citizen. We do not include corruption in the procurements or specific private business sectors, which would require interviewing the business community rather than the general public.

There are two aspects when approaching the complex reality of corruption: the objective aspect of corruption, i.e. the concrete experience of having paid a bribe in the past, and the subjective one, i.e. the expectation that an official, in a given sector, would ask for a bribe before delivering the service, which is a *perception* that corruption exists.

When asking the general question: “Have you been in 2005 asked to pay a bribe to a government or local official?”, we get the following result by areas:

Table 10: percentage of respondents having been asked to pay a bribe in 2005

	<i>Paid bribe</i>
<i>Rural areas</i>	3.7
<i>Small/medium cities</i>	3.9
<i>Tbilisi</i>	4.1
<i>Samegrelo region</i>	1.6 *
GE average	3.8

* Significant differences of proportions between the different areas and Georgian average; $p \leq 0.05$

All the four areas are similarly afflicted by corruption, except Samegrelo with a significant lower rate. The national rate obtained here converges with the results established in Georgia by the NGO Transparency International¹⁰.

To get an idea of the positive evolution of experience of corruption, this rate of 3.8% in 2005 can be compared with that of 17% obtained in 2000 (in Tbilisi).

We find a (non-significant) statistical particularity in cities between 100'000 and 199'000 inhabitants, where up to 6.1% of respondents said they were asked to pay a bribe in 2005. Analysing further within this group, we find that the city of Rustavi is particularly corruption-prone (with a rate of 13% of corruption experience).

Compared to Switzerland, Georgian corruption rate is significantly higher, since only 0.5% declares having paid a bribe (in 2004) in Switzerland.

¹⁰ This one has shown in a 2005 survey (thus concerning the year 2004) that a 7% proportion of the respondents say they, or a member of their households, had to pay a bribe during the last 12 months. As we only focus on *personal* experience of corruption, not household-linked, both rates obtained can be considered comparable.

6.2 Corruption typology

When respondents are asked to precise whom the bribe was paid to, we get the following distribution:

Table 11: Percentage of persons having been asked a bribe in different profession/sectors in 2005

Profession / Sector	%
<i>Doctor/nurses</i>	37.1
<i>Private sector</i>	15.5
<i>Custom officials</i>	13.7
<i>Tax/revenue officers</i>	5.6
<i>Communal services (gas, electricity, etc.)</i>	5.5
<i>Police officer</i>	4.6
<i>Court officials</i>	2.2
<i>Elected municipal official</i>	1.2
<i>Diverse other officials¹¹</i>	14.6

The rate of corruption experience with doctors/nurses is significantly higher than any others. The private sector and customs follow suit, while the rest (all state or elected officials) clearly provoke less corruption.

Police occupy the lower part of the ranking of bribe talking (further analysis in 6.4).

6.3 Perception of corruption

We asked the respondents about their perception on which officials they think are likely to ask for a bribe before delivering a service.

Table 12: Percentage of people thinking that a profession/sector would ask for a bribe before delivering a service

Profession / Sector	%
Doctor/nurses	42.2
Custom officials	35.2
Tax/revenue official	30.3
Members of Parliament	30.1
Court officials	28.6
Elected municipal councillors	26.6
Official in a ministry	26.0
Municipal official	25.3
Police officers	24.2
Teachers/Professors	22.7
Private sector	19.0

Rates are clearly higher than those observed with actual experience of corruption.

¹¹ Composed of disparate references given by respondents (passports, registration, social security, etc.).

From a general point of view, we deduce that the perception of living in a corrupted environment is much higher than the level of actually experienced corruption. The population has an opinion of the public administration that is more negative than what it is in practice. The state seems to have an “image” problem. Social representations might be determined by subjective or irrational factors, or by media coverage. It is not, this said, simply a “psychological” issue. It can have very negative effects in reducing the trust the citizens put in the state and its legitimacy.

For the private sector, the opposite observation is true: experience of corruption is high according to table 12, but the perception that the private sector is corrupted is the lowest amongst the sectors studied.

In terms of the specific sectors concerned, health and custom again appear at the top of the list. We find one clear convergence between corruption *experience* in the health and customs and the widespread *perception* that these sectors are corrupted¹².

6.4 Corruption in the police

Interestingly, the police are not perceived as particularly corrupted compared to other sectors, which reflects the low level of objective corruption presented in table 11. This is also in line with the ranking of Transparency International, which places the police on the 9th position, together with the media and the education sectors, on the list of the 15 most perceived corrupted sectors.

As a comparison, in 2000, 80% of the respondents in Tbilisi thought the police would ask for bribes, which was more than three times the current rate of 24.2%.

Additionally, we addressed the perception of the evolution of police corruption over the past five years. Knowing that drastic measures had already been taken by the government to curb police corruption (in terms of human resources, salaries and external control) an evaluation by the public of the progress so far is essential.

Table 13: percentages of the respondents thinking the police are less, more or no differently corrupt than 5 years ago

	Less corrupt	More corrupt	No change	Don't know
<i>Samegrelo</i>	84.9*	4.8	3.0	7.3
GE average	76.9	4.2	3.9	14.9

* Significant differences of proportions between the different areas and Georgia; $p \leq 0.05$

It comes out that 76.9% of respondents think that police are less corrupted today than five years ago, with the significantly higher rate of 84.9% in the Samegrelo region.

In all areas, less than 15% of the respondents have no opinion on the matter, which tends to show a high level of interest in police reform issues.

¹² An additional fact is interesting about the health sector corruption. Compared to others, we note that fewer people do not have an opinion about it: only 16% answer that they don't know if they would be asked to pay a bribe. This rate rises to 30% on average for other sectors.

6.5 Public administration effectiveness and fairness

Regarding public administration reform in general, there is a common perception that the service level has improved: 45.8% of the respondents consider that finding the right official to deal with one's problem is easier now than five years ago, and 54.2% consider easier to get a fair treatment. The proportions considering those relationships more difficult today are of, respectively, 29.5% and 21.1%. The remaining parts have no opinion on the matter.

The respondents then have a coherent and good opinion on the progress made by the public administration over the past years, in all areas considered.

6.6 Reporting corruption

Corruption, as seen with fraud, is virtually not reported to the police: at national level, only 1.4% of cases is reported.

One area differs in that regard: in the cities between 100'000 and 199'000 inhabitants, respondents report corruption cases to the police up to 8.9%, which is significantly higher than in other areas. This fact can be put in relation with the high level of corruption observed in these cities, Rustavi in particular.

When asked if police dealt efficiently with the corruption cases reported to them, respondents unanimously answer "no", complaining that the police were not interested at all in handling the issue (this is the same reason, but at a higher degree, as with victimisation, see 4.3).

There are other public entities to which some respondents report corruption (at a rate of 7.7% of the cases), notably: the mayor's office, the hotline of the Ministry of Finance and diverse local officials. Local government seems to play a certain role, taking into account the public's reporting pattern, as an actor in detecting corruption.

The reasons for reporting corruption cases are (in order of importance) that corruption should be stopped, that it is a crime that should be reported, to recover the money or to get help¹³.

In the majority of the cases, no explanations are given as to why cases are not reported to any organisation. When reasons are given, we find very diverse and punctual explanations. One reason that comes out relates to the image of the police: corruption victims dislike them (17.3% of corruption victims do so) or think that they will not do anything (9%)¹⁴.

¹³ We do not give here the statistical figures due to the very low number of individuals having answered to that question.

¹⁴ The remaining reasons are disparate (problem solved in another way, police involved, did not want the case to be public, etc).

6.7 Samegrelo region

Globally, the results obtained in the Samegrelo region in terms of corruption level, typology and reporting do not differ significantly from those obtained at national level.

We find one exception, where a significant difference appears: there are up to 84.9% of the respondents thinking that the police are today less corrupt than five years ago (table 13), which is significantly higher than the national level.

When focusing on Zugdidi, we find all rates to be similar with the rest of the Samegrelo region and the national average, except for corruption experience, which is, with 1.5%, even lower than the 3.8% observed nationally.

7. Recommendations

7.1 General police reform

7.1.1 Intelligence-led policing

Crime, if not especially high in Georgia as attested by comparisons with Switzerland, takes various forms and significantly differs from an area to another. At present, we find a *complex distribution*: violence (both assaults/threats and robbery), thefts from vehicles and simple thefts are more frequent in Tbilisi and thefts of vehicles and burglaries in small/medium sized cities, while rural areas benefit from systematic lower rates than the national average. Additionally, for drugs, we found that cities ranging from 50'000 to 99'000 inhabitants seem more concerned by drug problems than other areas.

The crime situation is very heterogeneous. It is crucial that police open their agenda to what really counts in given areas, to tackle in priority those crimes that mostly afflict the population. Intelligence-led policing emphasises the need to flexibly focus on crime trends locally and prevent them from developing, rather than solely reacting to crime once it happened. The identification of “hot spots” is then a priority of intelligence led policing.

Furthermore, intelligence-led policing builds on flexibility and quality rather than quantity of police staff and activities. The low level of priority given by respondents to the permanent presence through police stations encourages this flexibility.

At management level, the police, both nationally and at regional units, should develop strategic thinking and planning.

At the analytical level, there might be a risk, as suggested by the low rates of crime reports to the police, to rely only on police statistics, since those do not accurately reflect the reality. The use of the victimisation surveys should become a central element of the police strategy and intelligence, planning and evaluation, as it is, gradually, becoming the case in Europe.

7.1.2 Community policing and decentralisation

Via more foot-patrol police, as expected by the respondents, the police should develop more proximity with the population. There is no fear or disrespect of the police. The good relationship between the public and the police favours proactive stance and innovative policies. Well-documented and tested community policing measures should be developed further, following the classical methodology of analysing public demands (also some of the public disturbances we mentioned) and responding to them in cooperation with other agencies and the civil society through problem solving procedures. The development of local security councils is recommended in that regard in order to connect in a sustainable way actors from authorities and the civil society.

Community policing and foot patrol will also be the most valuable methods the police can undertake to stabilise or reduce the high insecurity feeling observed in urban areas, Tbilisi in particular.

From an organisational point of view, there are two main challenges ahead (also valid for the intelligence-led policing):

- Ensure community policing is introduced in complete coordination with the criminal and emergency police (mobile) functions, in order to improve efficiency (fluidity of communication between all police units and departments).
- Ensure a certain degree of autonomy at the local or regional level is allowed (decentralisation), which might ask for managerial reform, such as the empowerment, coupled with relevant oversight mechanisms, of regional police chiefs.

In terms of community policing priorities, apart from offences identified in the different areas, traffic issues should be considered a police matter and be dealt accordingly. It has been pointed out as an actual problem both by the accident rates and by the level of disturbances provoked by reckless drivers in the cities. Methods to reduce traffic accidents should involve urban design measures, which help reduce speeding without putting drivers in a potentially conflicting contact with police officers. Classical law enforcement measures nevertheless appear as unavoidable.

7.1.3 Victim support

We observed that victims reporting crimes to the police have a much lower degree of satisfaction with them than those having not been in contact for filing a complaint. This discrepancy calls for more efforts to be done in the way the police interact and deal with victims.

When a victim comes to the police, (s)he awaits a service to be delivered. But (s)he also expects to be treated with empathy: most of unsatisfied victims declared that the police were not interested in their case. A large amount of the problem seems to lie in the inappropriate behaviours police officers adopt in front of victims. Procedure, training and evaluation of this major part of the police work should be developed.

Moreover, an average of 60% of the victims (all crimes), mention that they would have found useful to receive the help of agencies specialised in providing assistance to victims. The police should set up partnerships with civil organisations specialising in psychological support of crime victims and allow easy transfers of victims from the police to specialists.

7.2 Samegrelo region

The Samegrelo region experiences lower, in some cases significantly, rates of victimisation (except for burglary). In terms of corruption in the police, there is a significantly higher rate of the respondents than at the national level thinking that it has been reduced compared to five years ago. Furthermore, the image of the police is especially good, as well as for the public administration.

In Zugdidi, we although emphasised that some offences were higher than the national average, notably: theft of vehicle, burglary and fraud. These higher rates should probably be linked to the urban character of Zugdidi rather than to the territorial conflict.

Without points of references as to what the antecedent situation was, it is difficult to assess if the presence of the UN has had an impact on the region in terms of public security and policing. All things being equal, we can make the hypothesis that the activities undertaken by the different UNOMIG units (police in particular) might have contributed to those positive results on the ground.

UNOMIG civilian police measures should then be further carried on and, amongst other, deal with most issues highlighted herein (more intelligence-led and community policing with related training at senior and mid-management level, victim support and related training, focus on most important types of offences, including fraud). The local mechanism for crime prevention and local governance of public security should be further developed and institutionalised.

7.3 Corruption

7.3.1 Police corruption

It is advised to continue the successful efforts in curbing police corruption. The results obtained both at experience and at perception levels encourage authorities to follow the path they have chosen. The findings of this survey can be considered as positive evaluation, by all means, of the police corruption reduction strategy implemented so far.

7.3.2 Other sectors: health and customs

Health sector and customs are certainly the next sectors needing close attention from authorities and from relevant professional bodies. Some of the methods employed in the police could be adapted and applied (especially in the customs). In terms of location, the city of Rustavi certainly needs close attention.

7.3.3 Police role in tackling fraud and corruption

The survey allows showing the importance of fraud experience by the general public. Corruption is less problematic in quantitative terms. What we obtained through this survey is however only the tip of the iceberg, the visible part at street level. A huge part of fraud and corruption, i.e. economic crime, never occurs in public and escapes both the attention and the control of police authorities. Even for the part concerning the public and making direct victims, as shown in chapter 5 and 6, it is marginally reported to the police or to any other authority.

There are few doubts that fraud and corruption constitute major hurdles to the general development of Georgia. This is regrettable, because the other indicators of public security (victimisation) show a much better situation, even when compared to Switzerland.

National strategies against fraud and corruption have already been drafted. They remain to be fully deployed and assessed, cascading from the State to local authorities and the business sector. A concrete step the relevant police authorities (financial police and anti-corruption units) should take lies at *information gathering level*. There is a clear lack of “focal point” to which citizens can report cases of fraud and corruption. Remaining largely unknown by authorities, fraud and corruption can not be analysed and efficiently combated. We make the hypothesis that “offer creates demand” and that offering more possibilities to report (hotlines, WEB sites, use of local authorities’ channels, etc.) would enhance these rates.

The police, thanks to the good image they enjoy within the population, and being not a major source of corruption themselves, should play a role here. Regrettably, at the moment, the few respondents declaring having reported corruption to the police were completely unsatisfied with the way their case was treated. Within the relevant fraud and corruption national strategies, police services should be given the task of communicating more thoroughly on their availability to file complaints and fight fraud and corruption. Victims reporting such crimes should receive police (and judiciary) support. This is the entry point to all other measures: without sound information, no economic crime policy will ever work.

7.4 Apply the survey methodology in Abkhazia

The only method allowing accurate and impartial view on the public security situation is the public survey. Applying such a method to Abkhazia, or part of it, would allow set up a more comprehensive picture of the most pressing problems the population faces and adapt police strategies and security policies accordingly. Furthermore, the situation in Abkhazia or part of it could be validly compared to the one in Samegrelo region and Georgia as a whole. Technically, such a survey is feasible, based on the same methodology as that used for the present report (identical questionnaire, interviewing process, database set up, analysis and reporting).

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