



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



# **VICTIMIZATION SURVEY IN GHANA**

## **Executive summary**

**April 2010**

The UNODC initiative *Data for Africa* has the overall objective to improve the knowledge of drugs and crime problems in Africa, by strengthening the capacity of African countries to collect and analyse data and trends in drugs, crime and victimization.

This report presents the results of a victimization survey carried out within the framework of the UN Development Account project 06/07R *Collection and analysis of data and trends on drugs, crime and victimization in Africa*.

<http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/2006/0607R.html>



The victimization survey in Ghana was carried out by the Ghana Statistical Service in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

This report and other *Data for Africa* publications can be downloaded from:  
<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Data-for-Africa.html>

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This report presents the summary of the major findings of the crime victimization survey carried out in four metropolitan areas in Ghana in 2009. The areas are Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA), Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA), Kumasi Metropolitan Area (KMA) and Tamale Metropolitan Area (TMA).

## Rates of victimization

Table 1 shows that property crimes were most frequently experienced by respondents. In the year preceding the survey (2008), almost a quarter of car owners had something stolen from their vehicle and 18 per cent of livestock owners had some animals stolen. Rates of personal theft and burglary were also high (9 and 6 per cent of the total sample, respectively), while robbery, that is, theft by the use of force, was experienced by a smaller portion of the sample (3 per cent). Four per cent of respondents were victims of assault/threat and 1 per cent of sexual offences. Finally, seven respondents were victims of kidnapping and four of car hijacking.

Approximately half of the respondents (47 per cent) were cheated when buying something or requesting services. Thirteen per cent were asked to pay a bribe to a public official, thus were victim of corruption.

**Table 1– Prevalence of victimization during the year preceding the survey, all areas (2008)**

Type of crime	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Household crimes</b>		
Theft of car	1	0.5 <sup>1</sup>
Car hijacking	2	1.0 <sup>1</sup>
Theft from car	48	23.3 <sup>1</sup>
Car vandalism	4	1.9 <sup>1</sup>
Theft of motorcycle	3	2.1 <sup>2</sup>
Theft of bicycle	19	5.6 <sup>3</sup>
Theft of livestock	55	18.0 <sup>4</sup>
Burglary with entry	96	6.2
Attempted burglary	42	2.7
Kidnapping	7	0.4
<b>Crimes against the individual respondent</b>		
Robbery	41	2.6
Personal theft	142	9.1
Sexual offences	15	1.0
Assault / threat	65	4.2
Consumer fraud	739	47.4
Corruption	206	13.2

<sup>1</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a car (206)

<sup>2</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a motorcycle (140)

<sup>3</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a bicycle (337)

<sup>4</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning livestock (305)

## Victimization at the local level

Table 2 shows victimization experienced in each of the four metropolitan areas in the five years preceding the survey. Theft of livestock (65 per cent) and burglary (27 per cent) were the most common crimes affecting households in the four areas, while car hijacking and kidnapping were not common crimes, with less than 1 per cent each. Only 2 per cent of respondents mentioned car vandalism in their households in the five years preceding the survey.

Theft of livestock is highest in TMA (79 per cent) and lowest in KMA (48 per cent). Theft of car, car hijacking and kidnapping are virtually not in existence in the metropolitan areas, except in AMA and TMA where 4 and 2 per cent of households, respectively, were affected by theft of vehicle.

**Table 2 – Prevalence of victimization during the five years preceding the survey, percentage of victims by area**

Type of crime	STMA	AMA	KMA	TMA	Total
<b>Household crimes</b>					
Theft of car	0.0	3.5	2.4	0.0	2.9 <sup>5</sup>
Car hijacking	0.0	0.5	1.5	0.0	0.8
Theft from car	6.5	16.9	15.0	3.8	14.0
Car vandalism	0.0	3.1	1.5	0.8	2.1
Theft of motorcycle	0.0	8.3	8.3	4.8	6.4 <sup>6</sup>
Theft of bicycle	16.1	15.0	19.4	31.9	20.8 <sup>7</sup>
Theft of livestock	71.4	68.1	47.8	78.7	64.9 <sup>8</sup>
Burglary with entry	21.9	32.5	23.1	23.1	27.4
Attempted burglary	8.3	11.6	8.1	11.5	10.1
Kidnapping	1.2	0.1	1.2	0.8	0.6
<b>Crimes against the individual respondent</b>					
Robbery	5.9	8.1	6.9	8.5	7.5
Personal theft	23.1	38.9	37.3	32.3	36.1
Sexual offences	3.6	5.8	6.0	6.9	5.7
Assault / threat	22.5	15.4	16.9	17.7	16.9

Theft of personal property is the second most common crime (36 per cent) against individual respondents. Looking at the metropolitan areas, AMA recorded the highest rate (39 per cent) while STMA recorded the lowest (23 per cent). Sexual offences were the lowest among the individual crimes across the metropolitan areas.

Consumer fraud was found to be common (47 per cent). AMA and KMA each had at least half of the respondents experiencing consumer fraud in the year preceding the survey.

<sup>5</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a car (206)

<sup>6</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a motorcycle (140)

<sup>7</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning a bicycle (337)

<sup>8</sup> This percentage is based on the number of households owning livestock (305)

## Experiences of victims in reporting to authorities

Respondents were asked whether they had been affected by any crime since 2004. Those who had been victims were further asked whether they reported the incidence to the police or to other authorities *the last time* they were affected. In general, more than 80 per cent of households which suffered car theft reported it to the police (Table 3). Other crimes frequently reported were car hijacking (67 per cent) and theft of motorcycle (44 per cent). All other types of crime were reported in less than a quarter of cases.

With the exception of theft of motorcycle (all incidents were reported to other agencies), the proportion of victims who reported to authorities other than the police remain relatively small. Incidents regarding three of the household crimes (theft of car, car hijacking and attempted burglary) were not reported to other agencies at all.

The crime against the individual respondent that received the highest attention of agencies other than the police was assault (4 per cent).

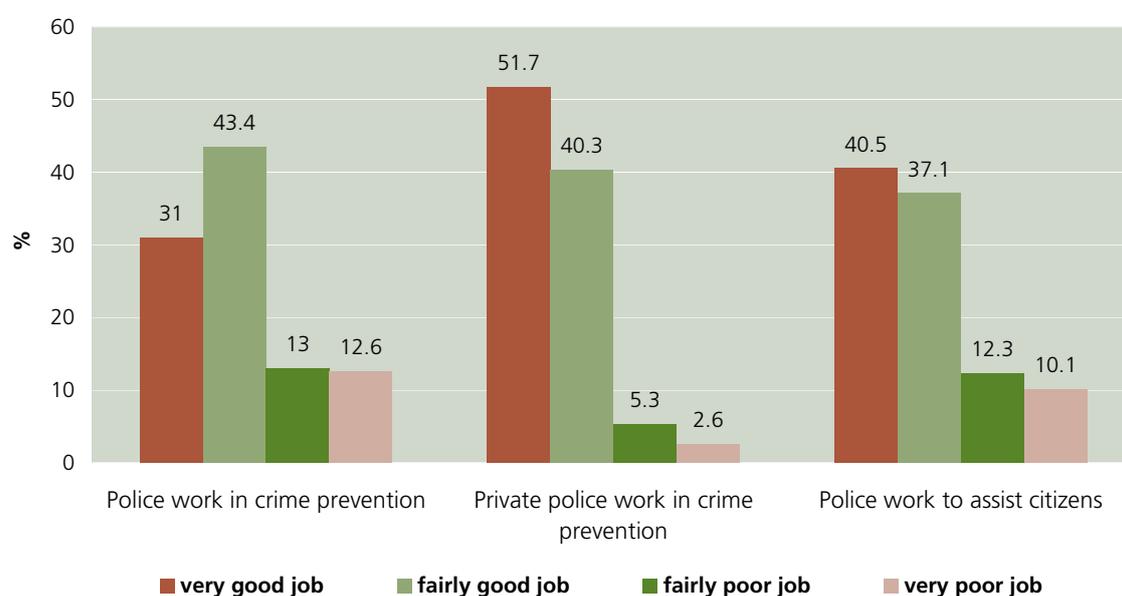
**Table 3 – Percentage of victims who reported crimes to the police or other authorities, all areas**

Type of crime	% reported to the police	% reported authorities other than the police
<b>Household crimes</b>		
Theft of car	83.3	-
Car hijacking	66.7	8.3
Theft from car	5.9	2.3
Car vandalism	25.0	-
Theft of motorcycle	44.4	0
Theft of bicycle	2.9	7.2
Theft of livestock	5.1	1.5
Burglary with entry	13.8	2.1
Attempted burglary	7.0	-
<b>Crimes against the individual respondent</b>		
Robbery	15.4	1.7
Personal theft	3.0	2.0
Sexual offences	13.5	1.1
Assault / threat	17.9	4.4
Consumer fraud	2.7	0.7
Corruption	2.9	0.5

## Opinions about police work

Respondents were asked whether they agree that the police work to assist the citizenry. Figure 1 shows that the large majority agree, with two fifths (41 per cent) of respondents fully agreeing and only one tenth (10 per cent) fully disagreeing. However, when asked their opinion on the performance of the police in preventing and controlling crime, only less than a third (31 per cent) of the respondents were of the opinion that the police are doing a very good job, while a quarter of the respondents consider it as poor or very poor. As for private security, 52 per cent of the respondents said they are doing a very good work. Only 3 per cent of those interviewed think that the performance of private security officers is very poor.

**Figure 1: Opinion about police work in preventing and controlling crime**

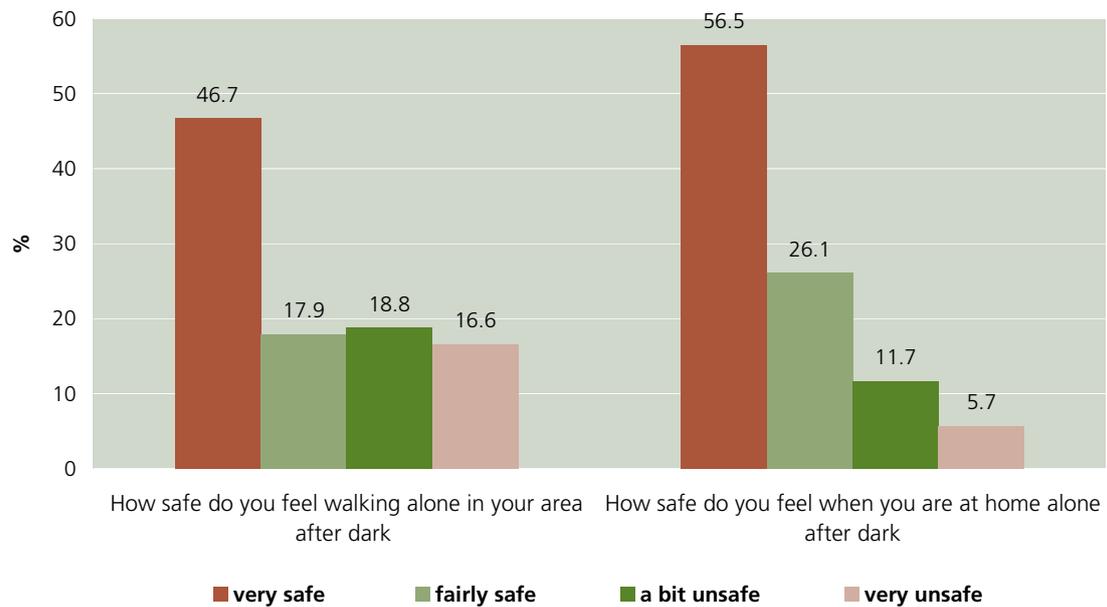


## Fear of crime

Respondents were also asked about how safe they feel in their communities. Figure 3 shows that approximately half (47 per cent) of the respondents indicated that they feel very safe walking alone in their community after dark. On the other hand, more than a third (35 per cent) of them feel a bit or very unsafe. About half (17 per cent) of these respondents indicated that they feel very unsafe. At the metropolitan level, more respondents in the STMA (72 per cent) feel very safe walking alone in the night, while smaller proportions expressed the same view in the other areas.

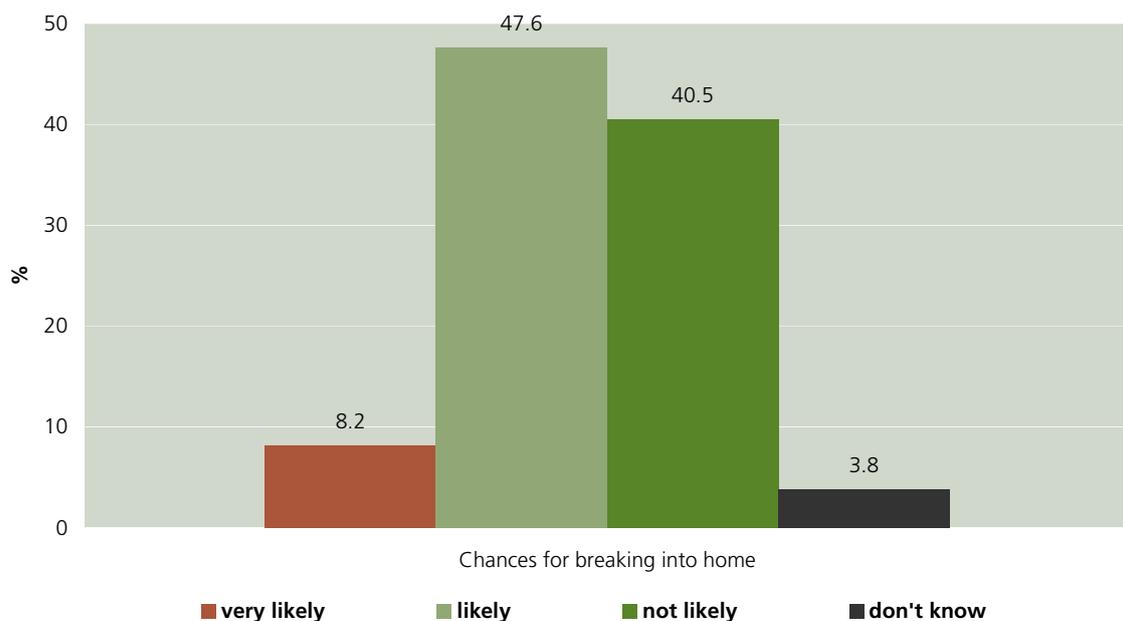
More than half (57 per cent) of the respondents believe that they are very safe when alone at home after dark. Only 17 per cent of those interviewed reported that they are either a bit or very unsafe alone at home after dark. Compared to those in the other two metropolises, relatively more respondents in the STMA and KMA (about one fifth) indicated that they are not safe alone at home after dark.

**Figure 2: Feelings of safety in the street and at home**



Respondents were asked about the likelihood of experiencing burglary in their household in the next 12 months. More than half (56 per cent) indicated the possibility of experiencing it while two fifths (41 per cent) said they were unlikely to experience burglary in the next 12 months (Figure 4). A majority of residents in the KMA (67 per cent) and AMA (53 per cent) expressed likelihood of experiencing burglary cases in the next 12 months after the survey.

**Figure 3: Likelihood of becoming victims of burglary in the 12 months after the survey**



## Neighbourhood support

Respondents were asked whether people living in the same area mostly help each other or mostly go their own way. Table 4 shows that 60 per cent of the respondents perceive that people in their areas mostly help each other while 26 per cent believe that people mostly go their own way. Only 13 per cent have a mixed perception. Most of the respondents from KMA (77 per cent) and TMA (67 per cent) perceive that people in their areas support each other. STMA has the highest proportion of respondents (44 per cent) who believe that people go their own way without helping each other in the areas where they live.

**Table 4 – Type of relationship among neighbours in the community, percentage of respondents by area**

	STMA	AMA	KMA	TMA	Total
Mostly help each other	44.4	51.3	76.5	66.9	60.2
Mostly go their own way	43.8	30.1	18.3	13.8	26.3
Mixture	11.2	18.2	4.4	18.5	12.9
Don't know	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.6

## Crime prevention measures

The survey also sought to find out about measures taken by respondents to prevent crime in their homes. Table 5 indicates that more than a third (35 per cent) of the respondents are not protected in any way. Of those who are protected in one way or the other, 37 per cent indicated that they have made friendly arrangements with neighbours to watch each others' houses. A relatively high proportion of respondents indicated using special door locks (19 per cent), special window/door grilles (15 per cent), a high fence (14 per cent) and/or a dog that would detect a burglar (13 per cent).

**Table 5 – Crime prevention measures**

Prevention measures	% of respondents using prevention measures
Installed burglar alarm	1.0
A formal neighbourhood watch scheme	9.2
Special door locks	18.7
Special window/door grilles	14.8
A dog that would detect a burglar	12.7
A high fence	13.9
A caretaker or security guard	3.6
Friendly arrangements with neighbours to watch each others houses	36.5
Other	0.7
Not protected by any of these	34.8

## Attitudes of respondents towards punishment

People have different ideas about the sentences which should be given to offenders. The survey sought the opinion of respondents on the appropriate punishment for a case of a young man found guilty of burglary for the second time, for stealing a colour television set. Table 6 shows that an overwhelming majority (80 per cent) of the respondents thought that such an offender should be imprisoned. Some advocated for community service or a fine as punishment for this offence; namely 12 and 4 per cent, respectively.

About 63 per cent of those who prescribed imprisonment as punishment for the offence were of the view that such an offender should be imprisoned for a period between one and five years, whereas 9 per cent recommended a prison term of less than six months. Eight per cent would go for a prison term of between 6 and 10 years, while 7 per cent thought that a life sentence would be the most appropriate punishment.

**Table 6 – Attitudes toward punishment**

Punishment	Count	% of respondents
Fine	65	4.2
Community service	187	12
Suspended sentence	2	0.1
Any other sentence	45	2.9
Don't know	10	0.6
Imprisonment	1,251	80.2
<b>Length of prison sentence:</b>		
Less than 6 months	117	9.4
Between 6 months and 1 year	73	5.8
1 to 5 years	783	62.6
6 to 10 years	105	8.4
11 to 15 years	21	1.7
16 to 19 years	7	0.6
More than 20 years	49	3.9
Life sentence	85	6.8
Don't know	11	0.9

## Methodology and sample description

### Sample design

The 2009 Crime Victimization Survey was held in four metropolitan assemblies in Ghana. They are Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tamale. The population in individual households that dwell in living quarters in each of the four metro areas constituted the sampling frame. The institutional population (such as persons in hospitals, prisons, hotels and similar establishments, persons living on the streets or the homeless) were excluded from the frame.

The sample design was a clustered, multi-stage probability sample. The updated list of enumeration areas (EAs) that were used for the 2000 Population and Housing Census constitute the sampling frame for the four metro areas for the victimization study.

The EAs are defined as Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) since they are the smallest well-defined units for which population and household data are available. Households within the selected EAs constitute the Secondary Sampling Units (SSUs).

Selection of the sample was in two stages. At the first stage of sampling, 120 EAs (PSUs) were selected through the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS method). That is, the determination of the sample size uses proportional allocation based on each metro area's share of the total population of the four metropolitan areas.

The selection of EAs (PSUs) is accomplished by carrying out sampling operations independently within each metropolitan area.

At the second stage, 13 households were selected systematically with a random start and interval separately for each EA to produce a total of 1,560 households for the four metropolitan areas.

### Sex of respondents

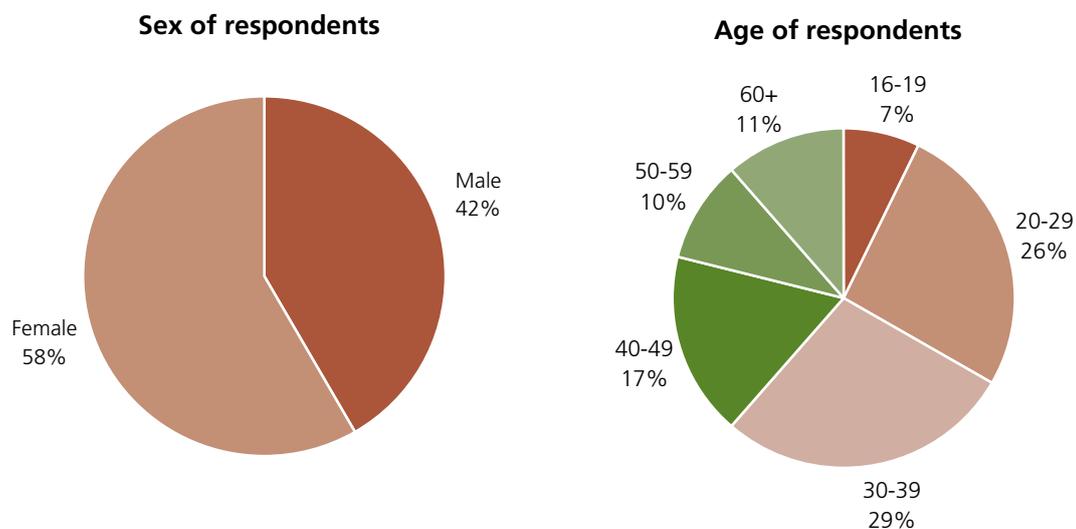
Figure 5 shows that 42 per cent of respondents were male and 58 per cent female. Females consistently dominated the selection in three of the four metros. It is only in TMA that 62 and 38 per cent of males and females, respectively, were interviewed. The margin between the dominance of females against males is highest in KMA.

### Age distribution of respondents

Figure 5 shows that, in total, 29 and 26 per cent of the surveyed respondents were in the age groups 30-39 years and 20-29 years, respectively. Those in the age group 16-19 years constitute only 7 per cent.

Three of the metro areas (STMA, AMA and KMA) recorded the highest proportion of respondents in the age bracket 20-29 years, whereas TMA had the highest in age groups 30-39 years and 40-49 years. All the metropolitan areas had the lowest proportion of respondents in the age group 16-19 years.

Figure 4: Distribution of respondents by sex and age



### Distribution of respondents in metropolitan areas

Nearly half of the respondents (48 per cent) are from AMA while a third of them are from KMA (Figure 6). 11 per cent come from STMA and less than 10 per cent are from TMA.

### Distribution of respondents by type of residential area

Figure 6 shows that almost half of the households (47 per cent) involved in the survey were found in middle status residential areas. A similar proportion were in the lower status residential areas (43 per cent), while there were much fewer in higher status residential areas (10 per cent).

Nearly half of the households interviewed in Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) live within higher status residential area. Three quarters and 50 per cent of households interviewed in Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) and Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) respectively stay in middle status residential areas. Three fifths of households visited in Accra Metropolitan Assembly live in lower status residential areas.

Figure 5: Distribution of respondents by region, residential status and survey area

