



# **VIOLENT CRIME IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

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Non-conflict homicide rates (2012 or latest year)

World average: 6.7/100,000

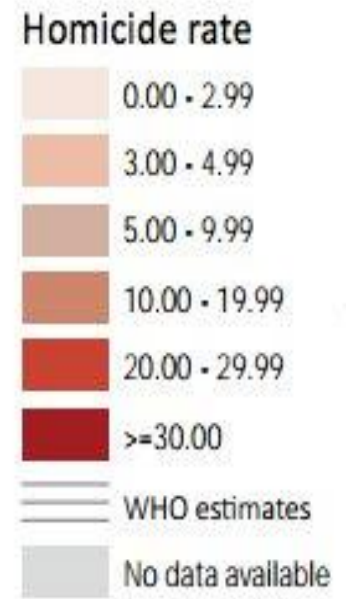
41/50 most violent cities are in LAC

EU: 1-2/100,000

Half of all homicides occurred in 20 countries, with 10% of world population. Global cost of violence: ~US\$9.5 trillion/year, 10% of world GDP. Costs concentrated in same 20 countries.

Average: 51.5/100,000

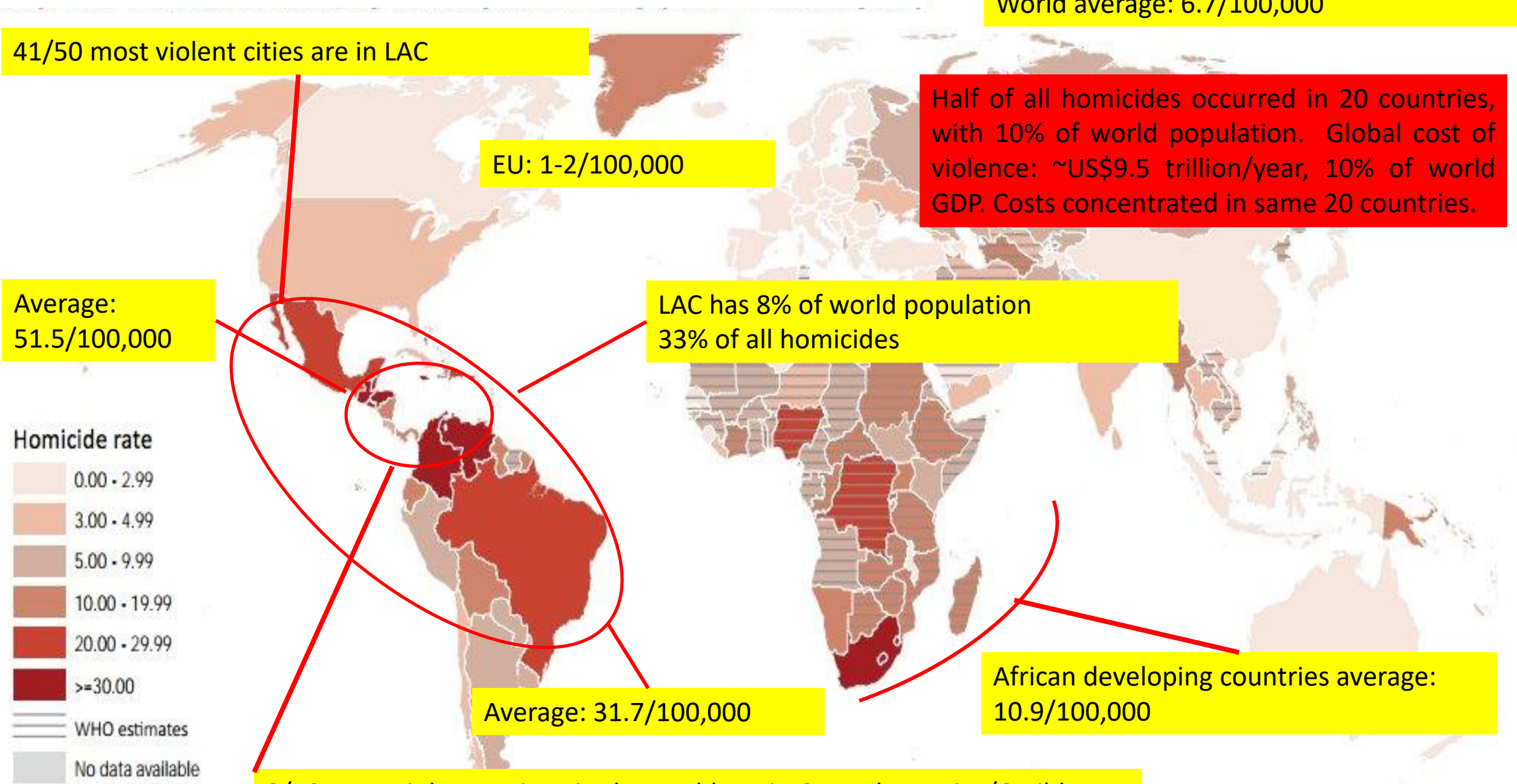
LAC has 8% of world population  
33% of all homicides



Average: 31.7/100,000

African developing countries average: 10.9/100,000

8/10 most violent nations in the world are in Central America/Caribbean





1. Honduras
2. Venezuela
3. Belize
4. ~~El Salvador~~
5. Guatemala
6. Jamaica
7. Swaziland
8. St Kitts and Nevis
9. South Africa
10. Colombia

Factors:

- Profits from narcotics, extortion
- Availability of weapons
- Social & economic problems
- Weak and/or corrupt government



# Jamaica

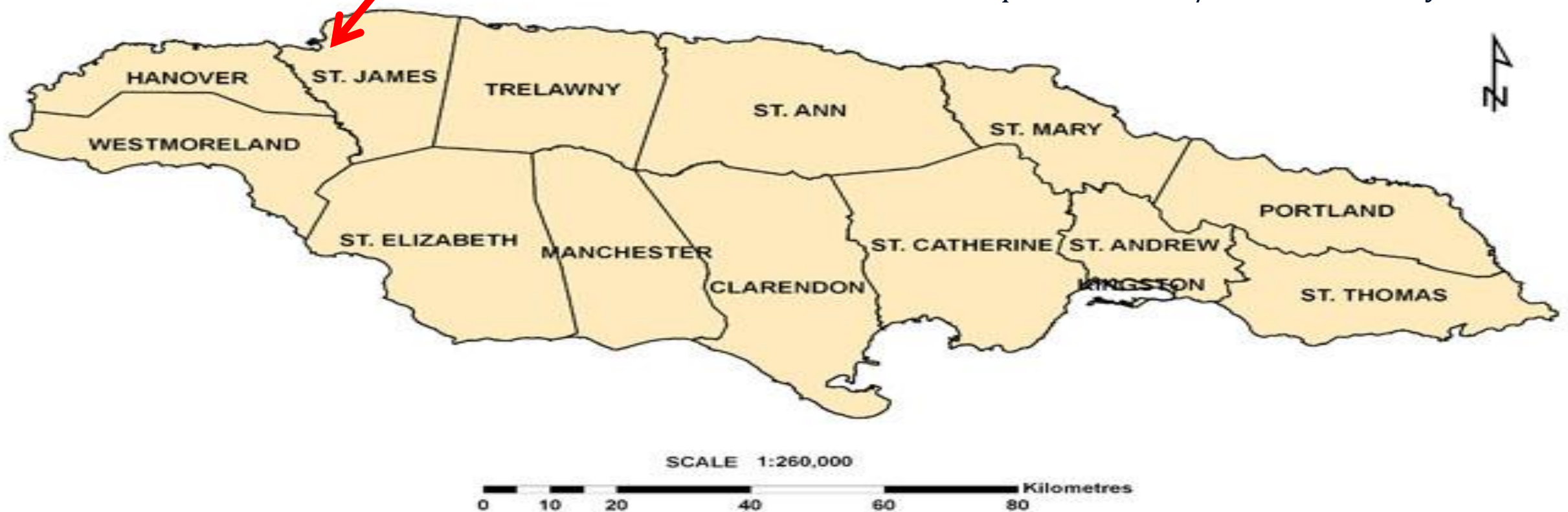
- 4<sup>th</sup> highest homicide rate in world, majority crime-related, domestic.
- Of the 10,000 gang members in CARICOM nations, about half in Jamaica (second largest concentration in Trinidad).
- Criminal organizations involved in narcotics and weapons-trafficking, extortion, cybercrime and frauds, misappropriation of public funds.
- Some criminal organizations connected to political parties, have legal/financial facilitators who assist in laundering funds.

Homicide rate Dec 2016: 141/100,000

<https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20160922/downtown/is-chicago-more-dangerous-than-war-zone-not-even-close>

<https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2016-04-30qr-section3-security.pdf>

2013 National Security Policy: 'Per capita, Jamaica has the equivalent of a 9/11 incident every week'



Homicide rate Afghanistan (Gov. controlled areas) 2015: 33/100,000

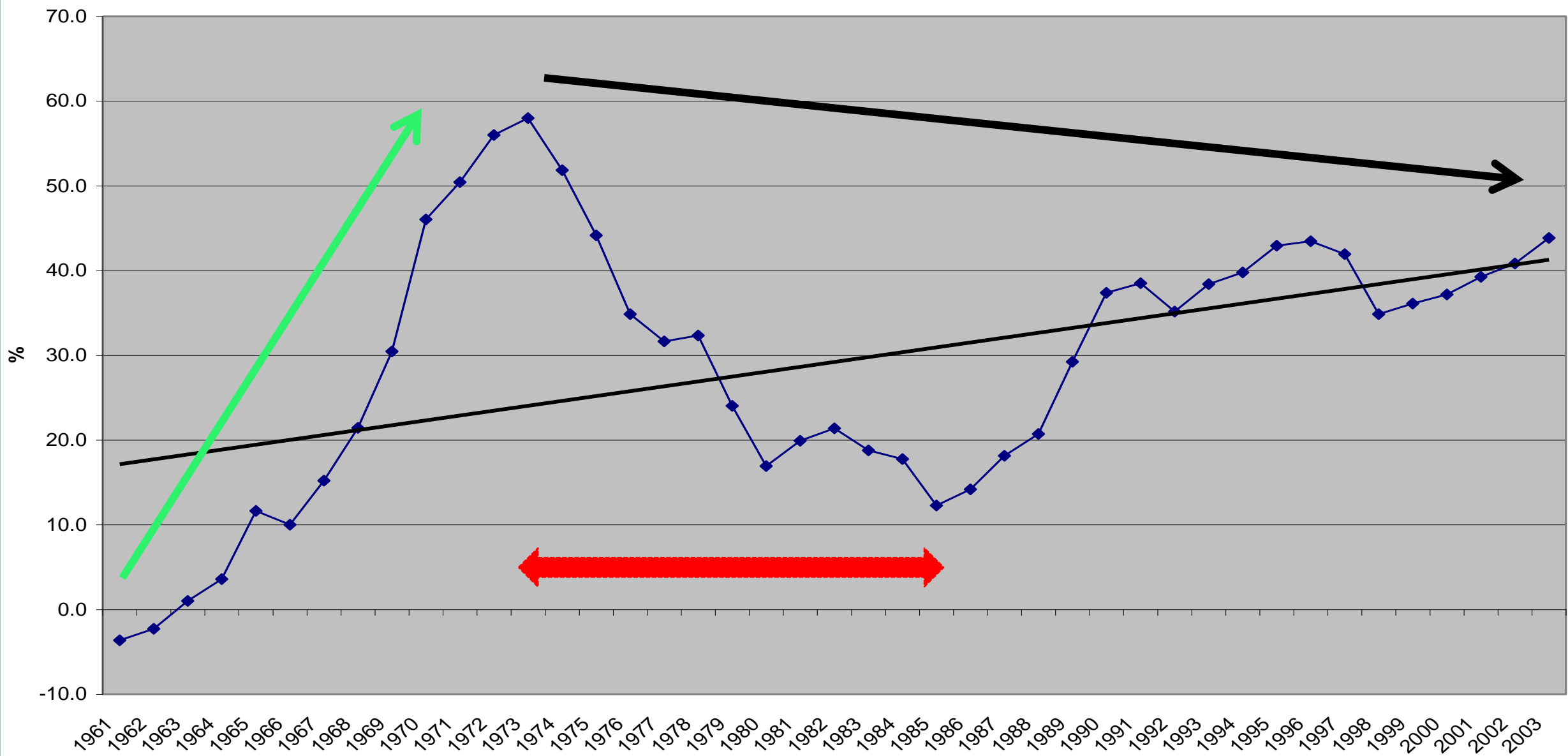


# The breaking of a nation...



- 1962: homicide rate 3.9/100,000.
- 1950s-60s: 23 years of high economic growth, ~4.5% p/a in 1960s.
- 1970: highest-ranked developing country on UNDP Index of Development.
- 1972/3: changed to low growth, recessions, average ~1% since then.
- Reason? Political use of violence - skill and capital flight; left two legacies:
  - High level of violence, low trust society (incl. police).
  - Criminals & facilitators acquired influence over public life; still the case.
- 2005: homicide rate 58/100,000 (highest in world)
- 2009: 63/100,000 (4<sup>th</sup> highest)

CUMMULATIVE CHANGE IN REAL PER CAPITA INCOME(%)



## Accumulated losses



Accumulated cost of crime and corruption 1972 - 2010 at 7.1% of GDP = US\$16.7bn.

Jamaica's public debt at December 2011 was US\$18.7bn, so accumulated losses due to crime would equal 89% of the debt.



# What has crime really cost Jamaica?



The accumulated cost of 4 decades of lost growth?

If Jamaica's development had kept pace with Barbados, Jamaica today would be ~3 times wealthier than it is now.

If 1960s growth rate had continued, then today the economy would be ~10 times larger than it is now .

# CRIME. WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

Spend more money on national security?

Hire more police officers? More patrols? Raise police pay to increase motivation?

Equip more forensic laboratories to capture more offenders?

Spend more on social programs and youth interventions to stop them from going into gangs?

Build more prisons? Or...what?

## Are we spending enough?

(Increases of expenditure on security tend to bring down crimes, but more complex relationship with homicide)

### *Spending*

- LAC average spend 5.4% of total government budget on security (OECD spends 3.3%).
- LAC spends security money on police (63.4 percent), criminal justice (22.3 percent), then prisons (8.7 percent).
- Compared to OECD, spend about the same % on police, more on justice, less on prisons, very little on research.



# IT'S NOT A SHORTAGE OF RESOURCES

- Many social interventions have been implemented over the past three+ decades. Not tracked, estimated hundreds.
- Between FY 2007/2008 and 2017/2018, the GOJ spent ~J\$342 billion on youth interventions.
- Over same period, GOJ spent J\$898 billion on education.
- 40% of education budget. Result: no effect on violence.

## Do we have enough police officers?

- Global median for ratio of police officers to population: 300/100,000.
- Example: Population of Scotland = 5.3 million, >17,000 FTE police officers = 326/100,000.
- Jamaica has 450/100,000 Most small nations have higher police ratios because they have smaller populations. Pitcairn Islands, for example, have just one police officer, but police ratio = 1,492/100,000, because entire population is less than 70 people.
- So the police ratio in Jamaica is close to the world average.
- The difference is in the workload. Scotland has 80-90 homicides/year ( $<1.9/100,000$ ) = 200 officers for each homicide.
- Jamaica has one of the highest homicide rates in the world, 1,682 murders in 2009 (the peak year) =  $63/100,000$  = 5 or 6 officers for each homicide. So workload per officer is ~40 times higher than Scotland.

## Can police solve this problem?

- Socio-economic, cultural, demographic and institutional factors determine the context for policing.
- Factors related to crime and violence e.g. poverty, inequality, unemployment, proportion of young people in the population, corruption, garrison constituencies etc. are beyond control of the police, but influence their performance and the results.
- JCF may appear inefficient, but efficiency is much higher and use of lethal force is lower when difficult context taken into account.



**SOLUTIONS?**



# Colombia

In 2000, Colombia was becoming a failed narco-state.

“In the last 15 years, 200 bombs (half of them as large as the one used in Oklahoma City) have blown up in Colombia's cities; an entire democratic leftist political party was eliminated by right-wing paramilitaries; 4 presidential candidates, 200 judges and investigators, and half the Supreme Court's justices, 1,200 police officers, 151 journalists, and more than 300,000 ordinary Colombians have been murdered.”

Rafael Pardo, former Colombian Minister of Defence, *Foreign Affairs*  
July/August 2000.

# KEY POLICY CHANGES

In 2002, President Uribe made key policy changes:

1. **Policy of 'Democratic Security'.** This changed the primary goal of national security from the 'defence of the state' to the 'protection of all citizens'.

**Won hearts and minds.**

2. **Policy of 'Humanitarian Care for the Demobilized Combatant'** This gave minor gang members a way out. If they surrendered, they could get medical & dental care, help with housing and training to reintegrate them into society. From 2002–2009, over 20,000 people entered the program.

**Isolated gang leaders.**

- **The legal system was reformed.** Time required for criminal case reduced by 80%, cost of trials reduced, conviction rate rose from 3% to 60%.

**Restored faith in justice.**

- **Strengthened police and military.** Size, budget, equipment, training.

**Increased effectiveness.**



Crime	2002	2008	% change
Kidnappings	2,882	376	- 87%
Terrorist acts	1,645	303	- 82%
Homicides	28,837	13,632	- 53%
Soldiers & police killed	684	359	- 43%
Right-wing paramilitaries	30,000	0	Gone
Left-wing paramilitaries	18,000	8 – 9,000	- 50 + %
Desertions from FARC	529	3,027	+472%
Ha cocaine eradicated	133,137	229,227	+ 72%
Tons cocaine seized	105.1	245.5	+ 134%
Drug labs seized	1,448	3,667	+ 153%
Tot. cocaine prod.			- 40%
Unemployment	15.7%	11.1%	- 29%
Economic growth	1.9%	7.9% (in 2007)	+316%

# Brazil

Population today 200 million



One of the top 20 countries for homicide. Over **500,000** people killed by firearms in Brazil between 1979 and 2003. Current rate: 23.6/100,000. Rate increased during late 2000s.

Notable exception: Rio de Janeiro (population 6,453,682). The homicide rate fell from 42/100,000 in 2005 to 24/100,000 in 2012.

## City of Rio de Janeiro

1948: 6% of population live in informal settlements (favelas) in isolated areas

2010: 22% of population live in ~ 1,000 favelas spread throughout city.

An aerial photograph of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, showing the city's topography with green hills and urban areas. Numerous small, irregular red patches are scattered across the landscape, representing the locations of favelas. The city is situated on a peninsula and surrounded by water. A white arrow points to a specific red patch on the eastern coast, labeled as Favela Santa Marta.

2008: Unidades de Policia Pacificadora (UPP) started

By 2012 city homicide rate down 43% to 24/100,000

In some UPP favelas homicide rate now zero

2005: city homicide rate 42 /100,000

Homicide rate in the favelas: ~80/100,000

Favela Santa Marta



# THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS

CLEAR, HOLD AND BUILD

Phase 1: intel  
Prior warning

*1 week*

Phase 2: dominate  
BOPE & army

*3 months*

Phase 3: UPP

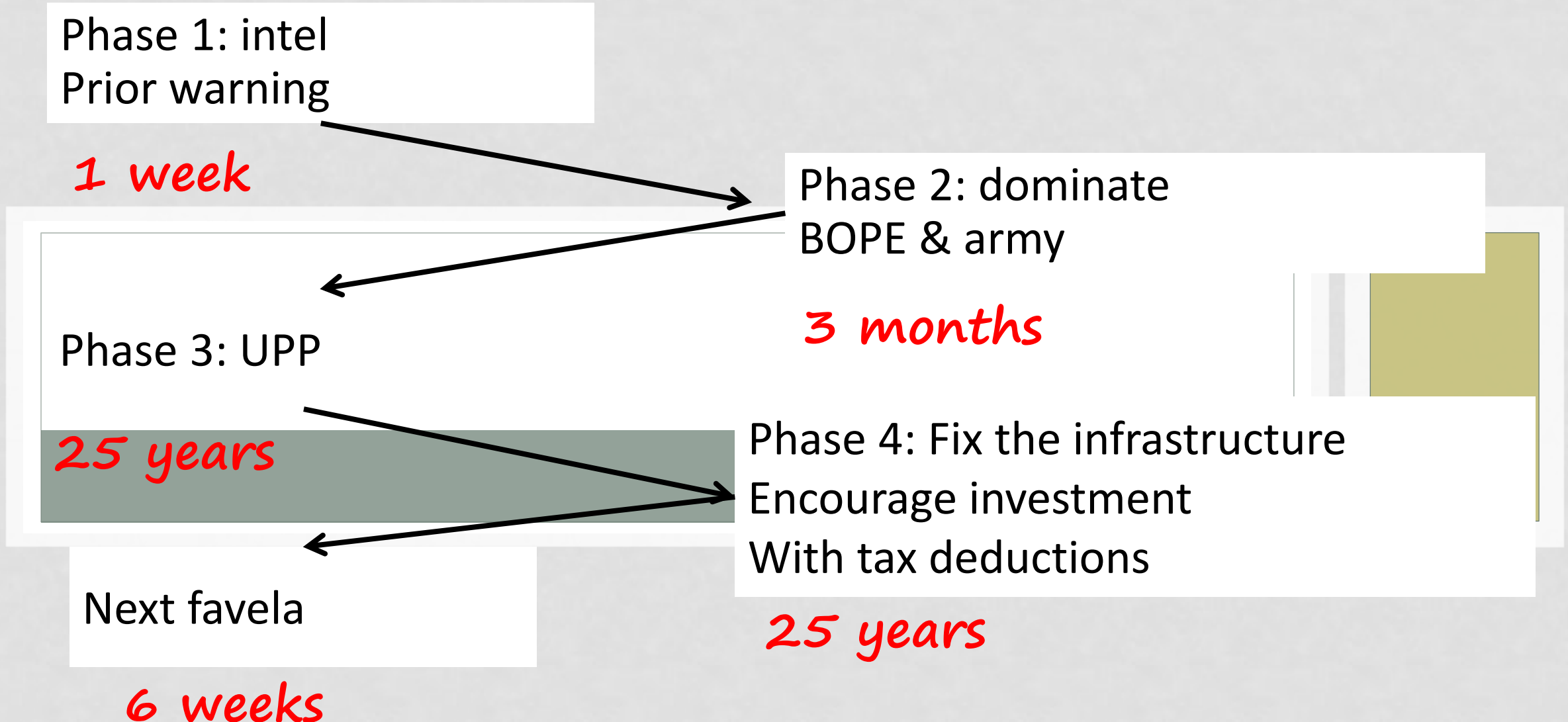
*25 years*

Phase 4: Fix the infrastructure  
Encourage investment  
With tax deductions

*25 years*

Next favela

*6 weeks*



# NORMALIZING UNSTRUCTURED COMMUNITIES

- Formerly the favelas only saw paramilitary officers, on raids. They did not see regular police officers.
- Before UPP, there was very little legitimate business in the favelas. Run by gangs. Murder, extortion, trafficking. Homicide rates were ~80/100,000.
- Now there are thriving businesses. In the first favela to be normalized, Santa Marta, there are 9 churches, 4 creches, 3 UPP stations (with 100 UPP officers), a Samba dance school, cooking schools, supermarkets.
- Homicide rates, extortion, trafficking – close to zero.

- If the UPP program was successful, why was it stopped?



Vote for Governor Pezao!  
(started UPP program)



Beco  
Camélia Rosa



## EL SALVADOR: *MANO DURA* ANTI-GANG STRATEGY

- In 2015 El Salvador had highest rate of homicide in the world (103/100,000), mostly gang-related; the two main criminal groups were Mara Salvatrucha (MS13) and Barrio 18.
- The government secretly negotiated with imprisoned gang leaders, offering benefits in return for reducing homicides. By 2018 rate had fallen to 52/100,000. In 2022 gangs broke the agreement, killing 87 people between 25-27 March to force further concessions from the government.
- President Nayib Bukele immediately declared one-month 'state of exception' (renewed every month since then). By May 2023 68,000 suspected gang members arrested under emergency powers; 5,000 subsequently released. Most charged with 'agrupación ilícita' (membership of illegal organization), allows them to be held incommunicado, no right to legal counsel, up to 15 days without seeing a judge.















## EL SALVADOR: *MANO DURA* ANTI-GANG STRATEGY

- Government estimates 2/3rds of gang members in jail. Homicide rate now 8/100,000; April 2023 was safest month in El Salvador in over 30 years. President Nayib Bukele's approval rating 85%.
- The government has not stated whether it plans to put all the suspects on trial, whether it will rehabilitate and reintegrate those who are eventually released; and what it will do to prevent a new generation of violent street gangs from emerging.

## LESSONS?

- Sometimes policy changes really work
- Political will, determination and resources matter
- A long-term strategy is essential

Could we do that here?



# The impact on social cohesion



- **UN Security Council, September 2018**
- Corruption makes people distrust government and weakens state institutions, which makes country more susceptible to crime and violence.
- If the corrupt are seen to be above the law, government forfeits its moral authority; the law is no longer seen as fair and impartial.
- Corruption destroys social cohesion and results in dysfunctional politics, where corrupt politicians on both sides of the house pretend to care about corruption but actually collude in an unwritten code, which is that no senior politician will ever go to jail or have to repay what they have stolen.

Corruption is most prevalent in:

- Oil and mining
- State-owned enterprises
- Public procurement, especially large construction projects.

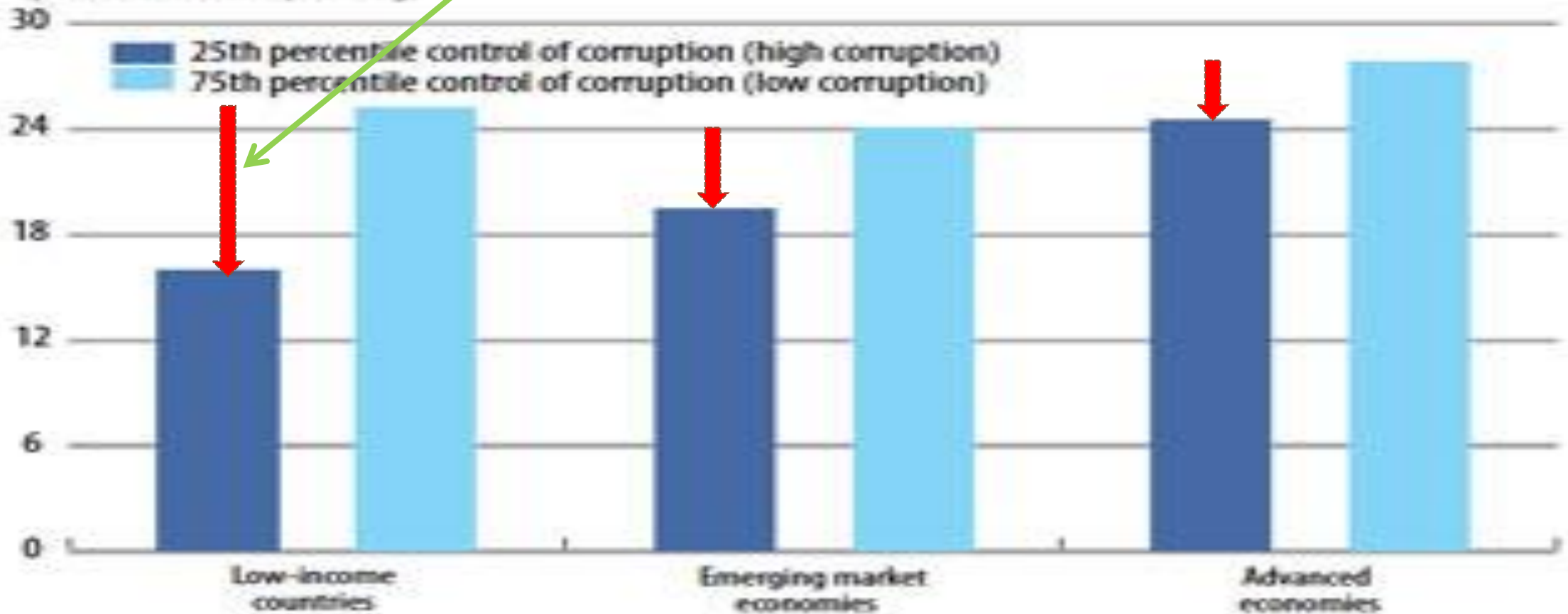
Corrupt politicians favor large public investments where they can make a lot of money. So corrupt politicians will over-allocate public funds to large construction projects, and leave less for e.g. teachers and health-care workers. Spending on education and health is about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> lower in countries (at equal levels of development) where corruption is high.

This is why educational standards, health status and productivity are low and remain low in corrupt countries.

## Skewed priorities

Public spending on education and health is lower in countries where corruption is higher.

(percent of total spending)



Sources: IMF, Government Finance Statistics; and IMF staff estimates.

Note: Data are for 2016.

Result: exam pass rates are lower in corrupt countries



Thank you!