UNODC's Global Study on Homicide Report 2023
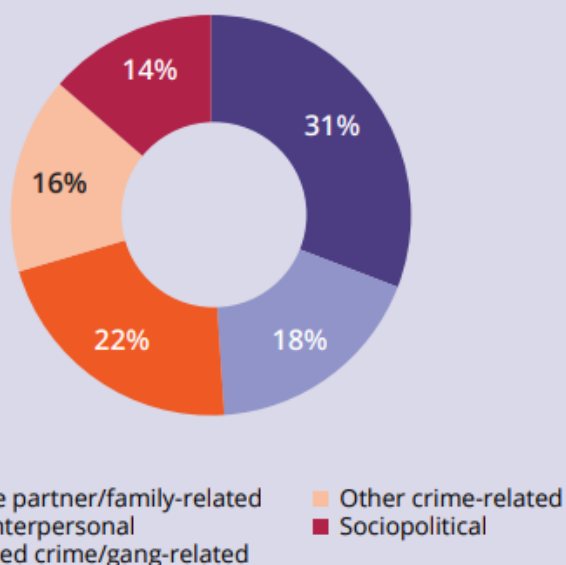
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Why in News?

Recently, the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** has released a Global Study on Homicide 2023 report, which found that homicide is a bigger killer than armed conflict and terrorism combined.

- Homicide is the **killing of a person, whether lawful or unlawful, intentional or unintentional** while Murder is the **unlawful killing of a person** with intent or malice aforethought.
- The report examines homicides related to criminal activities and **interpersonal conflict, as well as "socio-politically motivated homicides"** such as the deliberate killing of human rights activists, humanitarian workers and journalists.

What are the Key Findings of the Global Study on Homicide 2023?

- **Homicide Trends**:
  - An average of around **440,000 deaths** annually occurred due to homicide between 2019 and 2021.
  - 2021 was exceptionally lethal, witnessing **458,000 homicides.** Economic repercussions from the **Covid-19** pandemic and a surge in organized crime, gang-related, and **socio-political violence contributed to this increase.**
  - Despite a more than 95% surge in conflict deaths between 2021 and 2022, available data shows that the global homicide burden in 2022 was twice that of conflict deaths.
- **Factors Contributing to Homicide:**
  - **Organized Crime** accounted for **22% of global homicides,** reaching 50% in the Americas. Competition among organized crime groups and gangs can escalate intentional homicides significantly.
  - Factors like climate change, demographic shifts, inequality, urbanization, and technological changes **influence homicide rates differently across regions.**

Global distribution of homicide, by situational context, 2021 or latest year available

- Intimate partner/family-related — 31%
- Other interpersonal — 18%
- Organized crime/gang-related — 22%
- Other crime-related — 16%
- Sociopolitical — 14%

- **Regional Variances:**
  - America has the highest regional homicide rate per capita (15 per 100,000 population in 2021).
  - Africa recorded the **highest absolute number of homicides** (176,000) with a rate of 12.7 per 100,000 population. Rates in Africa did not show a declining trend compared to other regions.
  - Asia, Europe, and Oceania had homicide rates far below the global per capita average of 5.8 per 100,000 population in 2021.
- **Victims:**
  - Men constituted **81% of homicide victims and 90% of suspects,** while women were more likely to be killed by family members or intimate partners.
  - 15% of homicide victims in 2021 were children, amounting to 71,600 boys and girls.
- **Targeted Killings and Impact on Aid Workers:**
  - Deliberate killings of human rights **defenders, journalists, aid workers,** etc., accounted for 9% of global homicides.
  - Humanitarian aid workers **faced a higher average number of fatalities** during 2017-2022 compared to 2010-2016, indicating increased threat levels.
- **Projections and Vulnerability:**
  - The global homicide rate is **projected to decrease to 4.7 in 2030**, though this falls short of the **Sustainable Development Goals** target.
  - Africa is projected as the **most vulnerable region due to its younger population**, persistent inequality, and climate-related challenges.

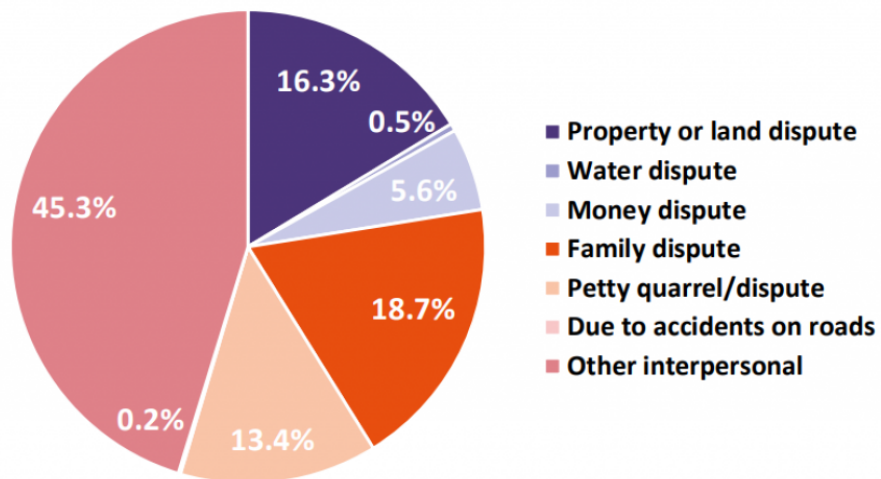## What are the Key Highlights Related to India?

- **Motives Behind Murders:**
  - Nearly 16.8% of murder cases recorded in India between 2019 and 2021 were linked to disputes over property, land, or access to water.
  - About **0.5% (300 cases) of recorded murders in India** between 2019 and 2021 were specifically attributed to water-related conflicts, highlighting the emergence of this issue as a significant driver of homicides.

- **Factors Amplifying Water-Related Conflicts:**
  - Population Growth, Economic Expansion, and Climate Change: These factors were identified as exacerbating tensions over water access, contributing to increased **violence related to disputes over water resources.**

Interpersonal murders by type in India, 2019–2021

- Property or land dispute
- Water dispute
- Money dispute
- Family dispute
- Petty quarrel/dispute
- Due to accidents on roads
- Other interpersonal

16.3%
0.5%
5.6%
45.3%
18.7%
0.2%
13.4%