

**Project Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity in the State of Alagoas:
An Integrated Initiative**

**EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENT 3:
ENHANCED MACEIÓ'S SAFETY IN PUBLIC SPACES**

Integrated Executive Summary
Participative and Analytical Diagnosis of the Urban Safety of Maceió
Strategies for the Urban Safety and Crime Prevention in Maceió

Maceió
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INTRODUCTION

This **Integrated Executive Summary** brings the main conclusions of two products elaborated by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in partnership with the Government of the State of Alagoas within the scope of the project **Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity in the State of Alagoas: An Integrated Initiative**, whose objective is to qualify sustainable urban development actions in the state of Alagoas.

The products summarized here are:

1. Participative and Analytical Diagnosis of the Urban Safety in Maceió;
2. Strategies for the Urban Safety and Crime Prevention in Maceió.

These were outputs of the Expected Accomplishment **Enhanced Maceió's Safety in Public Spaces** of the above-mentioned project. They were guided by the methodology of UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Programme and inspired by the "Local Prevention Guide for Social Cohesion and Citizen Safety Policies". The objective of these outputs was to produce a set of evidence-based diagnoses and strategies aimed at the prevention of lethal violence, from a multidisciplinary perspective, and at the promotion of sustainable urban development.

To carry out this Expected Accomplishment, UN-Habitat hired the Instituto de Estudos da Religião (ISER), a Rio de Janeiro-based organization with extensive experience in public safety, violence prevention and social participation.

Three regions of the city of Maceió were selected for the analysis: Jacintinho, Benedito Bentes and Baixada Lagunar (including the neighborhoods of Vergel do Lago, Levada and Bom Parto). The criteria for this choice involved not only the violence rates, but also policies and actions of the departments in these territories and the information available (and/or lack of).

1. PARTICIPATIVE AND ANALYTICAL DIAGNOSIS OF THE URBAN SAFETY IN MACEIÓ

Due to the alarming situation that has emerged in Alagoas since 2006, when the state was at the top of the national rankings of violent crimes against life for the first time, this diagnosis sought to present a more accurate analysis of lethal violence in Maceió in order to contribute to the development of policies aimed at reducing homicides.

The **methodology** used qualitative tools that emphasize both social participation and local experiences, based on the accumulated experience of UN-Habitat and ISER. The research included a bibliographic survey on the theme of public and urban safety; interviews with key actors on the theme in Alagoas, residents and workers in the three selected regions; and participatory workshops and listening sessions on lethal violence with a gender approach, according to the methodology of Women's Safety Audits, with the support of local organizations in each neighborhood.

Regarding the **context of lethal violence in Maceió**, it is important to point out that despite the reduction in the absolute numbers of intentional homicide, since 2012 there has been a change in these numbers by type of causes. Among these new configurations, the growing number of deaths resulting from police intervention draws attention, since they may indicate the potential for increasing the violence in safety policy and a certain distancing between police institutions and society in general. Another pertinent result in this diagnosis is the information on who are the victims and perpetrators of intentional homicides as well as where, how and when they occur. In general, the data indicate a high rate of murders by firearms, on public roads and at night, indicators that can serve to guide the strategies and planning of public safety in homicide prevention policies. This lethal violence is not homogeneous throughout the city of Maceió, given that six neighborhoods



accumulated around 50% of the records, they are: Benedito Bentes, Jacintinho, Cidade Universitária, Tabuleiro dos Martins, Clima Bom and Vergel do Lago.

A relevant aspect raised by the diagnosis in the research phase was the **silencing** on the theme of violent deaths both in the interviews with the local population, which was already expected, and with the organized civil society present in the territories and public servants. The answers generally strayed from the theme of homicide or related the violence to other aspects other than the intentional homicides. This silence, it seems, comes from the fear caused by the **violent regulation of daily life** in neighborhoods vulnerable to violence, established by local drug dealers.

As a result, the effects of this silencing consist on a lack of interest regarding the prevention of lethal violence as a priority safety agenda, and the collective discussion of the problem with the public authorities. Thus, demands for more police surveillance and opportunities for youth are only suggested as a solution to the problems of drugs and robberies, and hence the issue of homicides is not addressed in depth. This hinders the establishment of repertoire and inputs for the public sphere and, therefore, the mobilization of policies focused on the prevention of intentional homicides. Thus, the disarticulation related to homicide prevention policies, the low number of quantitative studies and discussions on the subject also came as a surprise due to the high rate of intentional homicides in Alagoas.

Although there are local initiatives aimed at homicide prevention, there is no articulation capable of exploiting the full efficiency of a network organization. The same can be observed in the various state secretariats that deal with violence prevention and confrontation. The result is isolated work that sometimes overlaps and hinders the deepening of the debate.

This diagnosis identified a common element in the interviews conducted in the three regions: youth are at the center of the violence, **both as**

victims and perpetrators. Among the points observed in the interviews, the main cause seems to be associated with drug dealing and its economic and symbolic effects: drug addiction, debt, settling of scores, setting an example, regulating behavior, and the territorial regulation of local gangs involving individuals outside of the drug trade.

As perpetrators, the young men emerged as suggestions and clues were revealed in the interviews. Silencing prevented a direct and open characterization of the perpetrators of lethal violence. However, as the interviewees indicated the causes of violence and the solutions to it, the figure of the youth became more consistent. In this sense, the causes presented revolved around the lack of opportunities at the various levels for young people; and the solutions, in turn, emerged strictly as the overcoming of these absences felt by the youth, such as improvements in education, more jobs, leisure etc.

Because of this dynamic of involvement in crime, many homicides are naturalized if not by consensus, by habit. Many of the interviewees believed that the violent local order is particular to drug dealing activities, so the individual who does not participate in these dynamics is free from lethal violence. Because of this, the fear of robbery or police violence appears with more intensity than the fear of being murdered.

In contrast to the similarity of the answers related to the themes of youth, local regulation and domestic violence, **the theme of the police surveillance showed significant variation among the dwellers of the three regions.** The two main issues that emerged revolved around unsafety resulting from the absence of police surveillance and unsafety caused by the deviation of police functions.

In the three regions investigated, police actions were described as arbitrary, according to a territorial and racial cutout, and, therefore, often truculent, and disrespectful to the population. In this way, according to the reports of home invasions, truculent



approaches, and forged arrests, there is a previously established profile of that young person considered as potentially criminal and subject to police violence. Therefore, this profile corresponds to the young black residents of the periphery, a scenario that is not exclusive to Alagoas, but characteristic of a great majority of the figures in Brazil.

As much as the absence of the police has figured as one of the causes of violence, **it is important to point out that the three regions have specific policing programs.** However, what the interviews point out is that the police surveillance is limited to a small territorial extension and in the case of Benedito Bentes, for example, there were reports of neglect to answer calls from the residents. Therefore, with their particularities described throughout the diagnosis, the three regions demanded less for police surveillance as violence prevention than for social policies.

Another important issue in the field research was the perception of a negative evolution in the police performance. The interviewees perceived an upsurge in police aggressiveness and a difference between the policemen who worked in the community bases and those who worked in police departments.

According to the interviews, the programs of the “Bases Comunitárias” (community bases) and “Ronda no Bairro” are neglected both by the traditional military policemen who do not value the colleagues who work in the programs, and by the disarticulation of the public instances. In the case of the “Base Comunitária Selma Bandeira”, the efficiency in reducing homicides was due to the delivery of basic services in the region. In the case of “Ronda no Bairro”, the multidisciplinary team of the program acts in the neighborhoods more with an assistance profile, with limited monitoring by the secretariats, than as a partnership to access services. Therefore, the policemen interviewed, as well as the residents, indicated that an association between police surveillance and basic services is needed. Moreover, according to the interviews, “Ronda no Bairro” is limited to a

program focused on the main streets and commercial districts. Thus, in order to reduce and prevent violence, safety policies must act in the most vulnerable areas of the neighborhoods and public agencies must act in an articulated manner to reconcile education, health, leisure, culture, work and transportation with police work.

Regarding violence against women, the diagnosis observed that due to the patriarchal culture, the absence of data and the underreporting of violence suffered are obstacles to the scaling of the problem and, therefore, to the design of public policies. Given this obstacle, the work relied on qualitative research through the methodology of Women's Safety Audits, elaborated by UN-Habitat, in the three regions. Three audits were carried out, one for each area, and the problems listed revolved around common ground: fear, silencing, and the feeling of omnipresent unsafety, away from home - subjected to external actors - and inside - to domestic violence.

According to the statements, the fear goes beyond the women's lives, and is extended to their children. When it comes to street's unsafety, there is vulnerability to harassment, abuse by police and drug dealers, and the inconvenience of territorial regulation. Inside home, in turn, due to gender inequality and the precariousness of life, many cases of domestic violence and humiliation were reported. Regarding concerns about daughters circulating outside, there are reports of fear of rape and prostitution. As for the sons, the fear corresponds to contact with drugs, arbitrary abuses by the police, co-optation by dealing, and susceptibility to violence.

As a safety measure, **the quartering** of daughters and restricting them to the space of the house appeared as the most feasible actions for women, even though they are also vulnerable to violence in the domestic environment.

Thus, even if since 2014 the state has been decreasing its numbers of homicides



proportional to the population (with the exception of 2017), the data raised by the “Atlas da Violência 2019” indicate a need to characterize lethal violence in Alagoas according to a racial, age, and gender clipping for the guidance of safety policies. Consequently, the growing number of homicides resulting from police intervention and the problem of territorial regulation produced by trafficking are also issues for government action. Finally, to bring the debate about lethal violence to the institutions and other organizations, it is necessary to break with the logic of silencing through political will and technical capacity to adjust public policies to the problems encountered.

2. STRATEGIES FOR THE URBAN SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION IN MACEIÓ

The “Strategies for the Urban Safety and Crime Prevention in Maceió” aim to set strategic guidelines for public safety in order to overcome lethal violence according to the problems and dynamics raised from the “Participative and Analytical Diagnosis of the Urban Safety in Maceió” and the results collectively developed in the “Strategic Workshops on Urban Safety, Crime Prevention and Public Spaces” with public managers, representatives of civil society and researchers from Maceió.

One of the main facts found by the diagnosis was that lethal violence in Maceió is directed and territorially located. This means that it does not reach the population in an accidental or unpredictable way. Thus, lethal violence is concentrated in certain locations and affects individuals of specific gender, color, and age. In 2016, according to the **Mortality Information System (SIM) of the Department of Informatics of the Unified Health System (DATASUS)**, Alagoas ranked 2nd in the national ranking of intentional homicides caused by firearms, with a rate of 85% of all intentional homicides. In the same year, the state had the 3rd highest homicide rate of young people (between 15 and 29), the 3rd highest rate of

black people murdered, and the lowest rate of non-blacks.

According to data from the “12º Anuário de Segurança Pública” 2018, Maceió, in turn, when analyzed only the intentional homicides and those resulting from police intervention, occupied in 2017 the 4th position of the most violent capitals in the country. The same research pointed out a reduction in homicides and a significant increase in deaths resulting from police intervention. With regard to the location of the homicides, the **Center for Criminal Analysis Statistics of the Alagoas Department of Public Safety (Neac/SSP)**, pointed out the neighborhoods of Benedito Bentes, Cidade Universitária, Jacintinho, Tabuleiro do Martins, Clima Bom and Vergel do Lago as the most susceptible to lethal violence concentrating around 50% of homicides between 2012 and July 2018.

To better understand the characterization of these deaths in this same period: most of them occurred by firearms on public roads, men are more susceptible to lethal violence, and most of these victims were black. In other words, the problem is localized and targeted.

These considerations obtained from the diagnosis guided the construction of the “Strategic Workshops on Urban Safety, Prevention and Public Spaces” organized as a space for discussion and proposals for action in a collective way with public managers, representatives of civil society and researchers.

As observed in the diagnosis, to deal with the problem of intentional homicides, it is necessary to direct actions according to a racial, age and gender clipping, as well as to the growing number of deaths resulting from police intervention. Hence, the workshops were developed from three thematic axes about these problems, to diversify and broaden the debate about public safety. The thematic axes were (i) **Strategies to Combat Violence against Women;** (ii) **Strategies to Prevent Violence in Youth and Combat Crime;**



and (iii) **Strategies for Planning and Management of Public Safety.**

Therefore, three groups were created based on affinities, actions, and knowledge of the participants about the listed axes. Each group met once a week for three weeks. The first meeting was reserved to raise problems; the second to discuss strategies and solutions; and the third to raise goals and indicators.

Throughout the workshops it was observed that, although there are many efforts in the direction of homicide reduction in Alagoas, there is still a disarticulation between government agencies and other instances, especially civil society. In addition, an absence of evaluation and monitoring measures of the strategies that have already been adopted was noted. In the three workshop groups, the participants showed a lack of knowledge about public policy planning in general. In the first cycle (problem identification), while the plan was to identify problems, the tendency of the participants was to present actions. In the second (choosing strategies for actions), many participants showed lack of knowledge about ongoing safety actions and limitation of action activities. And in the last one (defining goals and indicators), participants showed little familiarity with the concepts of goals and indicators, making evident the need for structuring courses on public policy management and evaluation.

With this context in mind, and according to what was established during the workshops, it seemed necessary to group the strategies into three axes of guidelines.

The first concerns the strategies for **"Strengthening Governance in Public Safety"** which implies: (i) creating an instance capable of articulating the different actors that need to be involved in the formulation and implementation of a sustainable and successful public safety policy; and (ii) stimulating the development of capacities and an evaluation and monitoring culture in Alagoas. For this axis three actions were suggested.

The second brought together the strategies of **"Modernization and Valorization of the Public Safety System Institutions"**, which revolves around: (i) strengthening the technological and human capabilities of police institutions; (ii) understanding the valorization of police work as a central element for the construction of a safer society; (iii) discussing models of police performance, making the performance of institutions compatible with a modern, transparent and democratic society. Five actions were suggested for this axis.

The third one had the strategies **"Measures for the Prevention of Lethal Violence"**, which seeks measures for: (i) the problem of the specific victimization of black and peripheral youth, as well as the victimization of women; (ii) promote a cultural change with society fighting various prejudices that help perpetuate the deaths in certain vulnerable groups. In the case of this axis, seven actions were suggested.

To access the detailed actions of each axis, see the complete document available on the link: <https://dados.al.gov.br/catalogo/dataset/segu-ranca-urbana-diagnosticos-e-estrategias-para-maceio>

