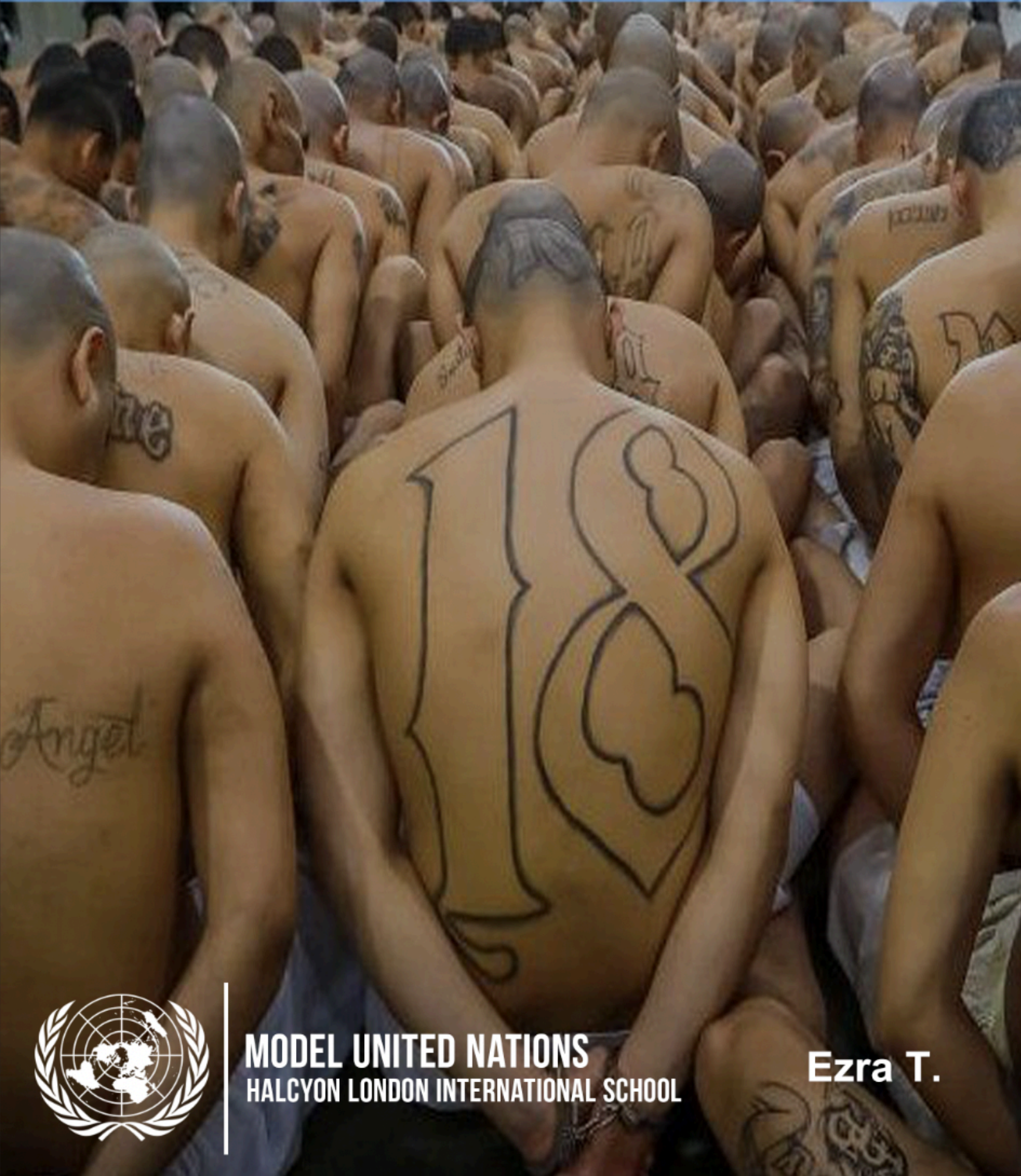


The Human Rights Council

Evaluating the Efficacy of Mass-Arrest
As A Means to Lower Crime Rates



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Committee:	Human Rights Council
Issue:	Evaluating the Efficacy of Mass Arrests as a Means to Lower Crime Rates
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Introduction

Mass Arrests have been in use for untold millennia, generally with the objective of quelling uprisings or suppressing religions and ethnicities. For example, during the Renaissance period in the 15th and 18th centuries, the Spanish Inquisition led anyone believed to be committing or participating in heresy to indictment.

Generally, mass arrests are most common during times of civil unrest or war. During World War II for example, the US arrested Japanese Americans by the thousands for treason, suspecting them to be spies. Or, during the 2019-2020 Hong Kong protests, judiciary forces from mainland China arrested protestors by the thousands without trial.

Though one could argue that these mass arrests proved to be effective for pursuing the arresting powers' means, others would maintain that the possibility of innocents being arrested is too great to forgo sufficient checks into backgrounds, actions, influences, and objectives of the arrestees.

Key Terms

Crime Clearance Rate

The percentage of arrests about reports of criminal activity can be influenced by mass arrests, resulting in a more positive clearance rate due to the stat not accounting for individual reports, but rather all that is given.

Criminal Profiling

The controversial law enforcement practice of suspecting particular individuals of a crime due to immediate appearances. For example, tattoos or turbans are common causes of proactive and reactive baseless suspicion.

Detention Centers

Facilities where arrestees are held to be processed before they are charged or released. Mass arrests either result in these centres filling up and becoming unusable, leading to arrestees being sent straight to prisons, or they are skipped entirely. Regardless, arrestees are not allowed due process.

Deterrence Theory

Deterrence theory is the belief that the existence and threat of punishment will discourage crime. Mass arrests can add to this discouragement too greatly, resulting in the halting of civil and emergency services due to fear of being suspected of association.

Due Process

The right of individuals to be subjected to a fair and impartial legal process when arrested, includes checking all avenues and reasons as to why the individual is, or is not, worthy of suspicion and charge. Mass arrests often forgo due process because of a lack of resources due to too many arrestees being forced through the system.

Preemptive Arrests

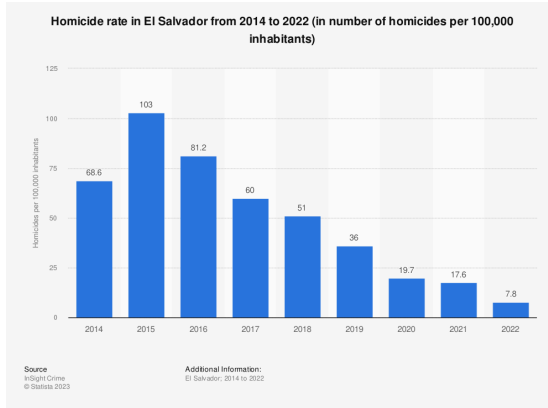
The practice of arresting individuals before a crime can be committed is usually based on intelligence or suspicion. These arrests can be controversial and raise the topic of civil liberties into question.

Use of Force

The use of non-lethal, physical force employed by law enforcement during an arrest, needs to be proportional to the committed crime and submission of the arrestee, as well as being within legal limits.

General Overview

Evidence of Mass Arrests as an Effective Means to Prevent Crime in El Salvador



Source A - A graph displaying the homicide rate in El Salvador by Statista from 2014-22 | Source B - An image of the conditions for victims of mass arrests in El Salvador

The graph above shows the homicide rate in El Salvador from 2014 to 2022, showing a clear downward trend, aside from a jump in 2015, likely due to the fallouts of gang-ordered strike action and violence. In 2021 the decline began to level out, with the rate only falling by 2.1 homicides between 2020 and 2021, when it was lowered by 9, 15, and 16.2 in 2018, 2019, and 2020 respectively. This meant that in 2021, the rate was at 17.6 per 100,000, well above the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)'s reported international average of 6.2 per 100,000, with no clear inclination towards substantial lowering. On the 27th of March in 2022, El Salvador began to seriously crack down on gang violence by engaging in a policy of mass arrests on all individuals believed to be affiliated with gangs. El Salvador is home to some of the highest criminal rates in the world, housing such notorious gangs as the infamous MS13, one of the most violent gangs in the world. This policy resulted in an immediate drop in the homicide rate, going down by nearly 10 homicides to 7.8/100,000 in 2022.

The success of El Salvador's arrests in lowering the homicide rate proffers an argument in favour of the tactic, however, there are still many against it. The Salvadoran government announced that they arrested some 70,000 gang members, however, human rights groups claim that thousands of innocents are being caught in the offensive. The process for identifying and profiling gang members amongst those arrested takes months and innocents who were eventually released claim that they experienced no mercy within prison walls. Law enforcement would pay special attention to tattoos,

considering them to be symbols of gang membership, whilst questioning, strip-searching, and photographing arrested individuals.

Advantages of Mass Arrests

Law and Order

Mass arrests serve as a quick and effective way to maintain law and order for countries struggling with mass widespread criminal activity.

Deterrence

Fear of mass arrests can be a deterrent to violating a country's rules and regulations; considering the impartiality of mass arrests, potential criminals are potentially likely to avoid criminal activity under the threat of mass arrests.

Public Safety

Mass arrests are a potent means of ensuring public safety from potential and active criminals, as any violators of law and order are detained, and those who escape prosecution are generally successfully deterred from engaging in further unlawful activity.

Preventive Measures

Mass arrests have the potential to prevent eventual criminal acts by detaining possible criminals before they engage in such acts.

Efficiency

Mass arrests, due to their scale, can be considered the most efficient way of quelling a particular issue with violations of law and order at some times.

Demonstrative Effect

The spectacle of mass arrests can send a message to the public that not only serves as a deterrent but also demonstrates a government's seriousness in solving a criminal issue, through any preventative measure.

Short Term Effects

In the short term, mass arrests can lead to an immediate drop in crime and homicide rates, as well as weakening criminal groups and their sympathisers considerably.

Long-Term Effects

In the long term, mass arrests can lead to the growth and development of a country's law and order, as various contests against such are institutionalised. This can result in increased civil liberties, economic opportunities and growth, and greater investment in the country.

Disadvantages of Mass Arrests

Civil Liberties

Mass arrests raise questions about civil liberties, especially if such arrests were carried out without due process.

Innocent Individuals

Mass arrests have a high chance of indicting innocents alongside criminals, not only is this an infraction on an individual's liberties, but also provides the possibility of an extreme power imbalance between innocent persons and criminals accustomed to violence.

Overburdened Legal System

Mass arrests lead to the possibility of an overburdened legal system, as institutions, prisons, and criminal courts struggle to maintain an equal level of treatment for all detainees. The result of strain on such facilities results in reducing the consideration taken to furthering of detainee comfort and rights preservation, with conditions going anywhere from poor to draconian.

Community Trust

Mass arrests may erode the trust between communities and law enforcement, especially if the arrests are seen to target particular groups or identities.

Escalation of Tensions

Mass arrests can escalate tensions, leading to more significant conflict between the public and law enforcement, potentially worsening the situation.

Human Rights Concerns

Mass arrests raise various human rights concerns, as individuals are not allowed due process, and are subjected to poor imprisonment conditions, and general unconditional, often forceful, treatment.

Public Backlash

Mass arrests result in near-immediate public backlash as the general populace is likely to act against what very well may infringe on their rights and liberties.

Short-Term Effects

The short-term effects of mass arrests are the various issues raised regarding human rights. The possibility of innocents being arrested is high, and the overburdened legal system results in poor treatment of arrested individuals. Furthermore, the public backlash as a result of mass arrests, as well as the possibility of escalated tension, can lead to only worsening the problem at hand, rather than solving it.

Long-Term Effects

Mass arrests have severe long-term effects, coming from the escalation of tensions, reduction of community trust, and the various human rights concerns raised; relations between a government and its country's populace may be significantly, and irreparably worsened, and the arresting government is likely to be severely discredited internationally, resulting in international solidarity for the detained, as well as political pressure against policies and actions.

Timeline

Tiananmen Square Crackdowns

1989

In June of 1989 the CCP began to mass arrest pro-democracy protestors in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. The exact number of arrests is still disputed, but it is agreed that the number is well within the thousands, estimates range from several to tens of thousands.

Iranian Green Movement Protests

2009

Following the controversial presidential election in Iran, mass protests broke out, and the Iranian government responded with mass arrests. Hundreds were arrested, many of which were subjugated to harsh treatment.

Arab Spring Protests

2010-2011

During the Arab Spring uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa, numerous governments responded with mass arrests of opposition leaders, journalists, and protestors. Notable examples include Egypt, where thousands

were detained during the 2011 protests that eventually led to the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak, and Syria, where mass arrests were part of the government's violent crackdown on dissent

Gezi Park Protests

2013 Protests against the urbanisation of Istanbul's Gezi Park led to tens of thousands being arrested, although many were released shortly after.

Black Lives Matter Protests

2020 Following the killing of George Floyd, widespread protests against police brutality and racial injustice spread across the USA. Thousands of protestors were arrested across various cities and times to quell these protests and uprisings.

Hong Kong Pro-Democracy Protests

2019-2020 Following the perceived encroachment onto the city's autonomy by the CCP, Hong Kong saw a myriad of protests, leading to mass arrests. Thousands of protestors, including celebrities, politicians, and activists were arrested.

Myanmar Coup Protests

2021 Following the military coup in February of 2021, mass arrests of Pro-democracy protests resulted in thousands being detained.

Gangs in El Salvador

2022 In response to numerous violent gangs within El Salvador, the government imposed a mass arrest policy, arresting some 70,000 individuals, using tattoos and any other basic perception as means to profile.

Anti-invasion protests in Russia

2022 Following Russia's decision to invade Ukraine, protests erupted Across the world, including in Russia. Russian police responded by arresting protestors across the nation, using a variety of newly implemented laws, such as one that permitted going through anyone's phone in search of evidence against the Russian Regime's decisions. In total more than 4,000 people were arrested, and the protests were, for the most part, successfully quelled.

Possible Solutions

Mediation and Dialogue

Dialogue between law enforcement and communities can increase trust and transparency and can lead to peaceful conflict resolution. Utilising trained mediators can further enhance the possibility of peace, as they can pursue equally advantageous solutions in the interest of all parties.

De-Escalation Training

Law enforcement trained specifically in the way of de-escalating riots in crowds can reduce the need for violent or forceful action.

Community Engagement and Outreach

Governments engaging in communities, by funding the building of town halls, public facilities, etc. can benefit relations between governing bodies and their people, as well as build trust.

International Intervention and Diplomacy

In times of severe civil unrest, at times it may be necessary for foreign nations to intervene and support, and possibly facilitate, the peaceful outcome of a protest or riot. This however raises questions as to a country's right to sovereignty and self-governance.

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