

# Crime in 2017: Final Analysis

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In this final analysis of crime rates in 2017, the Brennan Center finds an overall decline in rates of violent crime, murder, and overall crime in the 30 largest American cities, though homicide rates in some cities remain above 2015 levels.

The data reported here refine an initial report released in September, [Crime in 2017: A Preliminary Analysis](#), which concluded by noting that “these findings directly undercut any claim that the nation is experiencing a crime wave.”<sup>1</sup> A [December update](#) reached the same conclusion, showing rates of crime, violent crime, and homicide all declining.<sup>2</sup>

Updated Tables 1 and 2 show conclusions similar to the Brennan Center’s September and December reports, with slightly different percentages:

- The overall crime rate in the 30 largest cities in 2017 declined slightly from the previous year, falling by 2.1 percent to remain at historic lows.<sup>3</sup>
- The violent crime rate declined as well, falling by 1 percent from 2016, essentially remaining stable. Violent crime remains near the bottom of the nation’s 30-year downward trend.

- The 2017 murder rate in the 30 largest cities declined by 3.4 percent year-over-year.\* Large decreases in Chicago and Houston, as well as small decreases in other cities, contributed to this decline. The murder rate in Chicago, which increased significantly in 2015 and 2016, declined by 12.3 percent in 2017, but remains more than 60 percent above 2014 levels. The murder rate in Houston fell by nearly 17 percent. New York City’s murder rate also declined again, to 3.4 killings per 100,000 people.
- Some cities saw their murder rates rise in 2017, such as Baltimore (7.8 percent) and Philadelphia (13.1 percent). These increases suggest a need to better understand how and why murder is increasing in some cities. While Las Vegas saw its murder rate rise significantly, by 23.5 percent, this was due to the mass shooting at Mandalay Bay on Oct. 1, 2017.

The Brennan Center’s previous report on crime in 2017 is available [here](#), and a report studying crime trends from 1990 to 2016 is available [here](#).

\* This decrease is smaller than earlier estimates due in large part to a change in how the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department accounted for deaths from an October 2017 mass shooting incident. For more detail, see page 3.

**TABLE 1: CRIME IN THE 30 LARGEST CITIES (2016-2017)**

| City                           | 2016 Crime Rate (per 100,000) | 2017 Crime Rate (per 100,000) | Percent Change in Crime Rate | 2016 Violent Crime Rate (per 100,000) | 2017 Violent Crime Rate (per 100,000) | Percent Change in Violent Crime Rate |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| New York <sup>4</sup>          | 2,008                         | 1,923                         | -4.2%                        | 546                                   | 510                                   | -6.6%                                |
| Los Angeles <sup>5</sup>       | 3,134                         | 3,154                         | 0.6%                         | 661                                   | 688                                   | 4.1%                                 |
| Chicago <sup>6</sup>           | 4,238                         | 4,308                         | 1.6%                         | 1,047                                 | 1,057                                 | 1.0%                                 |
| Houston <sup>7</sup>           | 5,295                         | 5,012                         | -5.4%                        | 975                                   | 1,000                                 | 2.6%                                 |
| Philadelphia <sup>8</sup>      | 4,049                         | 3,943                         | -2.6%                        | 909                                   | 876                                   | -3.6%                                |
| Las Vegas <sup>9*</sup>        | 3,663                         | Unavailable                   | Unavailable                  | 774                                   | 748                                   | -3.4%                                |
| Phoenix <sup>10</sup>          | 4,301                         | 4,439                         | 3.2%                         | 610                                   | 704                                   | 15.4%                                |
| San Antonio <sup>11</sup>      | 5,829                         | 5,425                         | -6.9%                        | 638                                   | 619                                   | -3.0%                                |
| San Diego <sup>12</sup>        | 2,362                         | 2,153                         | -8.8%                        | 337                                   | 325                                   | -3.6%                                |
| Dallas <sup>13</sup>           | 4,104                         | 3,870                         | -5.7%                        | 704                                   | 675                                   | -4.2%                                |
| San Jose <sup>14</sup>         | 2,705                         | 2,733                         | 1.0%                         | 330                                   | 342                                   | 3.6%                                 |
| Austin <sup>15</sup>           | 3,835                         | 3,486                         | -9.1%                        | 359                                   | 365                                   | 1.5%                                 |
| Charlotte <sup>16</sup>        | 4,805                         | 4,441                         | -7.6%                        | 707                                   | 662                                   | -6.5%                                |
| Jacksonville <sup>17*</sup>    | 4,148                         | Unavailable                   | Unavailable                  | 566                                   | 569                                   | 0.4%                                 |
| San Francisco <sup>18</sup>    | 6,113                         | 6,820                         | 11.6%                        | 671                                   | 671                                   | 0.0%                                 |
| Indianapolis <sup>19*</sup>    | 6,090                         | Unavailable                   | Unavailable                  | 1,295                                 | 1,243                                 | -4.1%                                |
| Columbus <sup>20*</sup>        | 4,491                         | Unavailable                   | Unavailable                  | 421                                   | 378                                   | -10.3%                               |
| Fort Worth <sup>21*</sup>      | 3,769                         | Unavailable                   | Unavailable                  | 468                                   | 510                                   | 9.1%                                 |
| El Paso <sup>22*</sup>         | 2,143                         | Unavailable                   | Unavailable                  | 345                                   | 326                                   | -5.4%                                |
| Seattle <sup>23</sup>          | 6,065                         | 5,926                         | -2.3%                        | 577                                   | 607                                   | 5.2%                                 |
| Denver <sup>24</sup>           | 4,166                         | 4,211                         | 1.1%                         | 576                                   | 587                                   | 1.8%                                 |
| Louisville <sup>25</sup>       | 5,071                         | 4,711                         | -7.1%                        | 647                                   | 636                                   | -1.8%                                |
| Detroit <sup>26</sup>          | 6,683                         | 6,355                         | -4.9%                        | 1,960                                 | 1,750                                 | -10.7%                               |
| Washington, D.C. <sup>27</sup> | 5,703                         | 4,938                         | -13.4%                       | 1,055                                 | 790                                   | -25.1%                               |
| Boston <sup>28</sup>           | 2,816                         | 2,685                         | -4.7%                        | 666                                   | 604                                   | -9.3%                                |
| Nashville <sup>29</sup>        | 4,730                         | 4,883                         | 3.2%                         | 1,033                                 | 1,065                                 | 3.1%                                 |
| Memphis <sup>30*</sup>         | 7,373                         | Unavailable                   | Unavailable                  | 1,739                                 | 1,883                                 | 8.3%                                 |
| Oklahoma City <sup>31</sup>    | 4,615                         | 4,397                         | -4.7%                        | 714                                   | 708                                   | -0.9%                                |
| Baltimore <sup>32</sup>        | 6,510                         | 6,661                         | 2.3%                         | 1,732                                 | 1,988                                 | 14.8%                                |
| Portland <sup>33</sup>         | 5,585                         | 6,387                         | 14.4%                        | 432                                   | 476                                   | 10.3%                                |
| <b>AVERAGE</b>                 |                               |                               | <b>-2.1%</b>                 |                                       |                                       | <b>-1.0%</b>                         |

Source: Police department and city reports. See endnotes for specific sources. Cities are ordered by population size. Percentage changes in rates are calculated from unrounded estimates.

\* For these cities, the authors were able to obtain data on violent crime only.

**TABLE 2: MURDER IN THE 30 LARGEST CITIES (2016-2017)**

| City                     | 2016 Total Murders | 2017 Total Murders | Percent Change in Murder | 2016 Murder Rate (per 100,000) | 2017 Murder Rate (per 100,000) | Percent Change in Murder Rate |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| New York <sup>34</sup>   | 335                | 292                | -12.8%                   | 3.9                            | 3.4                            | -13.4%                        |
| Los Angeles              | 293                | 282                | -3.8%                    | 7.3                            | 7.0                            | -4.8%                         |
| Chicago                  | 765                | 671                | -12.3%                   | 28.1                           | 24.6                           | -12.3%                        |
| Houston                  | 301                | 256                | -15.0%                   | 12.9                           | 10.7                           | -16.9%                        |
| Philadelphia             | 273                | 310                | 13.6%                    | 17.4                           | 19.7                           | 13.1%                         |
| Las Vegas <sup>35*</sup> | 158                | 199                | 25.9%                    | 9.9                            | 12.3                           | 23.5%                         |
| Phoenix                  | 146                | 161                | 10.3%                    | 9.2                            | 10.0                           | 8.3%                          |
| San Antonio              | 149                | 125                | -16.1%                   | 9.9                            | 8.2                            | -18.0%                        |
| San Diego                | 50                 | 34                 | -32.0%                   | 3.5                            | 2.4                            | -33.0%                        |
| Dallas                   | 171                | 168                | -1.9%                    | 12.9                           | 12.5                           | -3.5%                         |
| San Jose                 | 47                 | 32                 | -31.9%                   | 4.5                            | 3.0                            | -33.0%                        |
| Austin                   | 39                 | 27                 | -30.8%                   | 4.1                            | 2.7                            | -33.2%                        |
| Charlotte                | 67                 | 85                 | 26.9%                    | 7.5                            | 9.3                            | 24.0%                         |
| Jacksonville             | 106                | 119                | 12.5%                    | 12.0                           | 13.4                           | 11.0%                         |
| San Francisco            | 57                 | 56                 | -1.8%                    | 6.5                            | 6.3                            | -3.2%                         |
| Indianapolis             | 148                | 153                | 3.4%                     | 17.1                           | 17.5                           | 2.7%                          |
| Columbus                 | 91                 | 123                | 34.9%                    | 10.6                           | 14.0                           | 32.5%                         |
| Fort Worth               | 66                 | 69                 | 4.5%                     | 7.7                            | 7.9                            | 1.9%                          |
| El Paso                  | 17                 | 16                 | -4.8%                    | 2.5                            | 2.3                            | -5.1%                         |
| Seattle                  | 19                 | 27                 | 42.1%                    | 2.7                            | 3.7                            | 38.1%                         |
| Denver                   | 57                 | 58                 | 1.8%                     | 8.2                            | 8.1                            | -0.7%                         |
| Louisville               | 119                | 107                | -10.1%                   | 17.4                           | 15.5                           | -10.6%                        |
| Detroit                  | 303                | 261                | -13.9%                   | 45.2                           | 39.6                           | -12.6%                        |
| Washington, D.C.         | 138                | 116                | -15.9%                   | 20.3                           | 16.7                           | -17.4%                        |
| Boston                   | 49                 | 57                 | 16.3%                    | 7.3                            | 8.3                            | 14.6%                         |
| Nashville                | 81                 | 112                | 38.3%                    | 12.1                           | 16.5                           | 36.0%                         |
| Memphis                  | 196                | 177                | -9.7%                    | 29.9                           | 27.0                           | -9.6%                         |
| Oklahoma City            | 70                 | 81                 | 15.7%                    | 10.9                           | 12.4                           | 13.5%                         |
| Baltimore                | 318                | 342                | 7.5%                     | 51.4                           | 55.4                           | 7.8%                          |
| Portland                 | 14                 | 22                 | 57.1%                    | 2.2                            | 3.5                            | 61.2%                         |
| <b>AVERAGE</b>           |                    |                    | <b>-2.3%</b>             |                                |                                | <b>-3.4%</b>                  |

Source: Police department and city reports. See endnotes for specific sources. Cities are ordered by population size. Percentage changes in rates are calculated from unrounded estimates.

\* The estimate for Las Vegas is significantly higher than in the original Brennan Center report, because the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department originally excluded from its homicide count the 58 killings resulting from the October 1, 2017 mass shooting outside the Mandalay Bay resort. Subsequent reports have since counted those deaths in addition to other city homicides. See the endnote for Las Vegas for more details.

## METHODOLOGY

This report analyzes crime in the 30 largest American cities, based on population totals reported by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program (UCR). It is part of a series of crime reports published each year by the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law. These reports are meant to provide near real-time data on crime trends in a representative sample of major American cities, as well as to provide some insight into national crime trends. Any reference to the "crime rate," "violent crime rate," or "murder rate" in this report refers to the average rate in the 30 largest cities rather than national rates.

### Sources for Crime Data

Data on crime in 2016 were derived from the UCR.<sup>36</sup> For data on crime in 2017, the authors collected crime data directly from police departments. Most cities provided full data, covering the entirety of 2017. Where a city could not provide data for the full year, the authors constructed estimates based on partial-year data, as described below.

When collecting data, the authors searched first for reliable, regularly-updated data sources. Weekly CompStat reports — that is, regularly-reported data reports collected and used by local law enforcement to allocate police resources — were used whenever possible, as were monthly and quarterly reports. Reliable open data portals, such as those maintained by Baltimore and Chicago, were given priority.

Not all cities release regular analyses or maintain trustworthy data access portals. In those cases, the authors reached out to local police departments directly. The authors also reached out directly in cases where data are publicly available, but police departments are either slow to update them or their updates are incomplete. Lastly, if no response to this outreach was received in time for publication, the authors drew data from the most recent violent crime report compiled by the Major City Chiefs Police Association.

### Offense Definitions

The authors categorized offenses according to UCR definitions. Violent crime includes murder, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crime includes burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Murder includes solely homicides. Overall crime includes all of the above. Rape was excluded from this analysis for two reasons: because its UCR definition has changed over time, creating inaccuracies when data is compared, and because police reporting rates appear to be low. Valid comparisons of the number of rape offenses committed could be made, in a different type of analysis, using victimization reports.<sup>37</sup> For other offenses, while most city crime reports use UCR

definitions, some variation between cities may exist based on state or local laws.

### 2017 Projections and 2016 Comparisons

Crime data from 2017 were drawn directly from city sources — in many case CompStat reports. Some difficulties arise when comparing city-level data to final, standardized UCR data. CompStat data, for example, is reported using local definitions of crimes, which may vary between cities, whereas crime data in UCR reports are standardized between cities. There may also be differences in geographic coverage, with CompStat figures reporting crime rates according to one definition of the city limits, while the UCR looks at the county level, or vice-versa. To ensure an accurate comparison, the authors took into account historic variations between UCR and CompStat data in the following manner.

First, the authors determined how UCR-reported crime data differed from CompStat-reported crime data for 2016. For most cities, UCR data for that year closely resembled CompStat data, making it likely that final UCR data for 2017 would also resemble CompStat data.

For some cities, where the UCR data varied from CompStat data by 10 percent or more in past years, the authors adjusted 2017 CompStat data to reflect an estimate of what the 2017 UCR release will show. The authors made these adjustments by assuming that the percentage difference between the number of crimes reported in the UCR and the number of crimes reported in CompStat would be the same in 2016 as it was in 2017. (The ratios between CompStat and UCR data have been historically consistent, making this a safe assumption.) The following data points were adjusted accordingly:

- New York: aggravated assault, larceny
- Chicago: aggravated assault
- Las Vegas: robbery, aggravated assault
- Jacksonville: murder, robbery, aggravated assault
- Indianapolis: robbery, aggravated assault
- Columbus: murder, aggravated assault
- El Paso: murder
- Seattle: aggravated assault, larceny
- Washington, D.C.: aggravated assault
- Memphis: aggravated assault
- Portland: aggravated assault

Lastly, in the case of one city — Dallas — the authors were not able to obtain final data on crime in 2017 from city sources or by requests for information. However, the city did provide crime data through November. In this case, the authors used the estimating procedure outlined on page 5 of *Crime in 2017: An Updated Analysis*.<sup>38</sup>

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Ames Grawert & James Cullen, *Crime in 2017: A Preliminary Analysis*, Brennan Center for Justice, 2017, <https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/crime-2017-preliminary-analysis>.
- 2 Ames Grawert & James Cullen, *Crime in 2017: Updated Analysis*, Brennan Center for Justice, 2017, <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/crime-2017-updated-analysis>.
- 3 For analysis, see Brennan Ctr. for Justice, *Preliminary Analysis of 2015 FBI Uniform Crime Report*, Sept. 26, 2016, <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/preliminary-analysis-2015-fbi-uniform-crime-report>. For original source material, see United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Crime in the U.S. 2015,” 2016, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2015/crime-in-the-u.s.-2015/>.
- 4 Police Department, City of New York, “CompStat Citywide (2017),” last modified April 22, 2018, May 3, 2018, [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/crime\\_statistics/cs-en-us-city.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/crime_statistics/cs-en-us-city.pdf). Some data points in this city result from an analysis that combines the source data cited here with past FBI reports. For more information, see the Methodology, page 5.
- 5 Los Angeles Police Department, “COMPSTAT Citywide Profile, 12/04/17 – 12/31/17,” last accessed May 23, 2018, <http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/123117cityprof.pdf>.
- 6 Chicago Data Portal, “City of Chicago, Crimes – 2001 to Present (2017),” last modified April 30, 2018, last accessed May 3, 2018, <https://data.cityof-chicago.org/view/5cd6-ry5g>. Some data points in this city result from an analysis that combines the source data cited here with past FBI reports. For more information, see the Methodology, page 5.
- 7 City of Houston, Texas, “Houston Police Department Monthly UCR Crime by Street/Neighborhood Crime Statistics (2017),” last accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.houstontx.gov/police/cs/index-2.htm>.
- 8 City of Philadelphia, “Major Crimes — Citywide — as Reported to P.P.D for 2017,” last accessed May 3, 2018, <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B-23Pg6Sgxl1b3FOTGphM3c3OTQ>.
- 9 Major Cities Chiefs Association, *Violent Crime Survey – National Totals: Year-End Comparison*, 2018. Data from this publication includes information on violent crime only. Some data points in this city result from an analysis that combines the source data cited here with past FBI reports. For more information, see the Methodology, page 5.
- 10 Phoenix Police Department, “Uniform Crime Reporting Annual Comparison,” last accessed May 3, 2018, [https://www.phoenix.gov/policesite/Documents/UCR\\_2010-2017.pdf](https://www.phoenix.gov/policesite/Documents/UCR_2010-2017.pdf).
- 11 City of San Antonio, “Uniform Crime Reports,” last accessed May 3, 2018, <https://www.sanantonio.gov/SAPD/Uniform-Crime-Reports>.
- 12 Automated Regional Justice Information System, “Crime and Statistics and Maps, San Diego,” last modified March, 2018, last accessed April 20, 2018, <http://crimestats.arjjs.org/default.aspx> (from the drop-down boxes, select “Jan / 2017” for “Begin Date,” “Dec/ 2017” for “End Date,” and “San Diego” for “Agency”).
- 13 Dallas Police Department, “Enforcement Activity” last modified November 17, 2017, last accessed May 3, 2018 [http://www.dallaspolice.net/resources/CrimeReports/Crime%20Summary%20\(Green-sheet\).pdf](http://www.dallaspolice.net/resources/CrimeReports/Crime%20Summary%20(Green-sheet).pdf).
- 14 San Jose Police Department, “Official Crime Statistics” last modified March 2018, last accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.sjpd.org/CrimeStats/crimestats.html>
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- 16 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, “Crime Statistics” last modified January 31, 2018, last accessed May 3, 2018, <http://charlottenc.gov/CMPD/Safety/Pages/CrimeStats.aspx>.
- 17 Major Cities Chiefs Association, *Violent Crime Survey – National Totals: Year-End Comparison*, 2018.
- 18 Email from Lieutenant Kathryn Waaland, Officer in Charge, Legal Division, San Francisco Police Department, to author (April 9, 2018, 19:39 EST).
- 19 Major Cities Chiefs Association, *Violent Crime Survey – National Totals: Year-End Comparison*, 2018.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Seattle Police Department, “SeaStat,” last modified Jan. 2, 2018, last accessed May 2, 2018, <https://>

- [www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Police/SeaStat/SEASTAT\\_2018JAN3\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Police/SeaStat/SEASTAT_2018JAN3_FINAL.pdf). Some data points in this city result from an analysis that combines the source data cited here with past FBI reports. For more information, see the Methodology, page 5.
- 24 City of Denver, “Part 1: Crimes in the City and County of Denver Based on UCR Standards,” last accessed May 3, 2018, [https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/720/documents/statistics/2017/UCR\\_Citywide\\_Reported\\_Offenses\\_2017.pdf](https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/720/documents/statistics/2017/UCR_Citywide_Reported_Offenses_2017.pdf).
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- 26 City of Detroit, “2017 Part 1 Crime,” last accessed May 3, 2018, [https://www.scribd.com/document/368416935/2017-Year-End-Stats#fullscreen&from\\_embed](https://www.scribd.com/document/368416935/2017-Year-End-Stats#fullscreen&from_embed).
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- 28 Email from Jenna Savage, Senior Research Coordinator, Boston Police Department, to author (April 18, 2018, 9:47 EST).
- 29 Metropolitan Police Department of Nashville and Davidson County, *CompStat Weekly Analysis*, 2018, 8 [http://compstat.nashville.gov/2017/20171230\\_CompStat\\_Report.pdf](http://compstat.nashville.gov/2017/20171230_CompStat_Report.pdf).
- 30 Major Cities Chiefs Association, *Violent Crime Survey – National Totals: Year-End Comparison*, 2018.
- 31 Oklahoma City Police Department, “Crime Statistics December 2017,” last accessed May 3, 2018 <https://www.okc.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=10586>.
- 32 Open Baltimore, “BPD Part 1 Victim Based Crime Data,” last modified April 24, 2018, last accessed May 3, 2018, <https://data.baltimorecity.gov/Public-Safety/BPD-Part-1-Victim-Based-Crime-Data/ws-fq-mvij> (from the raw spreadsheet, data was exported and then filtered by date to remove all years other than 2016 and 2017, and then filtered again by crime type to include only Part 1 index crimes).
- 33 City of Portland, “Monthly Neighborhood Offense Statistics,” last updated April 18, 2018, last accessed May 3, 2018. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/71978>. Some data points in this city result from an analysis that combines the source data cited here with past FBI reports. For more information, see the Methodology, page 5.
- 34 Unless otherwise indicated, data citations for each city in Table 2 are identical to Table 1.
- 35 This estimate differs from the one provided in the Brennan Center’s last report due to a change in sources and reporting practices. Data used in the previous analysis — a December report by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (“LVMPD”) — excluded the 58 killings that occurred at the October 1, 2017, mass shooting outside the Mandalay Bay resort from its homicide count. The authors sought but were unable to obtain an updated report from the LVMPD for this report, and rely instead on year-end comparison data provided by the Major Cities Chiefs Association. That source does code the 58 Mandalay Bay deaths as homicides — in addition to 141 “citywide homicide” — and likely reflects an internal decision by the LVMPD to report these mass casualty deaths as homicides.
- 36 U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2016* (2017), tbl. 6, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/tables/table-6/table-6.xls/view>.
- 37 Rachel E. Morgan & Grace Kena, *Criminal Victimization, 2016*, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017, <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6166>.
- 38 Ames Grawert & James Cullen, *Crime in 2017: Updated Analysis*, Brennan Center for Justice, 2017, 5, <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/crime-2017-updated-analysis>.