

# 24 Crime

## Crime and Law Enforcement

Public safety in Japan has been deteriorating. The number of Penal Code offenses almost doubled in two decades to reach 3.69 million in 2002, marking a new postwar high for seven straight years, while the rate of cases cleared, which hovered around 70% until the late 1980s, dropped to 38.8%. The clearance rate excluding traffic violations plummeted to 20.8%, about one-third of the 1980s' level.

The situation has gradually improved since then, however, and in 2004 the number of Penal Code offenses decreased 6.0% from 2003 to 3.43 million. The rate of cases cleared also improved 3.4 points to 44.7% (26.1% excluding traffic violations). Of the total Penal Code offenses, 57.8% were larcenies, and 25.2% were traffic offenses. The number of crimes excluding traffic offenses also dropped 8.1% from 2003 to 2.56 million.

There were 1,419 homicides in 2004, down 2.3% from the previous year, 7,295 robberies (down 4.8%), and 2,176 rapes. Recently Japan has seen an increasing number of computer- and Internet-related crimes, and 2,081 such cases were cleared in 2004, up 12.5% from the previous year. People arrested for child abuse, another social problem, numbered 253 in 229 criminal cases in 2004. The figures had climbed 94.6% and 90.8%, respectively, over the last five years.

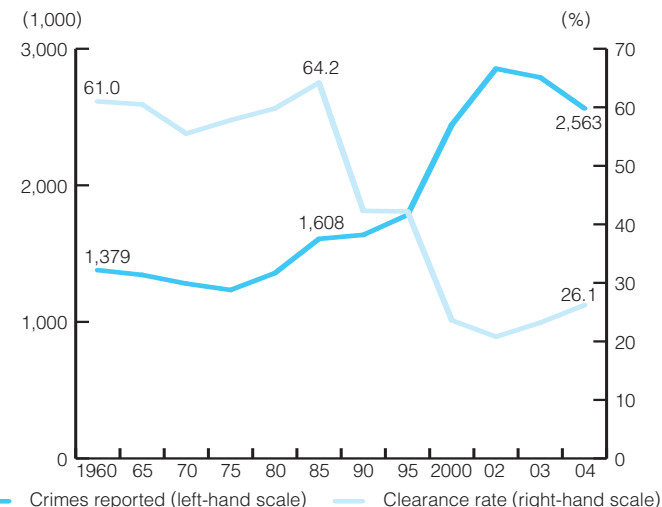
There is debate on Japan's present system of capital punishment. A Diet members' group and other civilian groups are actively calling for the abolition of the death penalty, as well as for the disclosure of information about each execution. In 2005 one prisoner was executed.

### Number of Crimes, Arrests, and Clearance Rate

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003	2004
Crimes reported (1,000)	1,496	1,932	1,813	2,218	3,256	3,646	3,428
Excluding traffic offenses	1,379	1,280	1,357	1,637	2,443	2,790	2,563
Persons arrested (1,000)	561	1,073	870	900	1,160	1,504	1,532
Excluding traffic offenses	443	381	392	293	310	649	668
Crimes per 100,000 population	1,601	1,863	1,549	1,794	2,565	2,857	2,684
Excluding traffic offenses	1,476	1,234	1,160	1,324	1,925	2,187	2,007
Clearance rate (%)	64.1	70.5	69.9	57.4	42.7	41.3	44.7
Excluding traffic offenses	61.0	55.5	59.8	42.3	23.6	23.2	26.1

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Hanzai hakusho* (White Paper on Crime), 2005.

## Trends in Number of Crimes and Clearance Rate



Source: Ministry of Justice, *Hanzai hakusho* (White Paper on Crime), 2005.

Note: Figures exclude traffic offenses.

### Number of Penal Code Offenses, Offenders, and Clearance Rate, 2004

	Reported Penal Code offenses	Cleared Penal Code offenses	Cleared Penal Code offenders	Clearance rate (%)
Homicide	1,419	1,342	1,391	94.6
Robbery	7,295	3,666	4,154	50.3
Physical injury	35,937	22,938	27,069	63.8
Assault	23,691	10,666	11,002	45.0
Menace	2,537	1,581	1,388	62.3
Extortion	14,424	5,915	7,063	41.0
Larceny	1,981,574	447,950	195,151	22.6
Fraud	83,015	26,617	11,238	32.1
Embezzlement	104,412	97,362	97,293	93.2
Rape	2,176	1,403	1,107	64.5
Indecent assault	9,184	3,656	2,225	39.8
Arson	2,174	1,513	867	69.6
Bribery	100	94	113	94.0
Abduction	320	232	187	72.5
Traffic professional negligence	864,569	864,569	900,119	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,427,606</b>	<b>1,532,459</b>	<b>1,289,416</b>	<b>44.7</b>

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Hanzai hakusho* (White Paper on Crime), 2005.

## Crime and Arrest Rates in Major Countries, 2003

	Crimes per 100,000 population		Arrest rate (%)	
	Homicide	Theft	Homicide	Theft
Japan	1.2	1,752	93.7	19.4
UK <sup>a</sup>	3.3	5,815	79.8	14.3
Germany	3.1	3,670	95.6	29.7
France	3.6	3,715	81.0	10.3
USA	5.7	3,588	62.4	16.4

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Hanzai hakusho* (White Paper on Crime), 2005.  
a. England and Wales only.

## Sentences Passed on Persons Charged

	Death	Indeterminate sentence <sup>a</sup>	Term <sup>a</sup>	Fine	Not guilty	No sentence <sup>b</sup>	Total
1993	7	27	56,373	1,142,241	124	782	1,199,554
1994	3	35	58,144	1,081,499	58	614	1,140,353
1995	3	35	59,157	971,918	52	551	1,031,716
1996	3	34	62,219	1,010,392	45	534	1,073,227
1997	4	32	64,207	1,034,779	58	487	1,099,567
1998	7	45	65,926	1,009,757	57	537	1,076,329
1999	4	48	69,680	1,020,336	59	574	1,090,701
2000	6	59	76,071	910,088	46	644	986,914
2001	5	68	78,585	887,801	44	635	967,138
2002	3	82	83,711	839,896	73	609	924,374
2003	2	117	88,917	787,289	80	665	877,070
2004	14	115	90,030	746,567	94	708	837,528

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Hanzai hakusho* (White Paper on Crime), 2005.  
a. Imprisonment.

## Types and Numbers of Penal Institutions, 2005

Prison	59
Juvenile prison	8
Detention house	7
Juvenile training school	53
Juvenile classification home	52

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Hanzai hakusho* (White Paper on Crime), 2005.  
Note: Figures are as of April 1.

## Average Daily Population of Penal Institutions

	Total	Convicted prisoners	Condemned prisoners	Unconvicted prisoners	Confinement in a workhouse	Others
1950	103,170	85,254	76	17,259	581	n/a
1960	75,821	63,330	54	11,922	470	45
1970	49,209	40,917	73	8,010	189	20
1980	50,596	42,142	24	8,285	135	11
1990	48,243	41,141	43	6,952	99	8
1995	46,535	38,013	57	8,283	178	4
2000	58,747	47,683	53	10,637	366	7
2002	67,354	55,132	57	11,694	467	4
2003	71,889	59,069	57	12,052	708	5
2004	75,289	62,641	59	11,686	899	4

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Hanzai hakusho* (White Paper on Crime), 2005.

## Organized Crime

Members of organized crime groups (*boryokudan*) as of the end of 2005 numbered about 86,300, a decrease of 700 (0.8%) from the previous year. Of the total, approximately 43,300 were full-time members, a decrease of 1,000 (2.3%) from 2004.

The police have been stepping up their efforts to crack down on organized crime by introducing in 1992 the Law Concerning Prevention of Unjust Acts by *Boryokudan* Members, the so-called anti-*boryokudan* law, the first law defining the *boryokudan* as antisocial organizations. Groups conforming to certain conditions are cited as designated *boryokudan*, and the law is enforced on their members. As of the end of 2005, there were 21 designated *boryokudan* throughout Japan.

To strengthen measures to combat organized crime, a set of three laws was enacted in 1999, enabling law-enforcement authorities to wiretap communications during investigations and expanding the punishment for laundering and concealment of profits from crime.

## Organized Crime Members Arrested

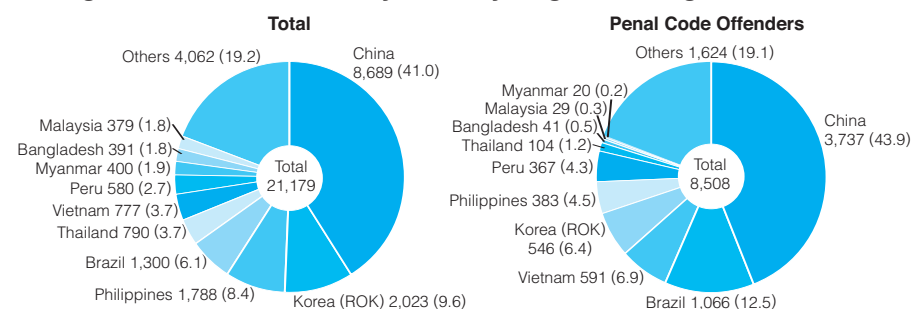
Year	Year	Year	Year		
1970	42,815	1985	48,213	2000	31,054
1975	53,058	1990	34,599	2004	29,325
1980	52,247	1995	33,011	2005	29,614

Source: National Police Agency.

## Crimes Committed by Foreigners

As the number of foreigners entering Japan increased from 3.50 million in 1990 to 7.45 million in 2005, so the number of crimes committed by foreigners rose. In 2005, 21,179 foreign nationals were arrested in 47,874 criminal cases, increases of 344% and 655%, respectively, over the 1990 figures. Of the 21,179, 41.0% were Chinese, followed by Koreans (9.6%), Filipinos (8.4%), and Brazilians (6.1%). Those arrested for violent crimes (homicide, robbery, arson, and rape) decreased 6.2% from 2003 to 395. Recently Japan has seen a growing presence of foreign criminal organizations, such as the Chinese Snakehead gangs, a human smuggling contractor; the Hong Kong triads; and the Russian Mafia.

### Foreign Nationals Arrested by Country/Region of Origin, 2005



Source: National Police Agency.

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentage of total.

## Juvenile Delinquency

In 2004, 193,076 juvenile delinquents were arrested, a ratio of 15.1 delinquents for every 1,000 youths. This represents a 39.2% decrease from a peak in 1983, or 2.1 fewer delinquents per 1,000 youths. Recently, however, violent crimes committed by juveniles have been on the rise. In 2004, 1,301 juveniles were arrested for robbery, 158 for rape, 62 for homicide, and 282 for arson. The number of juveniles arrested for these crimes topped 2,000 for the first time in 1997 and remained over 2,000 for seven years before the figure dropped to 1,803 in 2004.

## Arrests for Criminal Offenses

	Juveniles		Adults		Share of juveniles in total (%)
	Number of arrests	Per 1,000 population	Number of arrests	Per 1,000 population	
1950	158,426	9.2	458,297	10.1	25.7
1955	121,753	6.7	437,104	8.6	21.8
1960	196,682	9.7	413,565	7.4	32.2
1965	234,959	11.7	515,963	8.3	31.3
1970	224,943	13.3	883,254	12.6	20.3
1975	196,974	12.1	668,802	8.7	22.8
1980	269,769	15.7	653,958	8.1	29.2
1985	304,088	16.0	722,296	8.4	29.6
1990	244,122	13.2	683,688	7.5	26.3
1995	193,308	12.0	799,759	8.2	19.5
2000	193,260	13.7	987,359	9.8	16.4
2002	202,417	15.1	1,037,624	10.2	16.3
2003	203,684	15.5	1,087,640	10.6	15.8
2004	193,076	15.1	1,116,531	10.8	14.7

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Hanzai hakusho* (White Paper on Crime), 2005.

Note: Juveniles are persons aged between 10 and 19 years; adults are persons aged 20 years and over.

## Drug Abuse

The import, possession, and use of narcotics and stimulant drugs, except under a doctor's supervision, is forbidden in Japan. Since the early 1970s, however, the abuse of stimulant drugs has become a problem. Previously members of gangs that engaged in drug smuggling accounted for more than half of drug-related arrests, but ordinary citizens, particularly young people, have been showing a higher share of arrests in recent years.

The number of people arrested for stimulant drug offenses had been hovering at around 15,000 in the early 1990s, but it jumped to over 17,000 in 1995, then to nearly 20,000 in 1997. This upward trend was seen as the third wave of stimulant drug abuse, following the first wave that peaked in 1954 and the second in 1984. The number was 12,220 in 2004, a decrease of 16.4% from the previous year.

## Number of People Arrested for Drug Offenses

	Stimulant drugs	Marijuana	Narcotics	Opium
1955	32,140	52	1,753	181
1960	476	10	1,987	315
1965	735	259	1,090	902
1970	1,682	733	245	230
1975	8,422	909	232	140
1980	20,200	1,433	158	264
1985	23,344	1,273	138	443
1990	15,267	1,620	240	111
1995	17,364	1,555	334	172
2000	19,156	1,224	254	67
2002	16,964	1,873	327	55
2003	14,797	2,173	530	55
2004	12,397	2,312	635	68

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Hanzai hakusho* (White Paper on Crime), 2005.

## Police System

Japan's police system consists of separate prefectural forces guided and coordinated by the National Police Agency. Prefectural police forces perform the daily functions of law enforcement under the administration of prefectural public safety commissions. The National Police Agency, which operates under the administration of the National Public Safety Commission, supervises police training programs, procures equipment, compiles crime statistics, and provides criminal identification services on a nationwide basis.

Employees of Japan's police forces in fiscal 2005 numbered 285,112, of whom about 11,600 were female police officers and 7,501 worked for the National Police Agency. The ratio of citizens to police in Japan is high compared with that of most industrial nations, and law enforcement is aided by an extensive network of neighborhood police boxes (*koban*), which number about 6,455 nationwide. In 2004 it took the police an average of 7 minutes 15 seconds to reach the scene of a crime after receiving an emergency call.