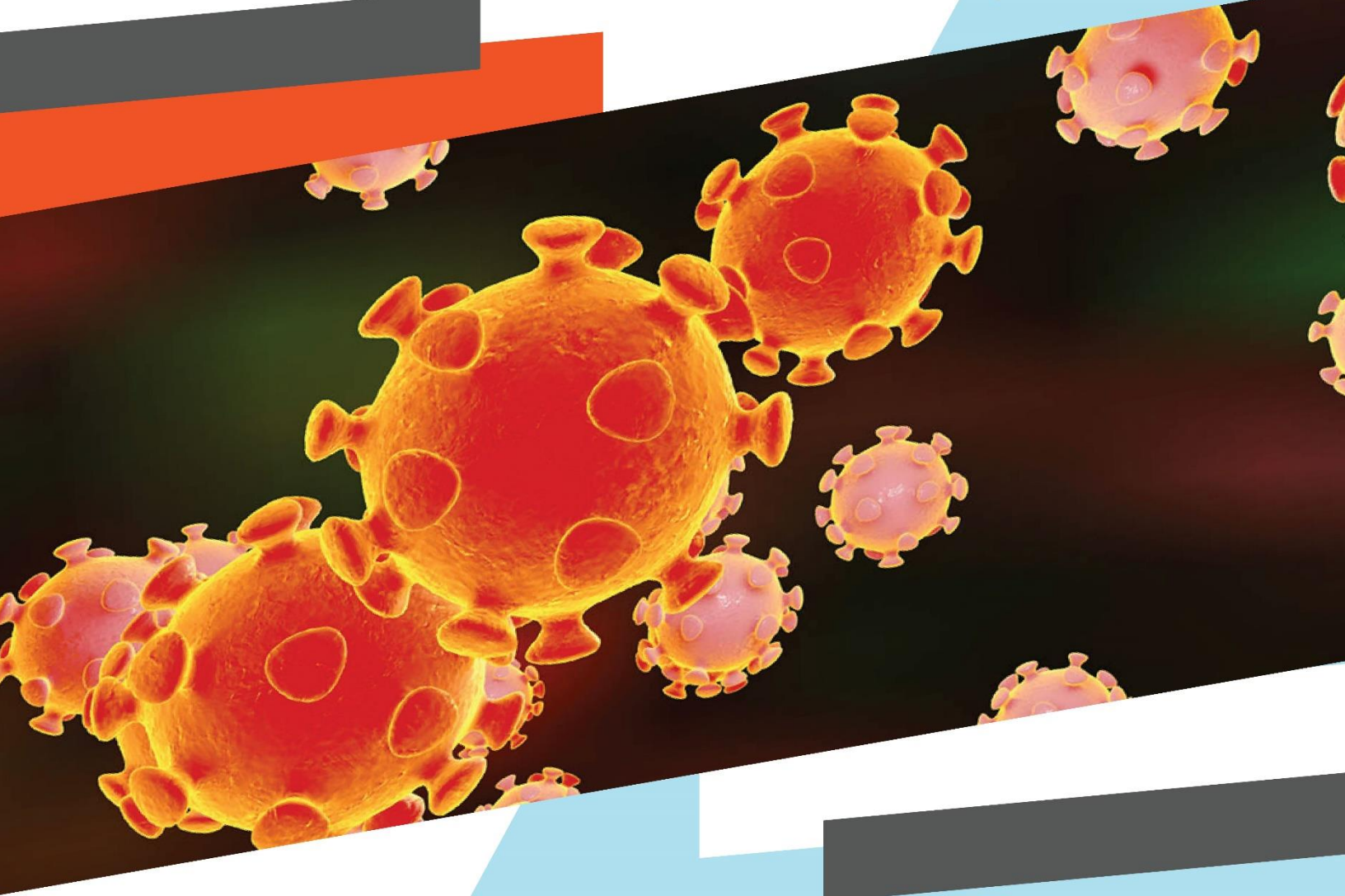


APRIL
2020

BELIZE CRIME OBSERVATORY



CRIME ANALYSIS **REPORT**

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CRIME & COVID-19



April 2020
lockdown
drives down
major crimes



Major
Crimes
declined
48%

3 | Lowest
murder count
for any month
since Nov 2013



Robberies
down > 90%



Crime Analysis Report

PERIOD: 1st – 30th April 2020



SUMMARY

- During the month of April 2020, police-recorded major crimes declined 48% over April 2019, from 79 to 41.
- Overall, they decreased by 18% (from 367 to 302) for the four-month period, January to April 2020, relative to the same period in the prior year.
- Three murders were recorded nationally during April 2020, the lowest monthly count since November 2013. During the month of April, cases of robbery declined over 90%.
- Most notably, no murders were recorded in Belize City during April, despite the release on 16 April 2020 of the 142 gang members or affiliates incarcerated following the 30-day State of Emergency declared for the City's Southside (Precincts 1 and 2), targeting 8 zones where fatal shootings had been most concentrated.

1,543 persons – most often young males ages 18-25 – were arrested and charged in April 2020 for COVID-19-related State of Emergency violations.

NATIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

- In addition to the gang-related State of Emergency measures, which extended into April 2020, new State of Emergency measures were declared for San Pedro / Ambergris Caye in the wake of the first confirmed case of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on 22 March 2020. National State of Emergency measures were implemented beginning April, including a total 2-week lockdown spanning 11 to 25 April 2020. The State of Emergency included stringent curfew measures.
- In Belize, ramped-up policing to help maintain law and order and enforce State of Emergency regulations was complemented by Belize's COVID-19 Unemployment Relief Program, to support persons who had lost their jobs and/or income flows due to the adverse economic impacts of COVID-19. Furthermore, financial assistance was also provided by the Government of Belize to the longer-term unemployed. More than 80,000 applications for relief were filed in April.
- This economic relief (together with other community-led support initiatives) may have buffered the potential adverse effects of COVID-19 on crimes of dishonesty.
- A total of 1,543 persons, most often young males ages 18-25, were arrested and charged in April 2020 for COVID-19 related State of Emergency violations, with the most common offence being "unable to provide reasons for movement outside of curfew." The second most common offence was "breach of curfew."
- Convictions for violations, which include failure to wear a face mask when in public, could result in a BZ\$5,000 fine or prison term of up to 2 years.

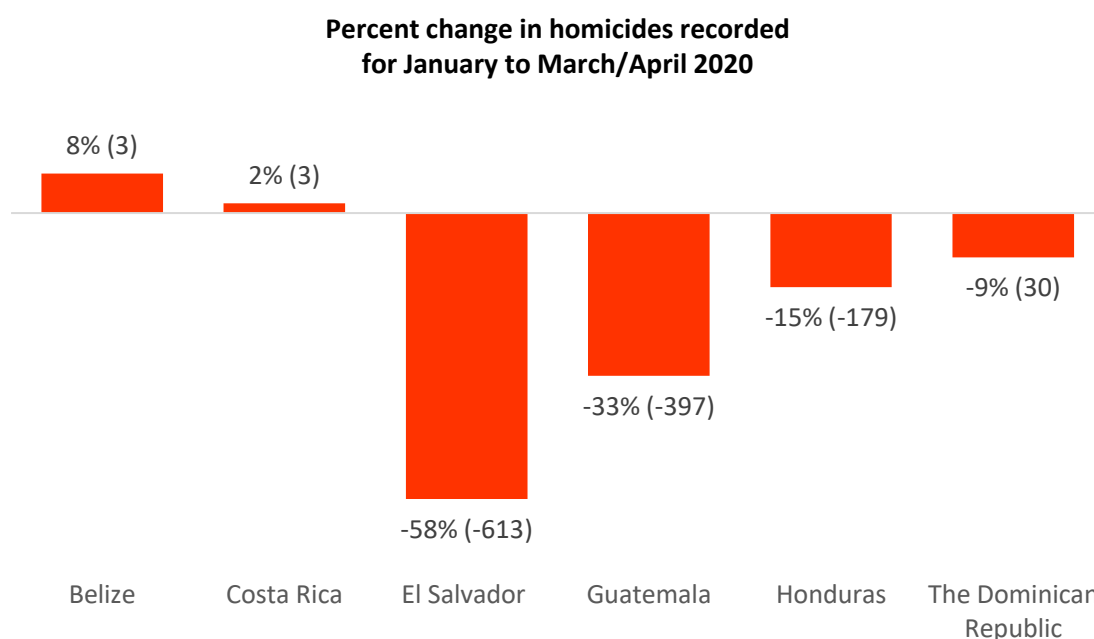
Crime Analysis Report

PERIOD: 1st – 30th April 2020



COVID-19 AND CRIME IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- Generally, countries in our immediate vicinity reported a **reduction in homicides** and other forms of violent crimes, associated with state-enforced lockdowns, curfews and other restrictive measures.
- Information provided through the USAID-funded InfoSegura Project, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic, revealed that homicides declined roughly 30% between January and April 2020 relative to the comparable period in 2019. Countries generally reported a steep fall in violent crimes over March and April 2020, as COVID-19 measures restricting human mobility came into effect.
- The reduction, reported for both males and females, was most prominent in the Under 30 age group. Meanwhile, the countries generally recorded an increase in homicides in the 30-50 group.
- Belize and Costa Rica both reported a higher number of homicides. Furthermore, the number of female murder victims in Belize was higher than the comparable period in 2019, contrary to the overall trend in the countries included in the regional analysis.



(Data: InfoSegura/UNDP report, *ANÁLISIS SOBRE LA SITUACIÓN DE VIOLENCIA Y SEGURIDAD CIUDADANA 1ER. TRIMESTRE 2020 _ 1T-2020*)

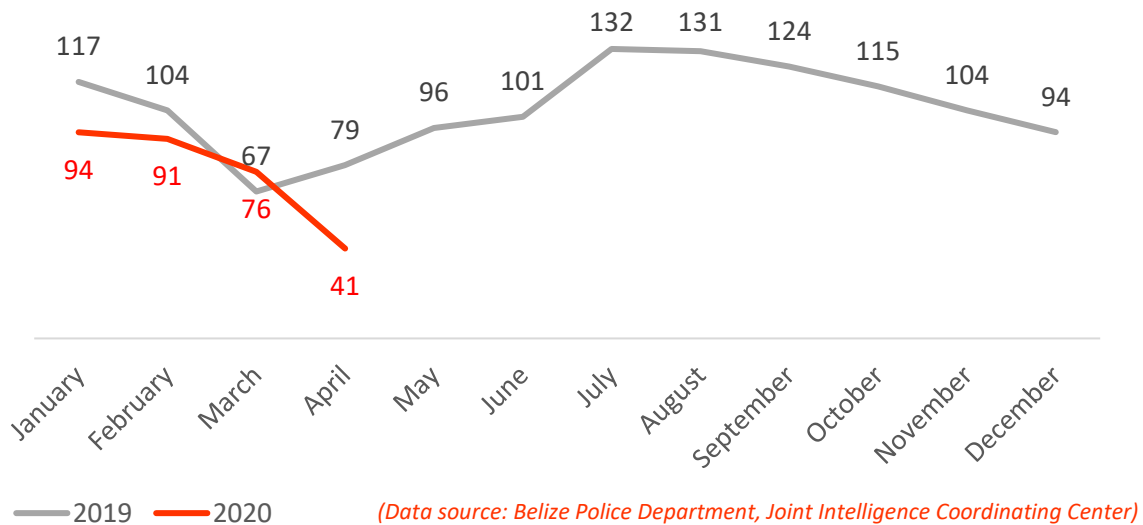
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PERIOD: 1st – 30th April 2020

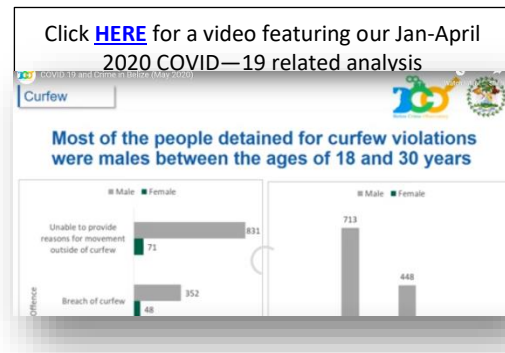


MAJOR CRIMES

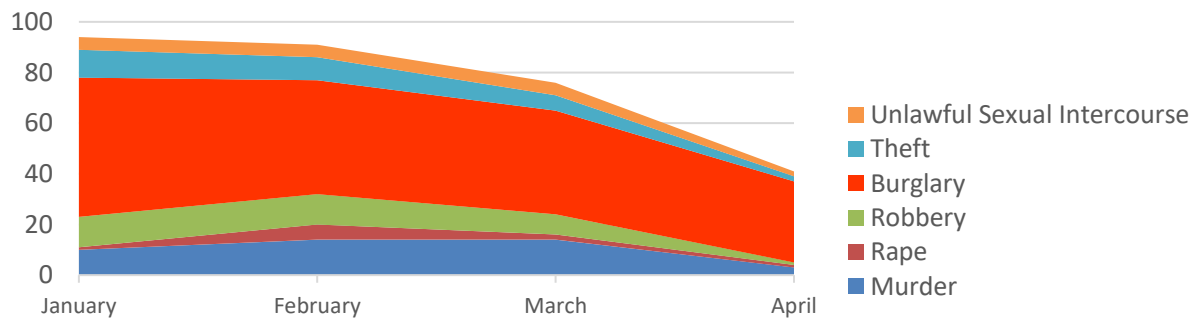
In April 2020, major crime reports continued to decline for the third consecutive month (relative to the previous month). The decline (from 79 to 41 cases) amounted to 48%, compared to the same month in 2019.



During April 2020, an increase was recorded for only unlawful sexual intercourse. There was no change in the number of rape cases. Cases were fewer for the other 4 categories of major crimes: murder, robbery, burglary and theft.



Trend in police-recorded major crimes (Jan-April 2020)



(Data source: Belize Police Department, Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center)

Crime Analysis Report

PERIOD: 1st – 30th April 2020



MURDER



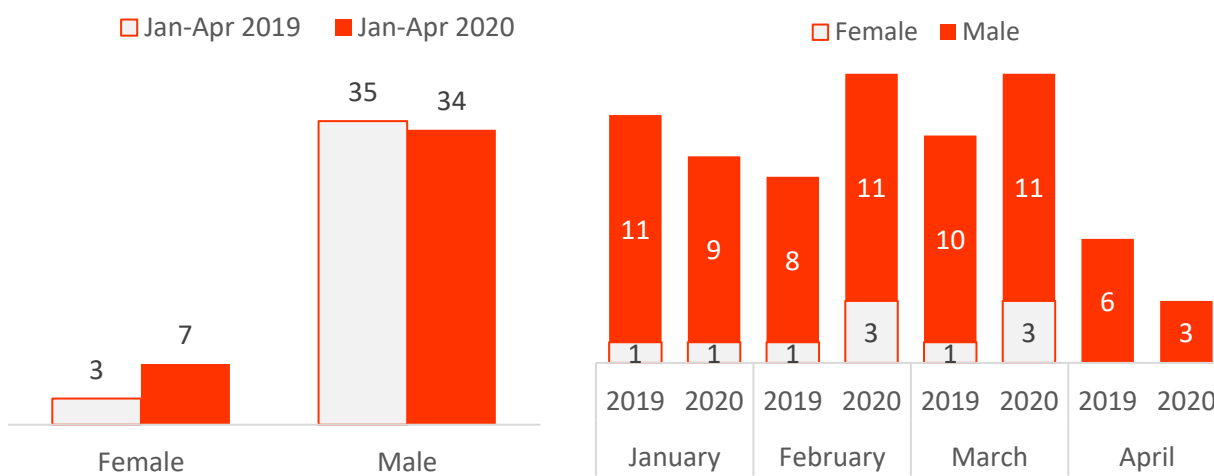
Three murders were recorded in Belize during April 2020: two in the Belize District (in Hattieville and in Ladyville), and one in Punta Gorda, Toledo District.

The total murder count for January to April 2020 was 41, up from 38 for the same period during 2019. This represents an overall increase of 3 incidents (or 8%).

April was the first month for 2020 to have recorded no female murder victims. Nonetheless, the number of female murder victims for January to April 2020 was twice what was recorded for January to April 2019.

On the other hand, the number of male murder victims decreased by 1 over the 4-month period (January to April 2020), relative the same period the previous year. The number of male murder victims in April 2020 was half the number for April 2019.

Number of murder victims for the period January to April 2020 (compared to same period in 2019), disaggregated by sex



(Data source: Belize Police Department, Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center)

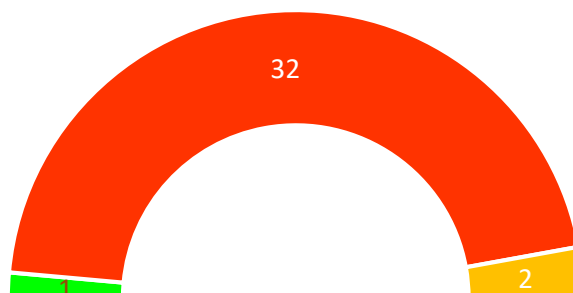
Crime Analysis Report

PERIOD: 1st – 30th April 2020



PROPERTY CRIMES

- There were 35 cases of property crimes recorded by the Belize Police Department during April 2020, a decline of 51% (or 37 incidents) from 72 in April 2019.
- Of the 35 incidents, 1 was a robbery, 32 were burglaries, and 2 were incidents of theft of items valued at least BZ\$5,000.
- A decline in April 2020 relative to April 2019 was recorded for all three categories, but the greatest decline (amounting to 95%) was recorded for robberies.

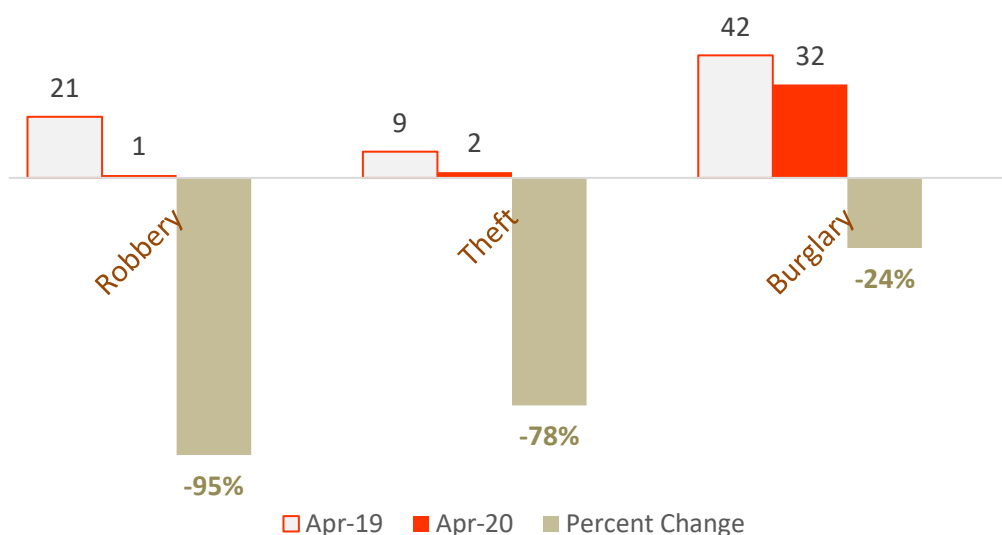


■ Robbery ■ Burglary ■ Theft

(Data source: Belize Police Department, Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center)

About 85% of major crimes reported were property crimes, and burglaries accounted for 78% of police-recorded major crimes.

Change in number property crimes cases for April 2020 compared to April 2019



(Data source: Belize Police Department, Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center)

Crime Analysis Report

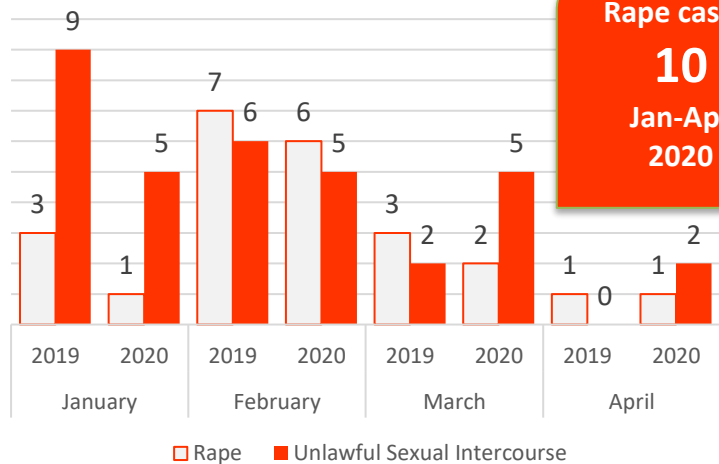
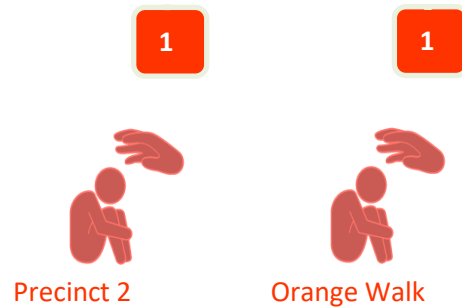
PERIOD: 1st – 30th April 2020



SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Unlawful Sexual Intercourse:

- 2 report for April 2020



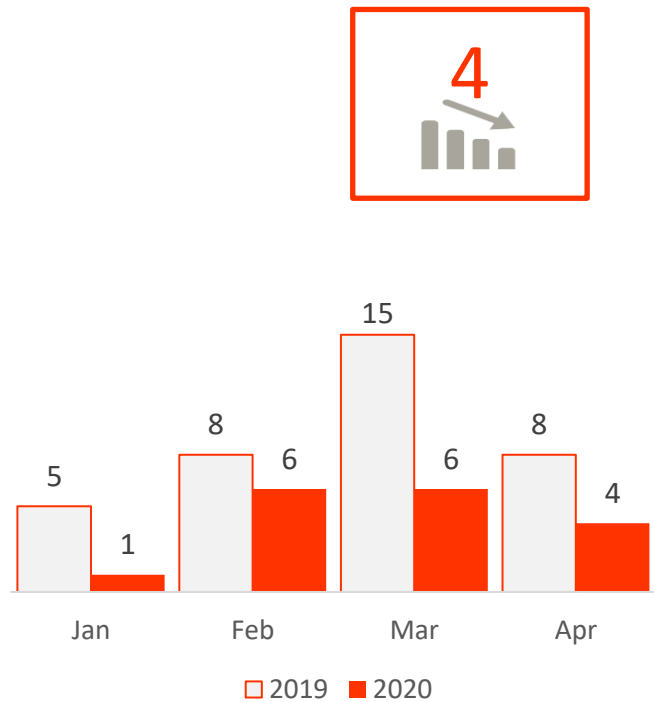
(Data source: Belize Police Department, Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center)

TRAFFIC FATALITIES



Authorities recorded a major decline in road traffic fatalities, from 8 in April 2019 to 4 in April 2020. For every month, from January to April 2020, the number of road traffic fatalities reported has been lower than the same time during the previous year.

Road traffic fatalities declined markedly (by 53%) during the first four months of 2020, to a cumulative count of 17, down from 36 for the same period of 2019.

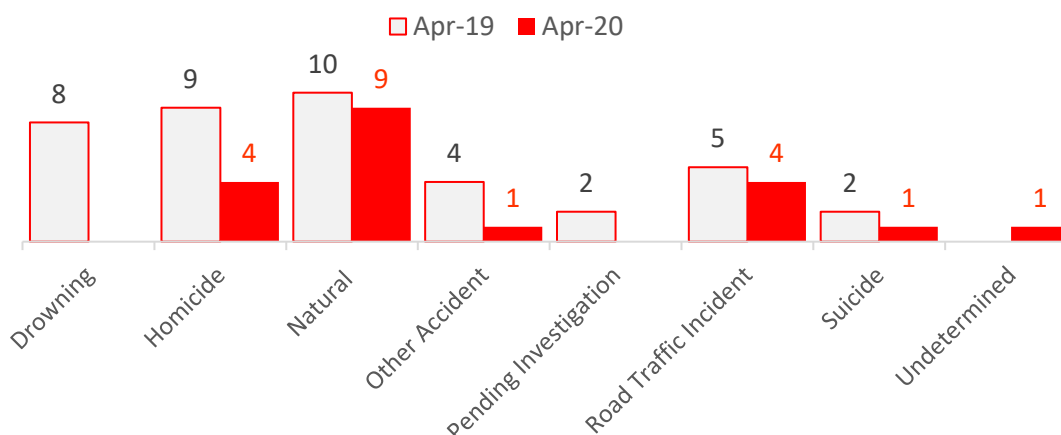


(Data sources: National Forensic Science Service, the Ministry of Health and the Belize Police Department)

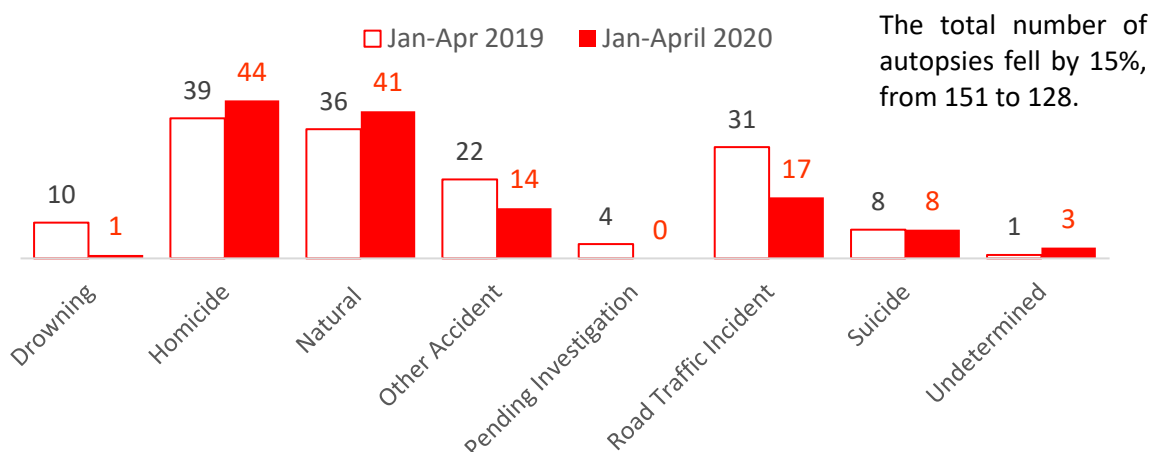
OTHER VIOLENT DEATHS

During April 2020, the National Forensic Science Service performed 20 autopsies, including 4 for homicides, 1 for a suspected suicide and 4 for road traffic fatalities¹. The remainder of the autopsies were for non-violent deaths, as detailed in the chart below. Notably, the number of autopsies performed for the month was down 50% compared to April 2019. Most notably, no drownings were recorded during April, corresponding with COVID-19-related restrictions on movement, and a temporary ban on swimming at public pools, rivers, and beaches. Last April, 8 autopsies were done on victims of drowning.

Number of autopsies by type for April 2020 (compared to April 2019)



Number of autopsies by type for Jan-Apr 2020 (compared to Jan-Apr 2019)



(Data source: National Forensic Science Service)

¹ Autopsies are not always done during the month a person dies. There are occasions when autopsies for persons who die near the end of one month are conducted in the following month.

Crime Analysis Report

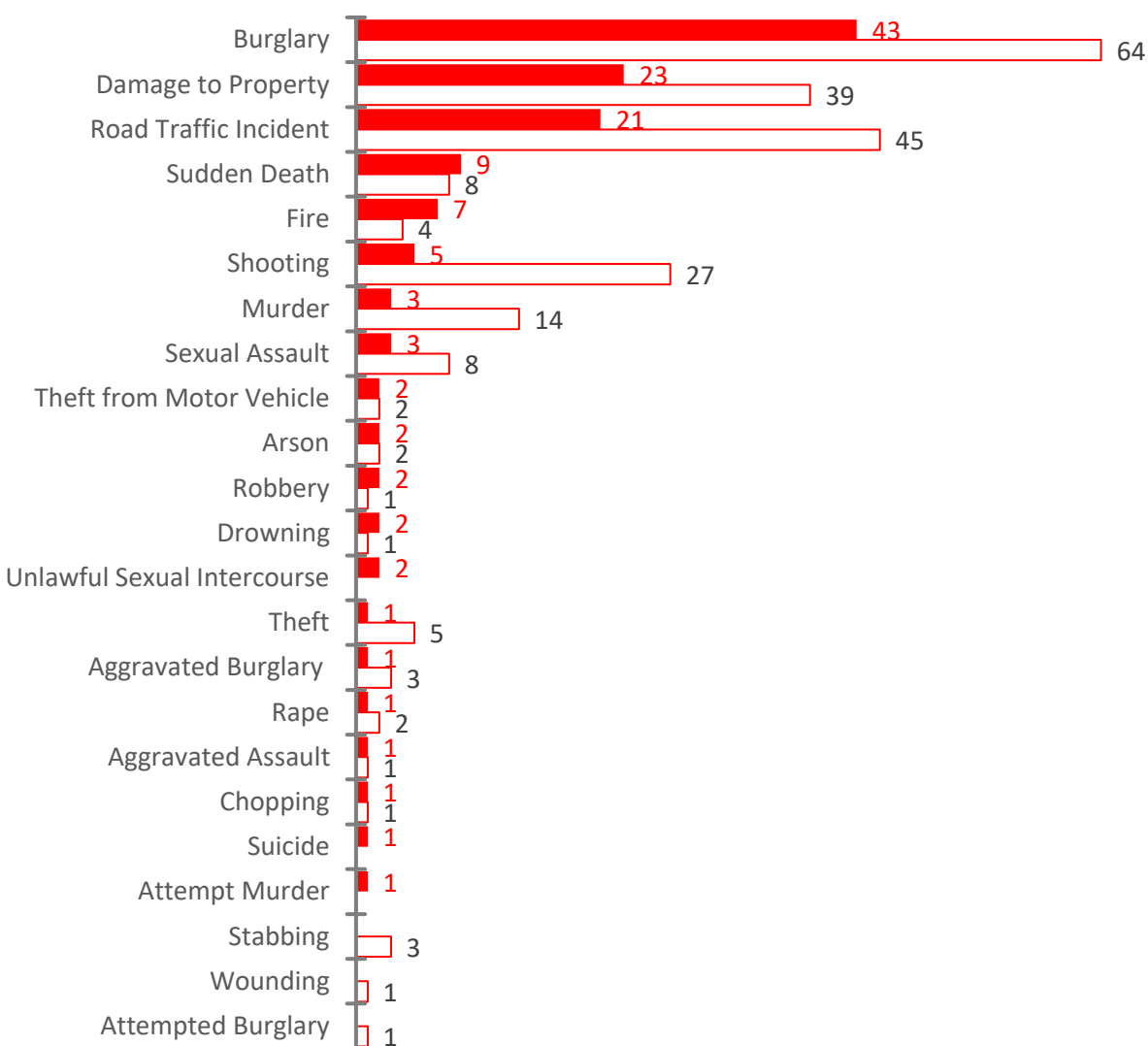
PERIOD: 1st – 30th April 2020



The Scenes of Crime Unit of the National Forensic Science Service processed 131 scenes related to the crimes or incidents listed in the chart below. Burglary continued to be the most prevalent crime type. Damage to property rose to second in rank. Murder fell in rank from 5th to 7th.

During January 2020, a total of 249 crime or incident scenes were processed. This increased to 280 during February 2020. The decline from 232 in March 2020 to 131 in April 2020 amounted to 44%.

Total amount of scenes processed by crime or incident type (April and March 2020)



(Data source: National Forensic Science Service)

Crime Analysis Report

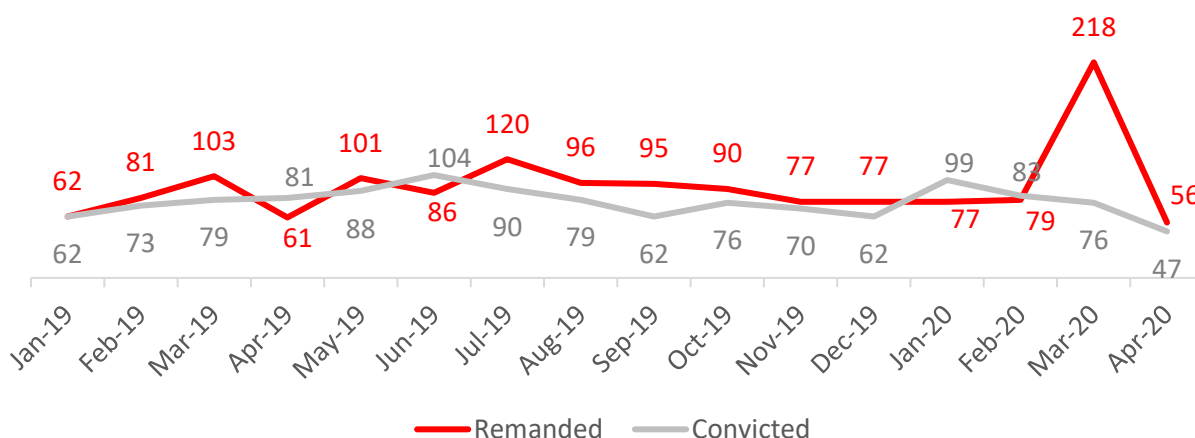
PERIOD: 1st – 30th April 2020



IMPRISONMENT

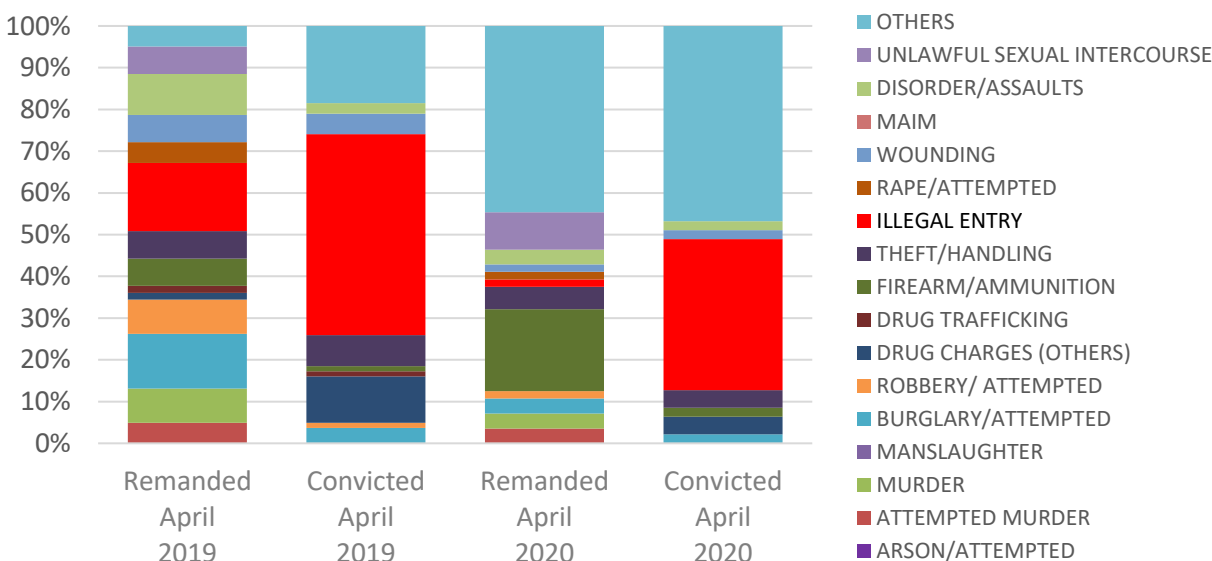
Incarceration for the period January to April 2020 increased by 17% over January to April 2019 (from 602 to 735). However, the number of newly incarcerated inmates fell by 27%, from 142 in April 2019 to 103 in April 2020, mostly attributable to a decline in newly convicted inmates, from 81 to 47 (or 42%). This was despite a notable decline in convictions for illegal entry, which generally accounts for the largest percentage of the intake of convicted inmates. Another area recording a decline was convictions for drug charges.

Change on number of newly remanded and convicted inmates since January 2019



(Data source: Belize Central Prison/Kolbe Foundation)

Proportion of remanded and convicted inmates by offence type (April 2019 vs April 2020)



(Data source: Belize Central Prison/Kolbe Foundation)

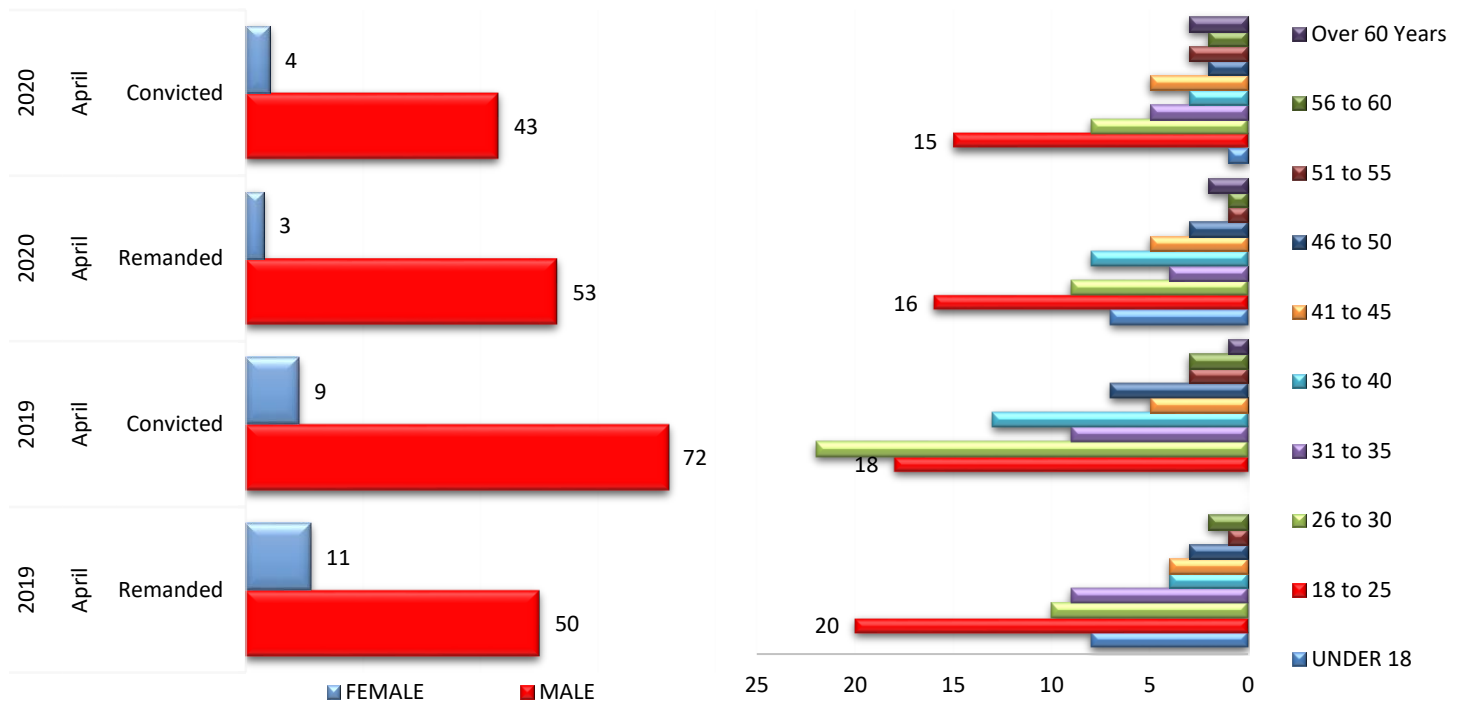
Crime Analysis Report

PERIOD: 1st – 30th April 2020



Young males between the ages of 18 to 25 continued to account for the largest number of new inmates, both among the remanded and convicted groups. However, in April 2020, both the number of new male and female intake declined overall relative to the same month in 2019.

Number of Remanded and Convicted Inmates, disaggregated by sex and age for April 2020 compared to April 2019



(Data source: Belize Central Prison/Kolbe Foundation)

GLOSSARY

Gang-related Crime: a criminal offence carried out by a gang or member of a gang, as classified by the Belize Police Department. The 2018 Amendment to The Crime Control and Criminal Justice legislation (Chapter 102 of the Laws of Belize) regards “any criminal activity or any enterprise, pursuit or undertaking in relation to a serious offence, acquiesced in, or consented or agreed to, or directed, ordered, authorized, requested or ratified by any gang member” as gang-related activity, and includes a schedule of serious offences under the wider classification of gang-related activities.

Homicide: the unlawful killing of a human being by another human being, either intentionally or not. The homicide classification used in this report is based on the classification by the National Forensic Science Service, for reporting purposes and includes murder and manslaughter.

Major Crime: The Belize Police Department includes six crime types under its classification of major crimes: murder, rape, unlawful sexual intercourse, robbery, burglary and theft. Only theft of items valued BZ\$5,000 and above are included among major crimes.

Police Formation/Precinct: The Belize Police Department operates 17 policing areas, referred to as formations and precincts. The Belize City area is divided into four precincts: Precinct 1, Precinct 2, Precinct 3, and Precinct 4. Orange Walk has one police formation, and so does Corozal. Punta Gorda is the police formation for the entire Toledo District. Stann Creek is divided into three policing areas: Placencia, Dangriga and the Intermediate Southern Formation in Independence Village. The divisions exist for operational purposes and are not necessarily geographic. For example, the Belmopan Formation includes some surrounding villages, such as Roaring Creek and Armenia.

Property Crimes: robberies, burglary and theft, involving the deprivation of the victim of any form of property, including cash, livestock, household goods, motor vehicles, etc.

Sexual Violence: The two major crimes classified as sexual violence in this report are rape and unlawful sexual intercourse.

Suicide: The act of an individual taking his or her own life.

Violent Death: Any form of death that results from an external factor, such as the use of a weapon or any object, toxin, or means of force, either by another person or the victim, whether the fatality was accidentally or intentionally caused. This report focuses on three types of violent deaths: homicides, suicides and road traffic fatalities.

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*“Supporting Improvements in
Citizen Security by Informing,
Interpreting, and Influencing
the Understanding of Crime.”*

Belize Crime Observatory
Ministry of National Security (Home Affairs)



<https://bco.gov.bz>



bco@nsc.gov.bz

*DATA SOURCES: Belize Police Department - Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center and Gang Suppression Unit; the National Forensic Science Service; and the Belize Central Prison.
Figures are reported as of April 2020. Any future revisions will be noted in subsequent reports.*