

**MAY**  
**2020**

BELIZE CRIME OBSERVATORY



# **CRIME ANALYSIS** **REPORT**

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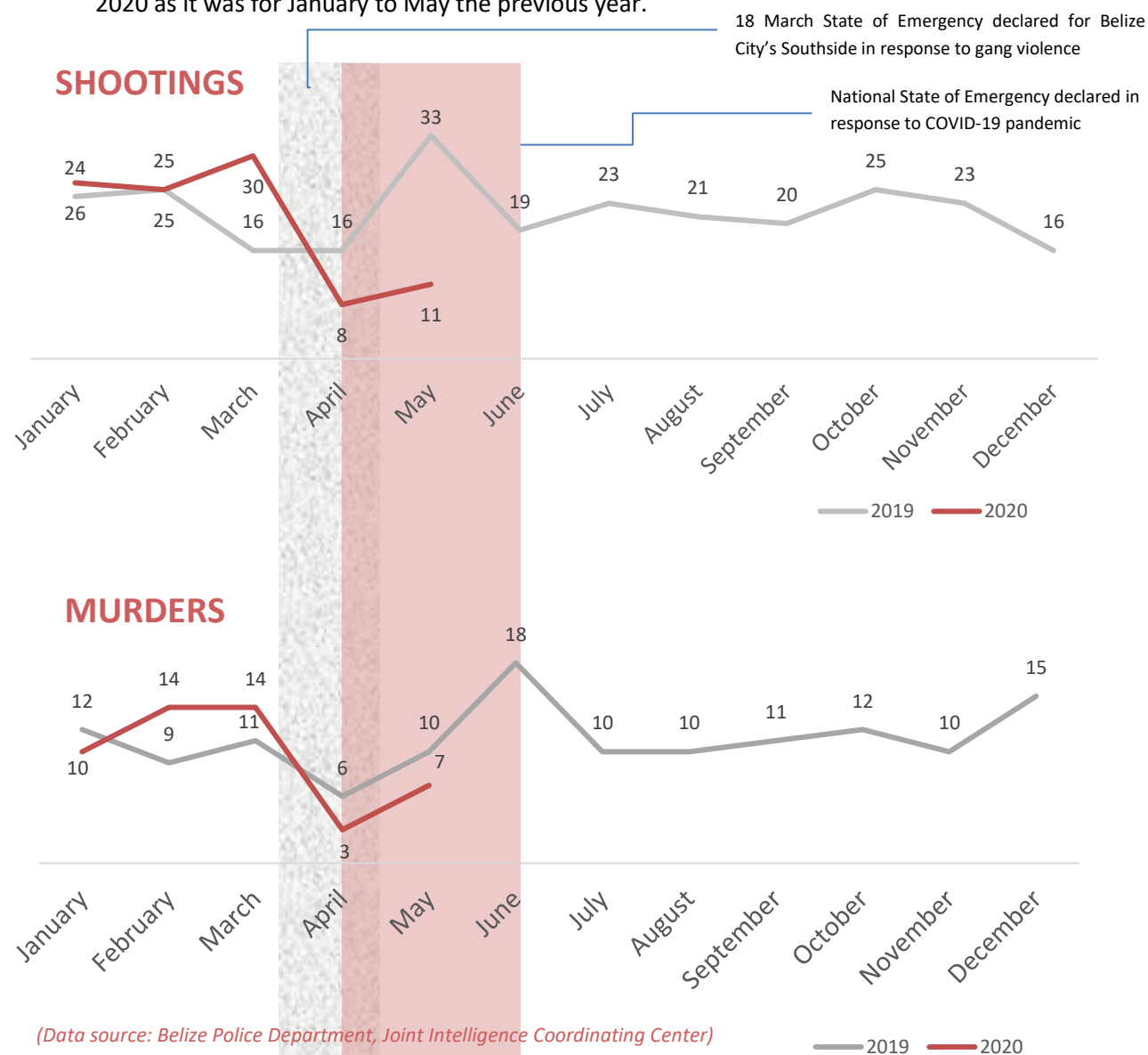
# Crime Analysis Report

PERIOD: 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020



## SUMMARY

- During the month of **May 2020**, police-recorded major crimes declined **57%** over May 2019, from 96 to 41. This marked the second consecutive decline relative to 2019, corresponding with restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic and ramped up policing.
- Overall, major crimes decreased by **26%** (from 463 to 343) for the five-month period, January to May 2020, relative to the same period in the previous year.
- Notwithstanding the reprieve during late March and April from gun violence, the number of murders and shootings recorded in May were both notably higher than the previous month.
- However, for January to May 2020, 100 shootings were recorded, compared to 114 for January to May 2019 – decline of 12%. The murder count, at 48, was exactly the same for January to May 2020 as it was for January to May the previous year.



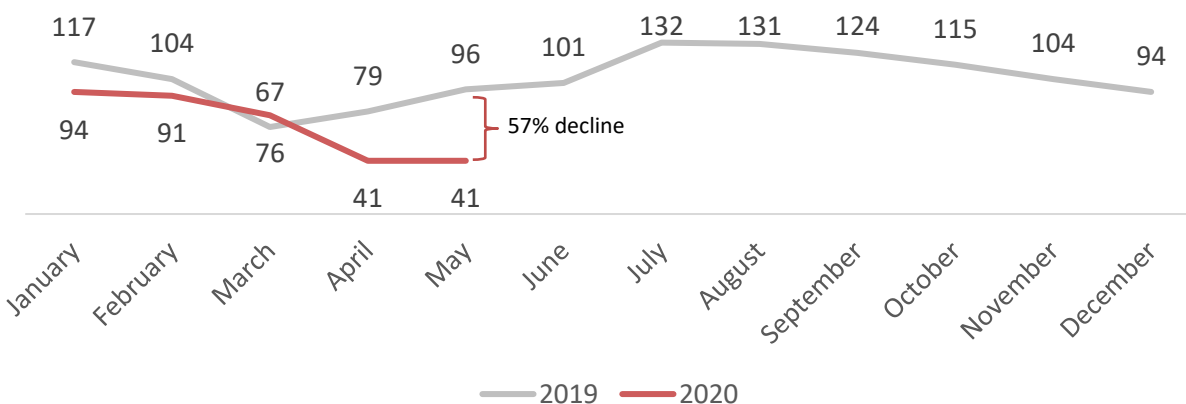
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## MAJOR CRIMES

In May 2020, major crime cases totalled 41 for the second consecutive month, and registered a decline of (55 cases) 57%, compared to the same month in 2019.

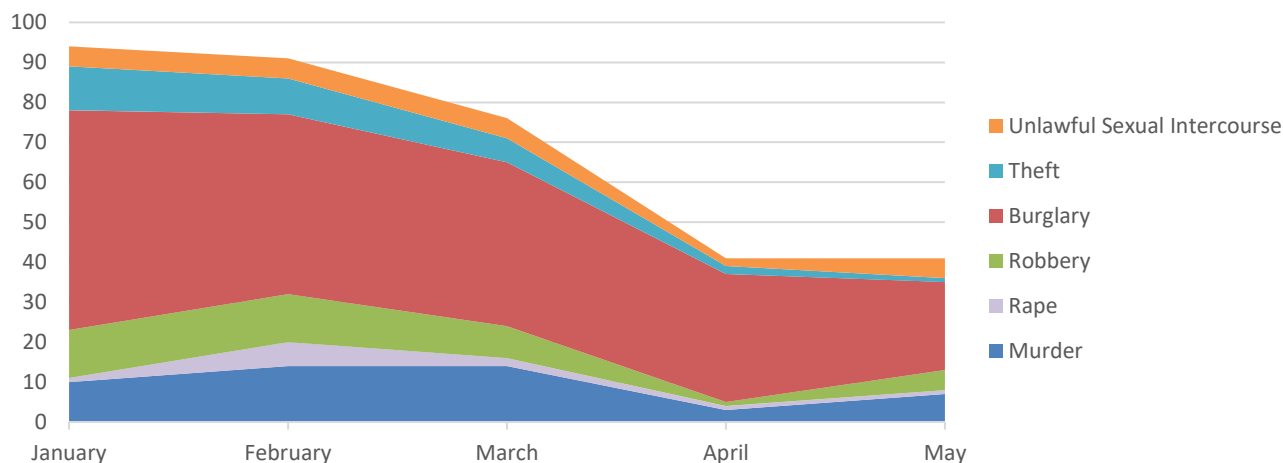


(Data source: Belize Police Department, Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center)

May 2020 saw a reduction in all categories of major crimes. For the second consecutive month, the greatest reduction was recorded for robbery. The largest decline for the five-month period, January to May 2020, compared to January-May 2019, was also recorded for robbery.

Burglaries, which accounted for 57% of major crimes, fell from 242 for the period January to May 2019 to 195 for January to May 2020, a decline of 47 (or 19%).

### Trend in police-recorded major crimes (Jan-May 2020)



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

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## MURDER



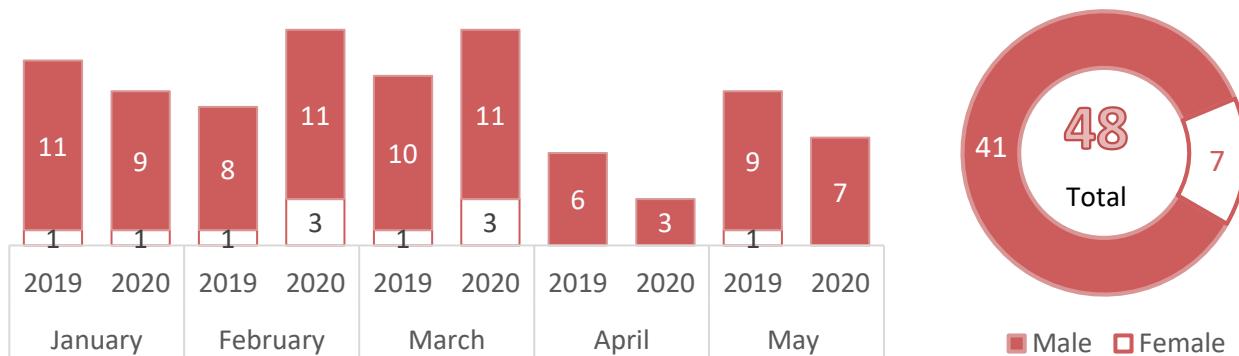
Seven murders were recorded in Belize during May 2020: one in Belmopan, two in the Belize City, two in Dangriga, and two in Orange Walk.

The total murder count for January to May 2020 was 48, equal to the same period in 2019.

85% of the murder victims so far this year have been males. At the end of 2019, 117 of the 134 murder victims (or 87%) were males.

*The number of female murder victims increased from 4 for January to May 2019 to 7 for January to May 2020.*

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



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

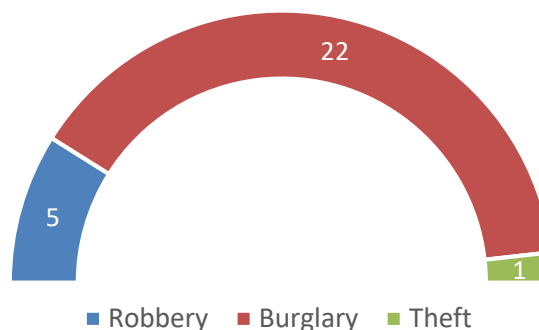
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## PROPERTY CRIMES

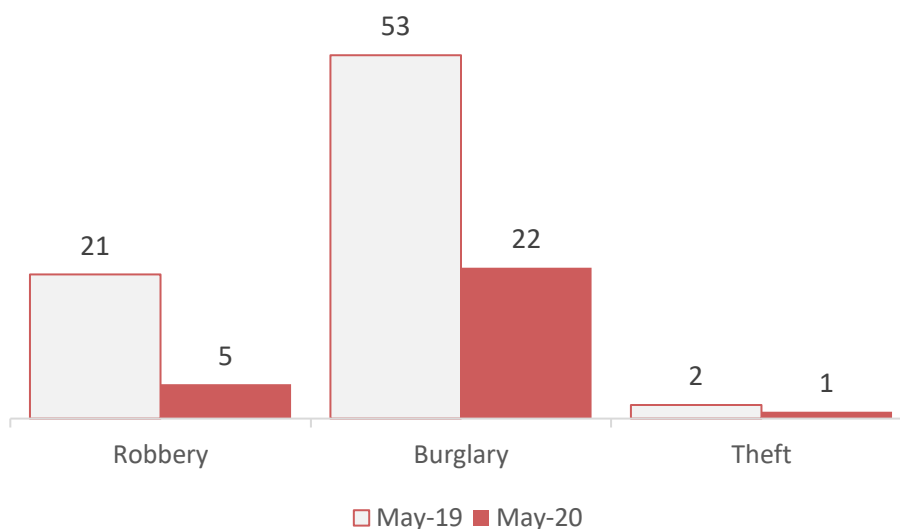
- There were 28 cases of property crimes recorded by the Belize Police Department during May 2020, down from 76 in May 2019 – a decline of 63% (or 48 incidents).
- Of the 28 incidents, 5 were robberies, 22 were burglaries, and 1 was an incident of theft of items valued at least BZ\$5,000.



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

About 68% of major crimes reported were property crimes, and burglaries accounted for 54% of police-recorded major crimes.

### Change in number property crimes cases for May 2020 compared to May 2019



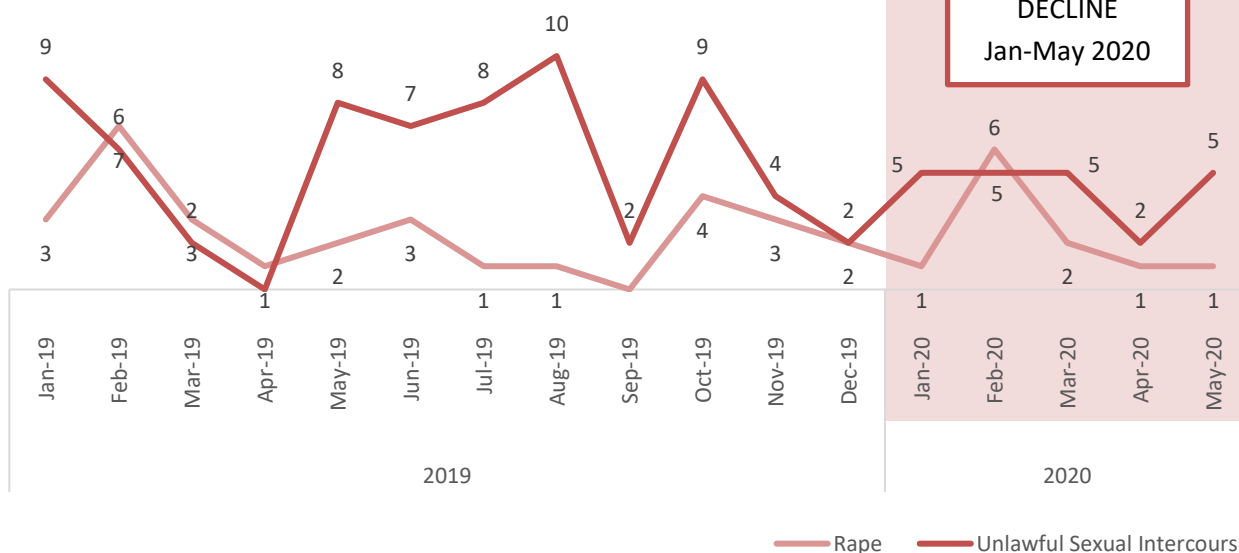
(Data source: Belize Police Department, Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center)

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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

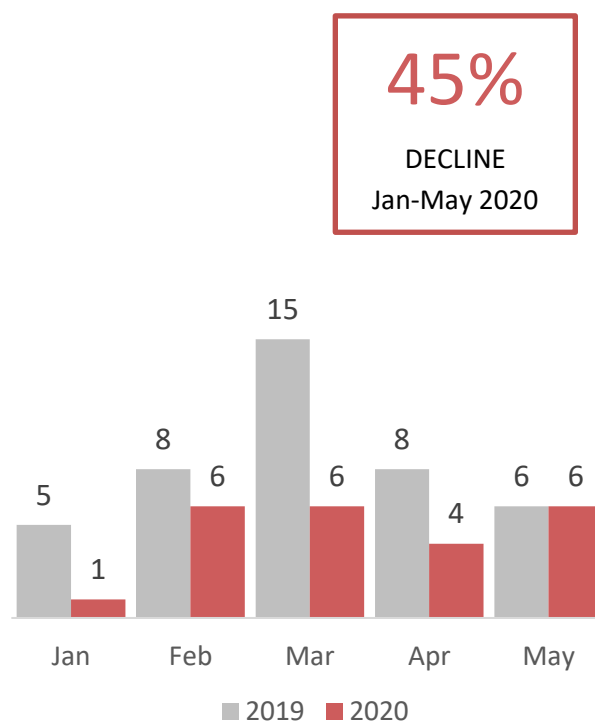


(Data source: Belize Police Department, Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center)

## TRAFFIC FATALITIES

Authorities recorded **6** road traffic fatalities, during May 2020, equal to the number recorded for May 2019. May was the first month of 2020 that did not record a decline in road traffic fatalities, relative to the same month in 2019.

Road traffic fatalities declined markedly (by 45%) during the first five months of 2020, to a cumulative count of **23**, down from **42** for the same period of 2019.



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

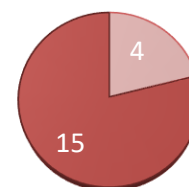
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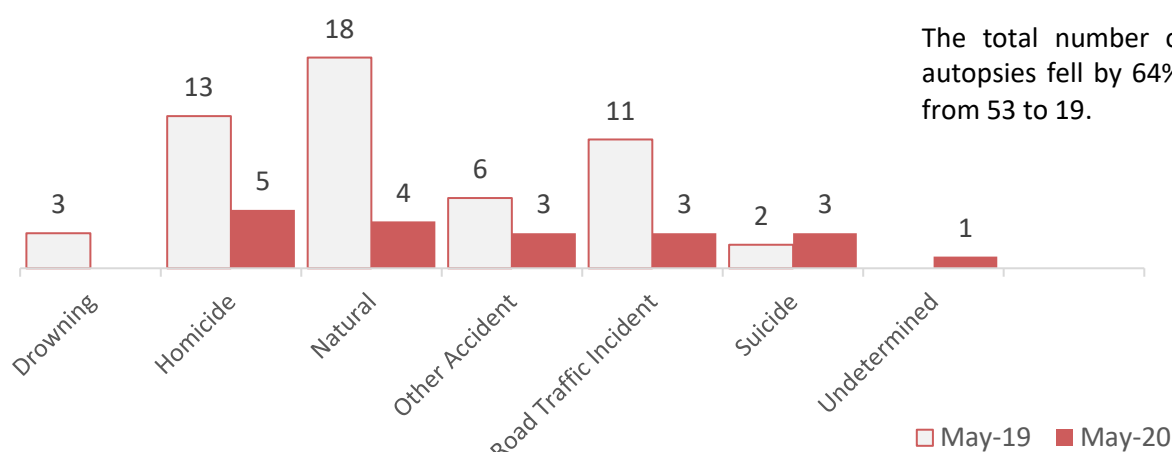
## OTHER VIOLENT DEATHS

During May 2020, the National Forensic Science Service performed 19 autopsies, including 5 for homicides, 3 for suspected suicides, and 3 for road traffic fatalities<sup>1</sup>. 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 64%, from 53 in May 2019 to 19 in May 2020. During April and May 2020, no autopsies were done on victims of drowning.

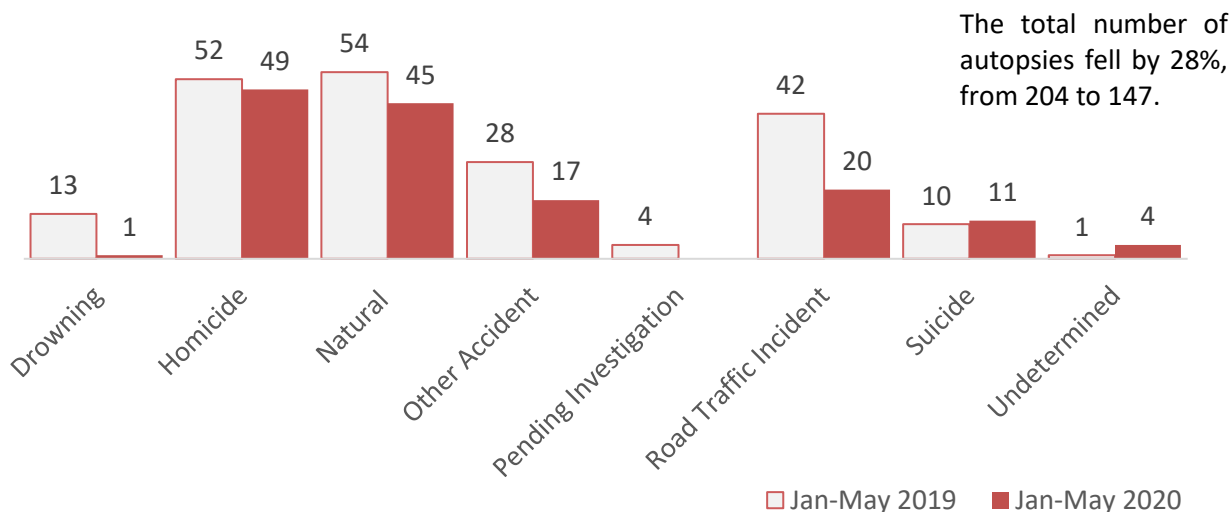


Female Male

### Number of autopsies, according to manner of death for May 2020 (compared to May 2019)



### Number of autopsies according to manner of death for Jan-May 2020 (compared to Jan-May 2019)



(Data source: National Forensic Science Service)

<sup>1</sup> 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.



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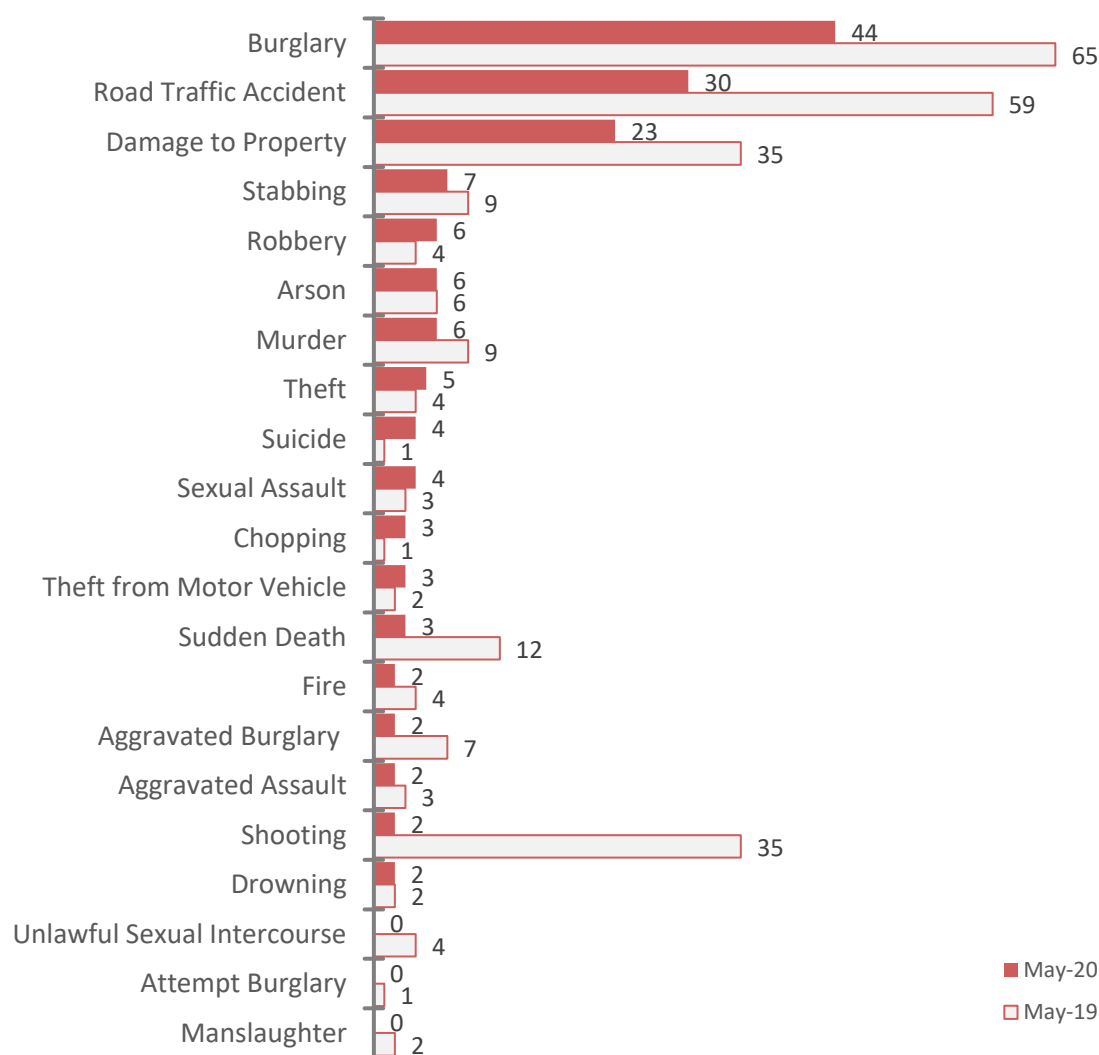


The Scenes of Crime Unit of the National Forensic Science Service processed 154 scenes related to the crimes or incidents listed in the chart below. This represented a 43% decline relative to May 2019, when 268 scenes were processed.

The number of scenes processed for shooting incidents was down 94% relative to the number for May 2019. Burglary continued to be the most prevalent crime type, although the number of scenes processed was down 32%. The number of scenes processed for robbery and theft were marginally higher.

Road traffic incidents rose to second in rank. Murder remained the 7<sup>th</sup> most frequent incident type for which scenes were processed.

**Total amount of scenes processed by crime or incident type  
(May 2020 compared to May 2019)**



(Data source: National Forensic Science Service)

# Crime Analysis Report

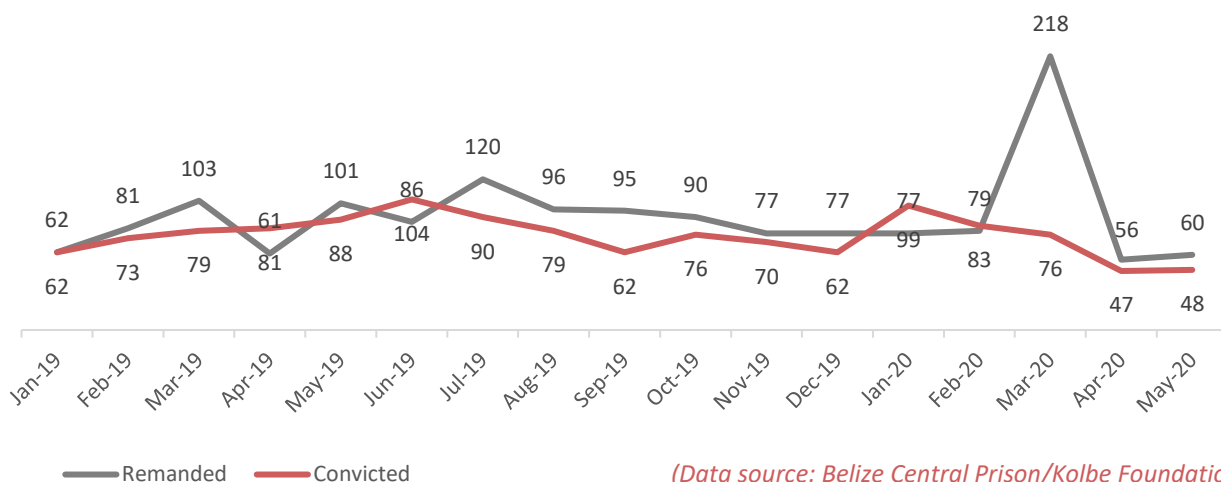
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## IMPRISONMENT

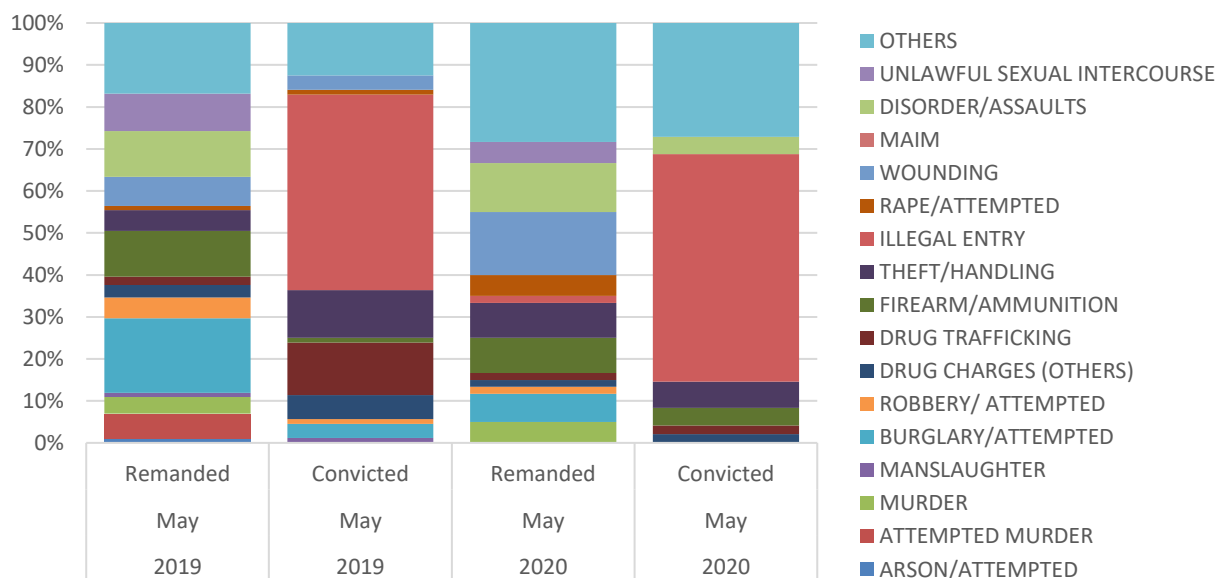
Incarceration for the period January to May 2020 increased by 7% (from 791 to 843). However, the number of newly incarcerated inmates fell by 43%, from 189 in May 2019 to 108 in May 2020, attributable to a notable decline in both newly remanded and convicted inmates of over 40%.

### 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 (May 2019 vs May 2020)



(Data source: Belize Central Prison/Kolbe Foundation)

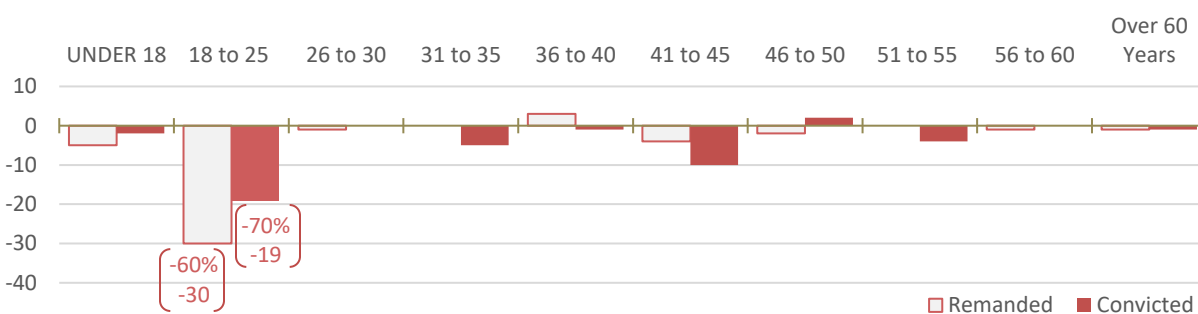
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The greatest absolute decline in incarceration was recorded for remanded inmates ages 18-25. Convicted inmates in the same age group accounted for the second largest absolute decline. *(The percent change is specified on the chart below.)* Young males between the ages of 18 to 25 generally account for the largest number of new inmates, but during May 2020, youth ages 26 to 30 were more often convicted than those in the lower age cohort (ages 18 to 25).

**Change in the number of remanded and convicted inmates, disaggregated by age for May 2020**

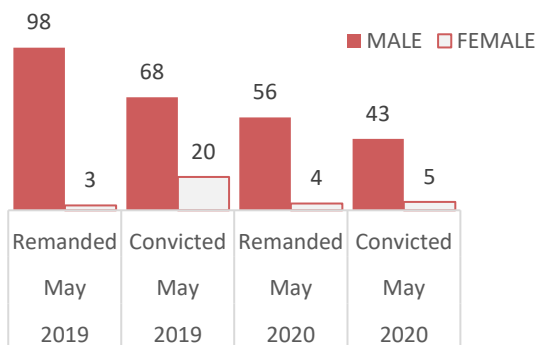


(Data source: Belize Central Prison/Kolbe Foundation)

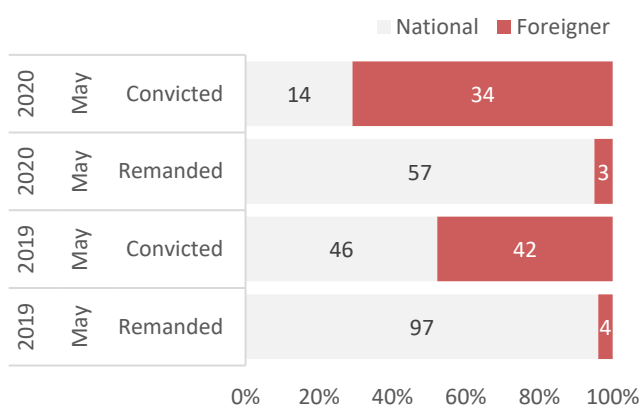
Both the number of newly remanded and convicted males increased in May 2020 when compared to the numbers for May 2019. There was a very notable decline in the number of incarcerated females for the month, due to a marked decline in the number of newly convicted female inmates.

Seventy percent of newly convicted inmates were foreign nationals, primarily from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

**Number of remanded and convicted inmates, disaggregated by sex for May 2020 compared to May 2019**



**Number of remanded and convicted inmates, disaggregated by nationality for May 2020 compared to May 2019**



(Data source: Belize Central Prison/Kolbe Foundation)

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## 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.”*

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**Belize Crime Observatory**  
Ministry of National Security (Home Affairs)



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<https://bco.gov.bz>



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*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 May 2020. Any future revisions will be noted in subsequent reports.*