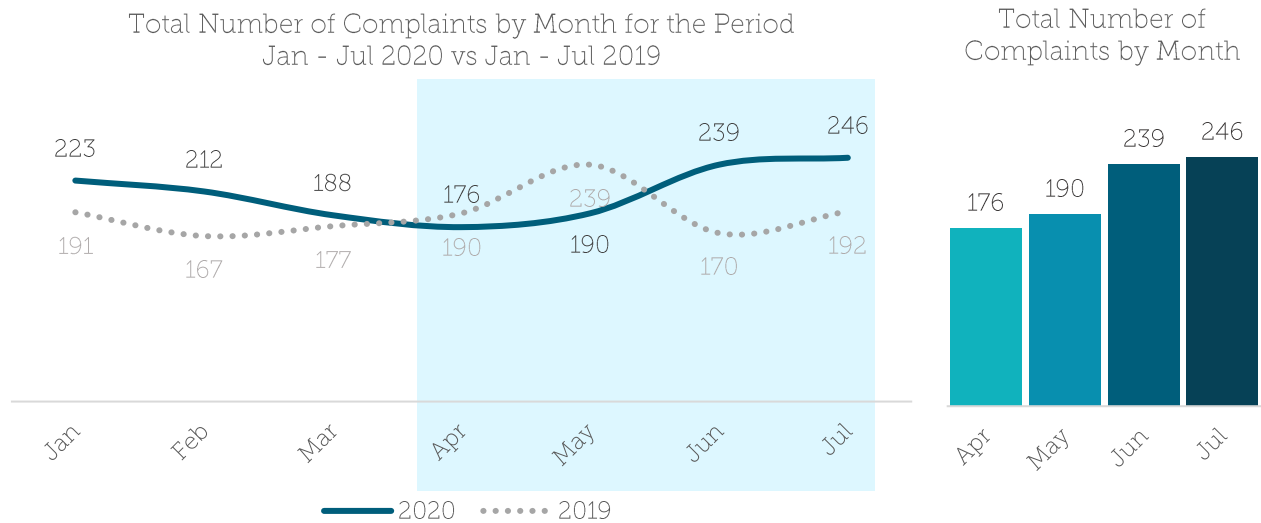




DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMID COVID-19

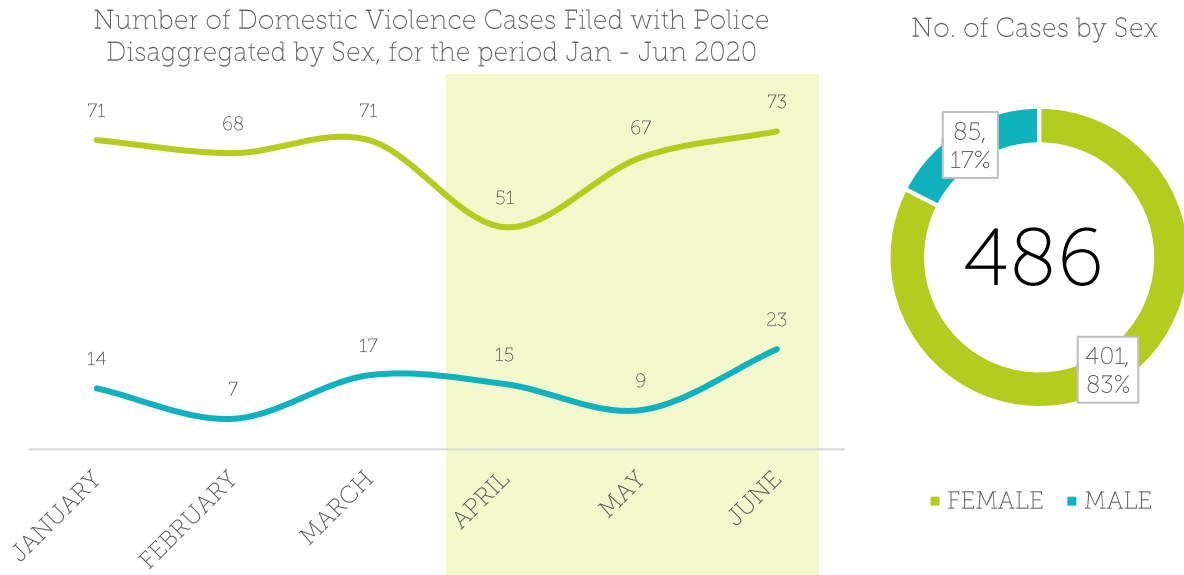
Belize has seen a consistent increase in the number of domestic violence complaints made to the Police Department since the first case of COVID-19 recorded in late March 2020. Restrictions in movement, ranging from curfews to a total lockdown, were implemented under a State of Emergency declared for April to June 2020. Many of the restrictions that were lifted at the end of June, after cases plateaued, began to be reintroduced in late July and August, due to a resurgence of COVID-19 cases. With increased restrictions come renewed concerns over the risk of violence in homes. Until the COVID-19 pandemic is over, these heightened concerns will remain.

The total number of domestic violence complaints lodged with Police¹ increased consistently over the period April to July 2020.



¹ Official data provided by the Belize Police Department, Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center

The recorded increase² was more consistent for females than males. More than 8 in every 10 cases filed were for complaints made by females. Complainants were most often women in common-law unions, ages 20 to 44. Women ages 35 to 44 accounted for the largest percentage (22%). Girls accounted for twice the cases as boys did. More than 90% of the accused perpetrators were males, primarily those ages 25-34.



(Note: This summary was extracted from an official campaign brief to counter violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic, prepared by the BCO and other agencies that constitute the Belize Task Force for a regional campaign funded by USAID and coordinated by the UNDP.)

² Underreporting of domestic violence cases continues to occur, and the data quoted here only accounts for complaints brought to the attention of the Police. There are also instances where a complainant declines to pursue court action, and so no case is initiated by the Police.