

KOLBE FOUNDATION BELIZE CENTRAL PRISON



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 was the most challenging and historical year for the Kolbe Foundation and the Belize Central Prison. It started when the COVID-19 outbreak, which was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, due to it constituting a public health emergency of international concern, was declared a pandemic on 12 March 2020. On March 23, 2020 – exactly eleven days after the pandemic was declared, Belize recorded its first Covid-19 case in the island of San Pedro. The Ministry of Health immediately sprung into mitigating mode by conducting mapping exercises and educating the populace on the deadliness of the virus and urging everyone to practice Covid-19 protocols in order to be safe and control the spread. Despite this effort, shortly thereafter a few other cases were detected in other parts of the country with some resulting in very quick demise of the victims. Not surprisingly however, although this may have caused panic in most of the Belizean people, some Belizeans obviously did not take the virus seriously and as a result it began spiraling out of control to the point where the government had to declare the virus as a pandemic and put the country under full lockdown in April, 2020; declared through a Covid-19 State of Emergency signed into law by the Governor General.

COVID-19 AND THE BELIZE CENTRAL PRISON

As everyone may know by now, people in prisons are more vulnerable to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak than the general population because of the confined conditions in which they live together for prolonged periods of time. Moreover, experience shows that prison settings where people are unable to practice social distance may act as a source of infection, amplification and spread of infectious diseases within and beyond the prisons. This literally means that prison health is therefore considered public health and the response to COVID-19 in prisons is very challenging.

Upon hearing of the virus being detected in the country, the prison immediately began its Covid-19 educational campaign to the inmate population, staff, and the public through the implementation of Covid-19 protocols (*wearing of face masks, hand hygiene, social distancing, temperature checks, and screening*), posters, announcements via the prison's radio station, and press releases for the public via the media houses. This effort was especially to prevent it from entering the prison and we tried extremely hard to keep the prison Covid-19 free and did so right up to September 28, 2020 (6 months after) when it was detected in a prison guard from the Orange Walk District.

Despite our proactive measures as aforementioned though, we always knew that the risk of getting the virus imported into the prison would always be by a visitor as the inmates cannot go anywhere and this risk was higher amongst staff who leaves the facility, mingles with the public, and must return to work. At the time the officer got infected with the virus, the Orange Walk District was the epicenter of the pandemic. Upon learning of the infected officer, the prison went on a contact-tracing exercise which resulted in several other officers testing positive for the virus.

On October 28, 2020 the prison experienced a massive outbreak when 90 inmates tested positive (this being the highest since the virus came knocking at our doors) and as a result went under a full lockdown for 21 days. Ever since then the prison conducted an accumulated total of 964 rapid and PCR tests on inmates and recorded a total of 214 cases, broken down as follows: 202 males and 12 Females. Amongst prison staff a total of 71 tested positive for the virus of which 61 were males and 10 were females. As of the writing of this report only one (1) inmate and one (1) staff each is still in isolation or on quarantine.

The prison remained on full lockdown for most of 2020 in an effort to prevent the importation and mitigate the spread of the virus within its walls. The initial lockdown of the prison was when the government declared the Covid-19 State of Emergency on April 1, 2020. During this time all visits to inmates by loved ones was suspended, however we permitted cash deposits into the inmates' personal accounts and drop-offs of basic items, mostly cooked food. This arrangement, however, was suspended all together in May when the prison was forced to go under complete lockdown to synchronize its efforts with that of the government. In June we reopened visits for the inmates on a very small scale – 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM as opposed to the normal (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM) and this too was once again suspended in August 2020 with just cash deposits being allowed.

The last complete lockdown as a consequence of the massive outbreak of the virus, when 90 positive cases were detected on October 28, lasted twenty-one days and involved absolutely no movement by inmates within the prison – they were confined to their cells 24/7. This move proved to be most effective as the outbreak was brought under proper control by the end of the period. When this was ended the prison had only six positive cases pending recovery.

In-person visits for inmates remain suspended however, to alleviate the hardships of the no-visits, the inmates are now given the opportunity to connect with their loved-ones virtually using tablets bought by the prison. Aside from this they continue to receive cash deposits and drop-offs.

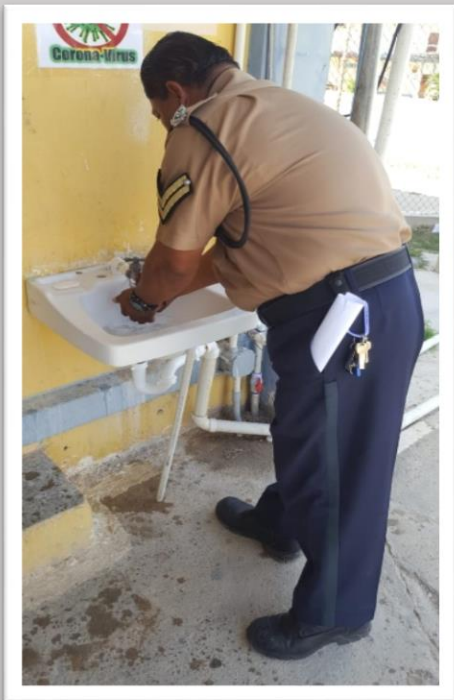
I must applaud and thank the Police, Immigration, and especially the Judiciary for being so understanding in deferring the trials of inmates during this full lockdown period because without this collaboration and cooperation, mitigating the spread of the virus in the prison would have been next to impossible! Lastly, I must commend all our frontline prison staff who did their very best in ensuring that the virus got stopped in its tracks by practicing, adhering, and enforcing all Covid-19 protocols.



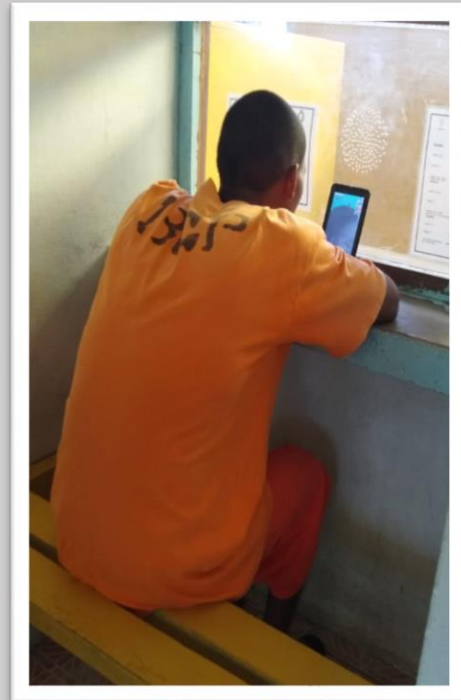
Covid-19 screening and temperature checks being done.



Wash hand basin for hand-hygiene by all visitors, staff, and inmates.



Hand-hygiene being practiced



Inmate on virtual visit

HOSTAGE-TAKING-TURNED-ESCAPE

On October 12, 2020 at approximately 6:00 PM the prison witnessed a *hostage-taking-turned-escape* situation at the Administrative Segregation area of the prison when a small group of about FIVE (5) disgruntled inmates managed to take over the location by overpowering the guards, changing into their uniforms, and locking them up in the prisoners' cells.

This plot included them walking up the tower above the building and stripping the officer of his M-4 Carbine Rifle. Once equipped with the guard's stolen rifle they reportedly commandeered all security activities for the rest of the day from about 1:00 PM – 6:00 PM (an approximate five hours). It was further reported that this situation played out totally unnoticed to the remaining prison security force on duty on that fateful day. The hostage-takers waited until dark had set in, after which they launched their escape plot by darting towards the fence that lead to their freedom, taking the prison guards held hostage during the day with them. Once on the run they commanded the guard with the radio to warn the other tower guards "not to shoot as they were being held hostage and that it will be dangerous if they did. Eyewitnesses also recounted that the inmate with the rifle fired shots towards the Alpha 2 Tower to ward off any offensive by the guard in that tower. At the end of the ordeal a total of 28 of the 95 inmates housed at that location escaped into the dense bushes behind the prison's shooting range under the cover of darkness.

One escapee was shot and killed on October 15, 2020 during a shootout with police and BDF Soldiers whilst they tried to recapture him in the Coastal Road area and to date all other 27 have been safely returned to prison.

TANGO 7 RIOT

On the heels of the above incident, a riot broke out at the Tango 7 building the following morning around 9:00 AM in which an inmate lost his life from a gunshot wound he received during the melee. Our investigations revealed that having seen the incident that took place at the Administrative Segregation location, a group of prisoners from this building, knowing fully well that the media would have been bomb-rushing the prison to seek information for the news the following day, decided to take over the building. Reports are that as soon as they were let out on recreation, they viciously attacked the officers posted at the building, took away the keys to the cells and building and padlocked and barricaded the entrance with benches and tables used during programs. They took away the cell phone of the Officer-in-Charge of the building which they had planned to use for notifying one of the media houses that the prison was under siege and to get them to come and get footage of it. They tried climbing up the tower atop the said building to go and relieve the guard of his rifle which they would have used to hold the prison hostage. They were unsuccessful with this because the Officer-in-Charge braced himself across the stairway and did not have the key to the locked hatch above. In their frustration, they attacked one of the female guards, covered her head with her bag, stuck a plastic shank to her neck, and began fondling her whilst dragging her into one of the back cells threatening to

gang-rape her. Efforts were made to regain control of the building without violence however, this was futile because of the rage this handful of about 15 inmates were in. Physical and lethal force was used which resulted in several inmates being injured and two of them receiving gunshot wounds – one being fatal.



Controlling Tango 7 Riot

STAFFING

Staffing capacity and competency continue to be a challenge for the Kolbe Foundation as it strives to manage the Belize Central Prison efficiently and effectively for the government and people of Belize. People with the attributes befitting of a prison environment are very hard to attract and retain because the “*fee per prisoner per day*” contractual arrangements with the government makes it impossible for the foundation to pay staff a salary that commensurate with the nature of the social work at hand. The falling inmate headcount – which is averaging 1,100 is certainly not helping our situation and by all indication this will continue to be the trend.

Our attrition rate continues to be around 30 percent when the acceptable standard should be around 10 percent. Needless to mention that due to the pandemic in 2020 staff shortages caused serious problems with the proper manning of the prison, nonetheless by God’s Grace we pulled through well. Due to the pandemic quite a number of our officers were infected with the virus and had to be isolated or quarantined for a period of time. This situation was exacerbated by the Covid-19 State of Emergency which caused major disruptions because of the lockdowns of certain parts of the country, curfews, and restrictions on the transportation industry.



Staff being trained in Riots, Hostage-Taking, and Escapes



Dr. Jarrod Sadulski conducting training on Riots, Hostage-Taking, and Escapes

PRISON STATISTICS

ESCAPES

The year was going exceptionally well with no escapes – which was one of our aspirations for 2020, right up to October 12, 2020 around 6:00 PM when the infamous hostage-taking-turned-escape incident took place from the Administrative Segregation section of the prison. In this episode a total of twenty-eight (28) inmates escaped from this facility after holding the three guards – including the tower guard working there, hostage at gunpoint for almost five hours. Investigations indicate that it was carefully planned and orchestrated by about five inmates undergoing sanctions for prison rule violations or being escape risks.

As it turned out, human error was the biggest contributor to this negligent incident as officers at this location placed these inmates in working positions which should have never happened due to their offending status. In the end the masterminds capitalized on the officers' poor judgement and made good on their escape plan causing a major upset for the prison administration. With the tremendous assistance and support of the police department and the public we had managed to get back almost all escapees within a month of their escape from the prison. As mentioned earlier one of the escapees lost his life and the other twenty-seven (27) have been safely returned to the prison – the last two having been recaptured on January 31, 2021. Disciplinary actions were taken against all those officers found culpable and we have ramped up security to prevent something of this magnitude from happening again. *(Please see chart below – Table 1)*

ESCAPES STATISTICS - 2000 - 2020

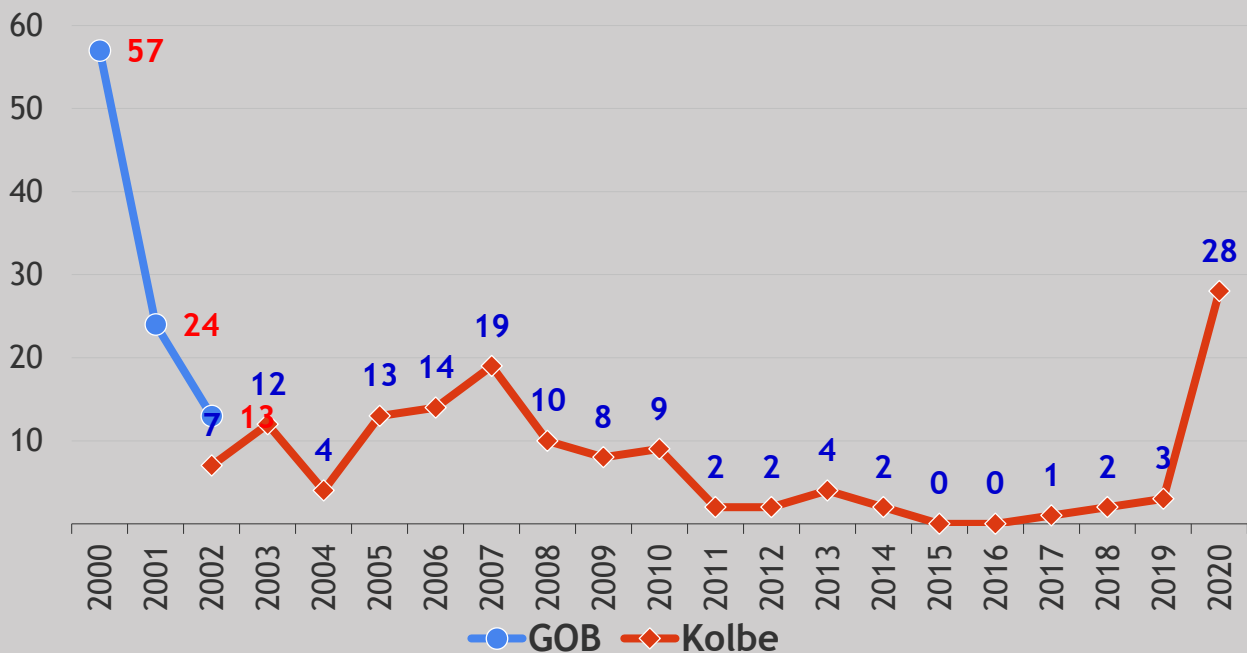


Table 1

CONTRABAND

Drugs – particularly marijuana continued to pose a challenge for the prison administration in 2020, with prisoners coming up with the most ingenious ways to smuggle it into the facility. Drugs as we know all too well, increases prison violence because of the indebtedness of the addicts and users to the peddlers or dealers. Moreover, the availability of it in the prison prevents the inmate from rehabilitating constructively.

In 2020, as the chart below will attest, with very good intelligence and rigid searching procedures we managed to have kept it out extremely well. Admittedly too, the prison was on full lockdown for most of the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and this had a significant impact on the flow of drugs into the prison. Although the handful of inmates that escaped from the Administrative Segregation area of the prison and the few rioters at Tango 7 would want us to believe that they did so because of the threat by the Coronavirus entering the prison, by all indication it was the scarcity of drugs in the prison that prompted their action. Their addiction to the marijuana is so much bigger than their ambition that they seemed to have been ready to lose their lives over it when the prison went on full lockdown.

Note too that all other types of prison contraband, except for weapons, were significantly low as well. Please note however, that the number of weapons found is directly proportionate to the numerous and consistent searching and raiding that took place at the prison to keep it safe. *(Please see Table 2)*

CONTRABAND SEIZURES - 2020

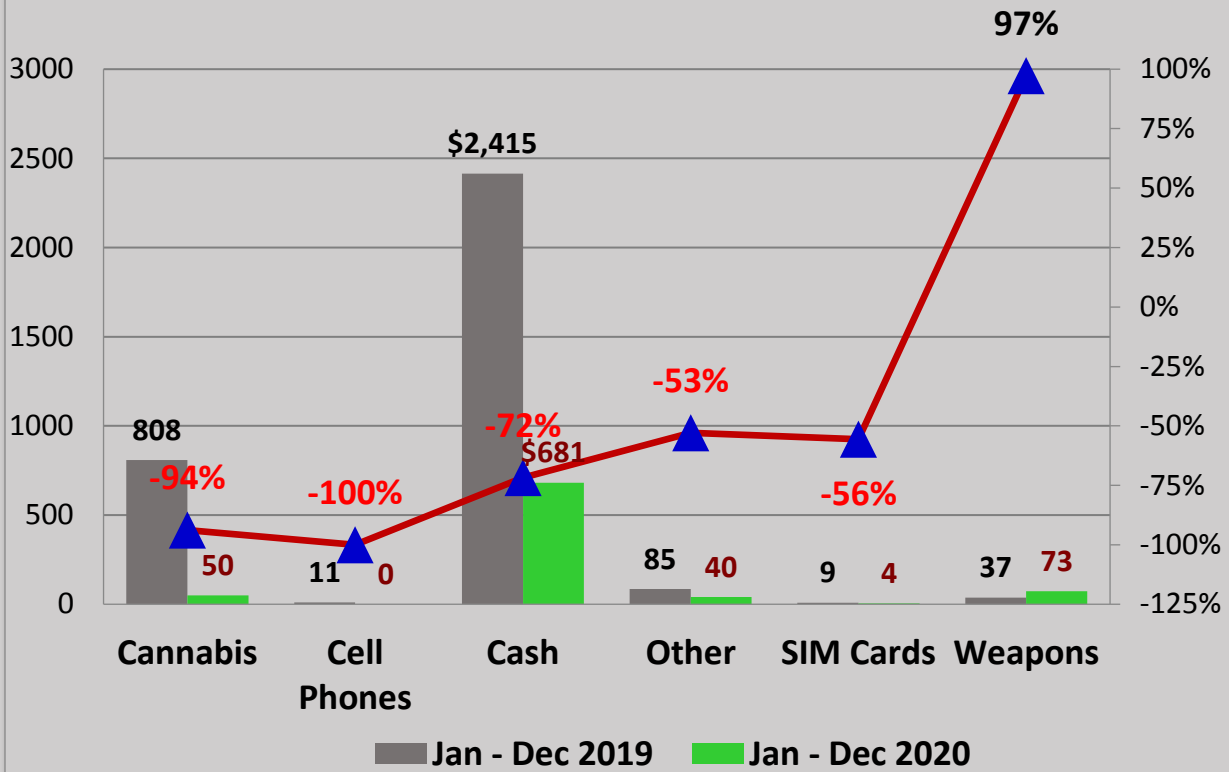


Table 2

As can be seen on Table 3 (below), the prison has done extremely well with keeping drugs out of the prison. We will continue our efforts to keeping the drugs and other contraband out of the prison thus making it more conducive to rehabilitation for the inmates. (Please see charts below – **Table 3**)

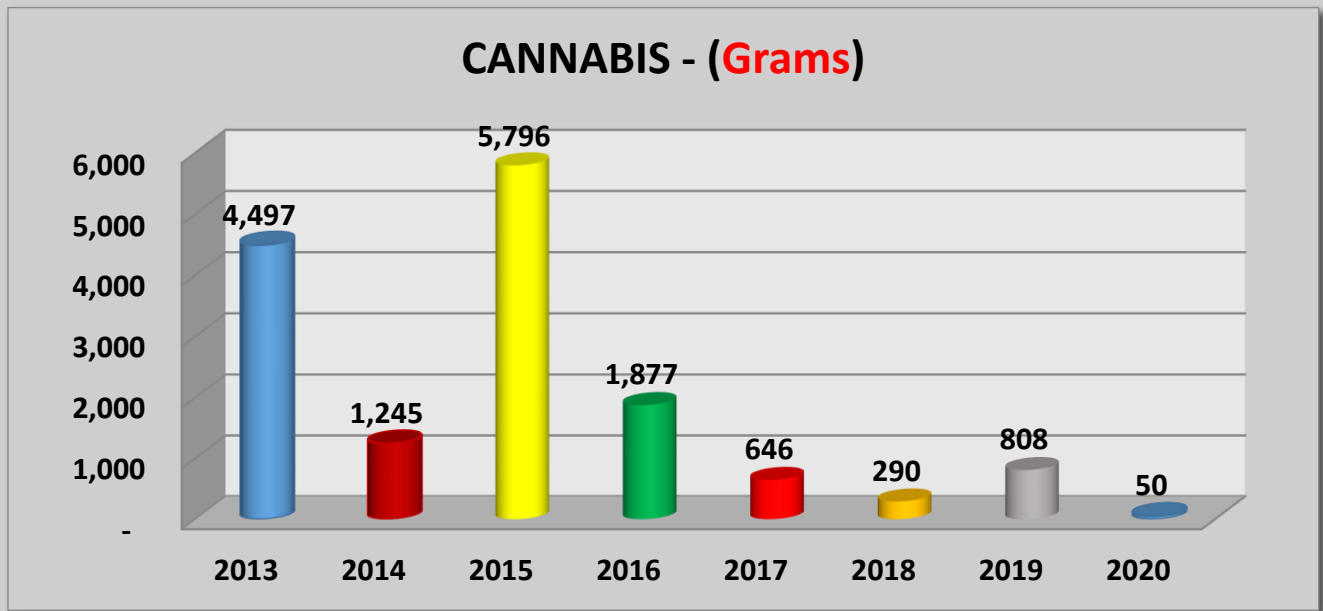


Table 3

Cell phone is another major contraband item in prisons that are in high demand as having them allows an inmate to continue to run his/her criminal organization, threaten or get witnesses killed, or even corrupt other members of the Criminal Justice System (i.e. Police, Prosecution, or Judiciary), from behind bars. Very good intelligence gathering, proper searches of staff, inmates, and visitors, continuous building and cell searches, and most of all vigilant prison guards has enabled the prison to successfully keep this item out of the prison. (Please see Table 3a)

CELL PHONES

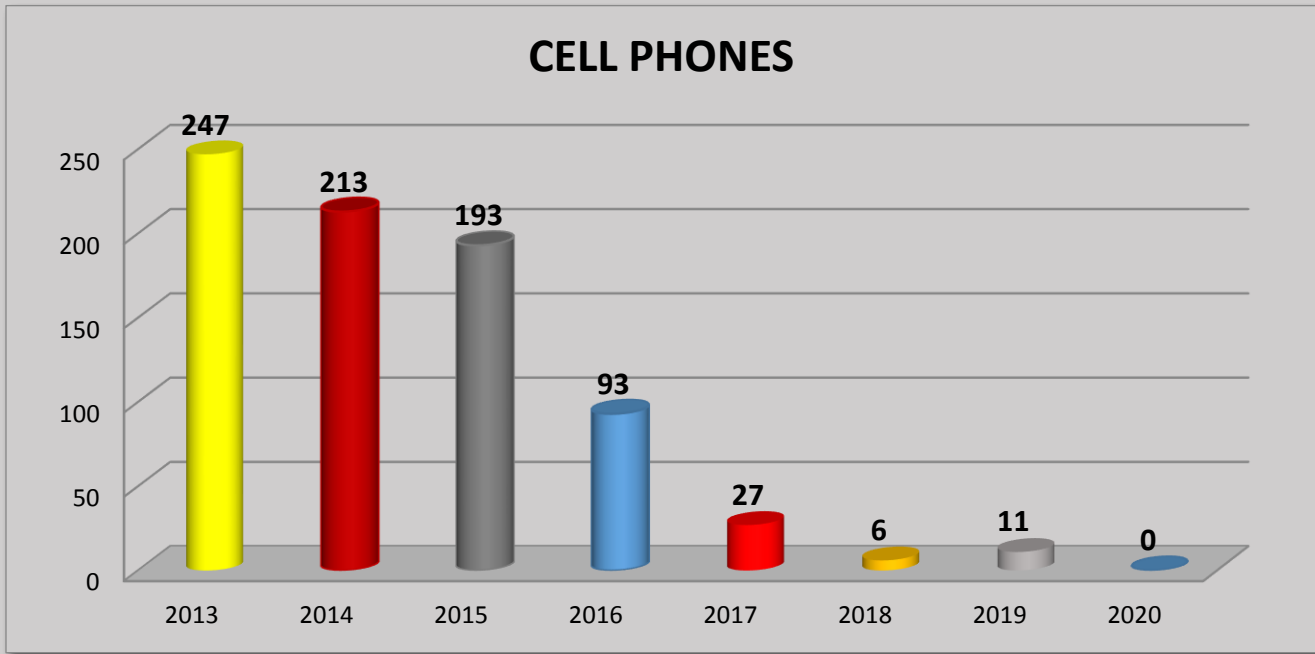


Table 3a

INCIDENTS

In table 4 (below) a total of 343 prison incidents was recorded in 2020 with “**Offending Good Order and Discipline**” and “**Assault – Inmate on Inmate**” accounting for 98 (29%) and 95 (28%) respectively.

PRISON INCIDENTS - Jan - Dec, 2020

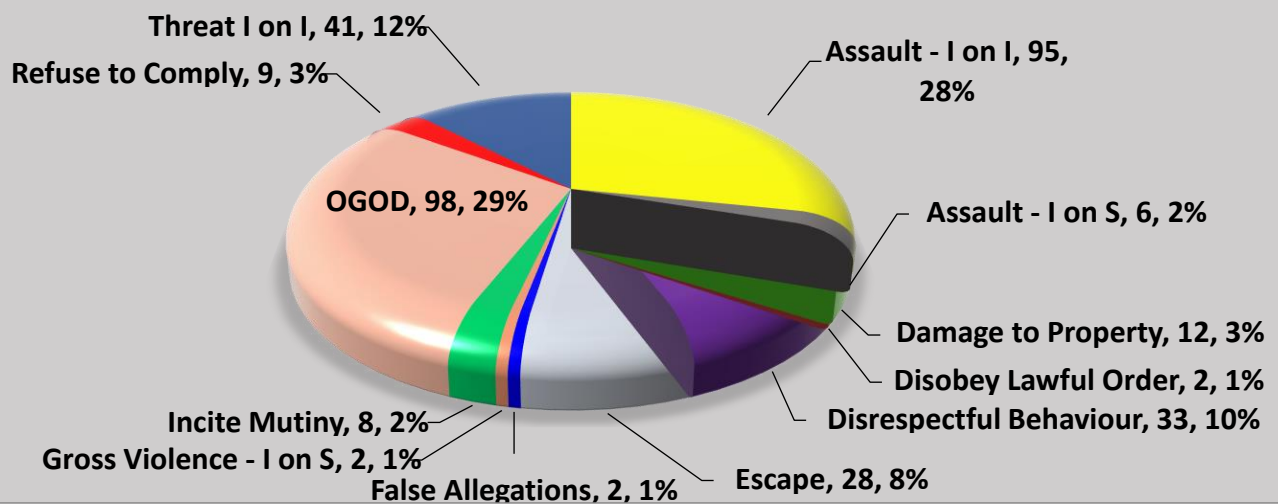


Table 4

Most worthy of explaining as it pertains to incidents in Table 5 (below), both Incite Mutiny and Assaults – Inmate on Staff shot through the roof in, most of them attributed to the riot at Tango 7 which took place on October 13, 2020. As mentioned earlier too, there were 28 escapes from the Administrative Segregation area of the prison on October 12, 2020. This, when compared to 2019 is equivalent to 23 (82%) more escapes. We also recorded one more Gross Personal Violence – Inmate on Staff which again was a direct result of the Tango 7 riot.

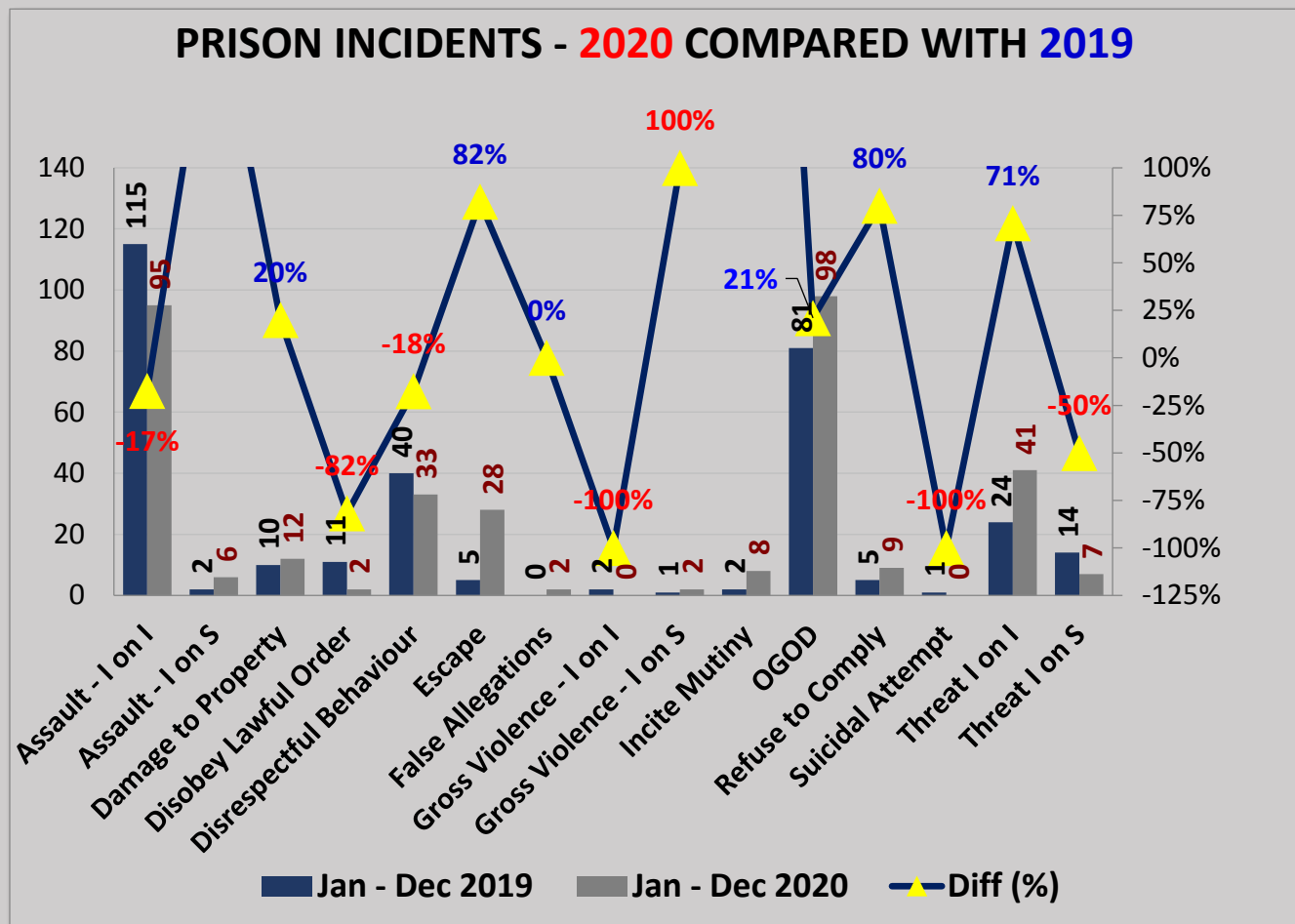


Table 5

IMPRISONMENT

724 persons were sent to prison on conviction in the year 2020 with 273 (38%) being for Immigration Offences. The other large number - 207 (29%) was for Other Minor Offences (i.e. Child maintenance, vehicular, debtor, and other misdemeanors). Almost half of this amount was for persons who breached Covid-19 Regulations. (See Table 6 below)

Total Convictions by Offences - 2020

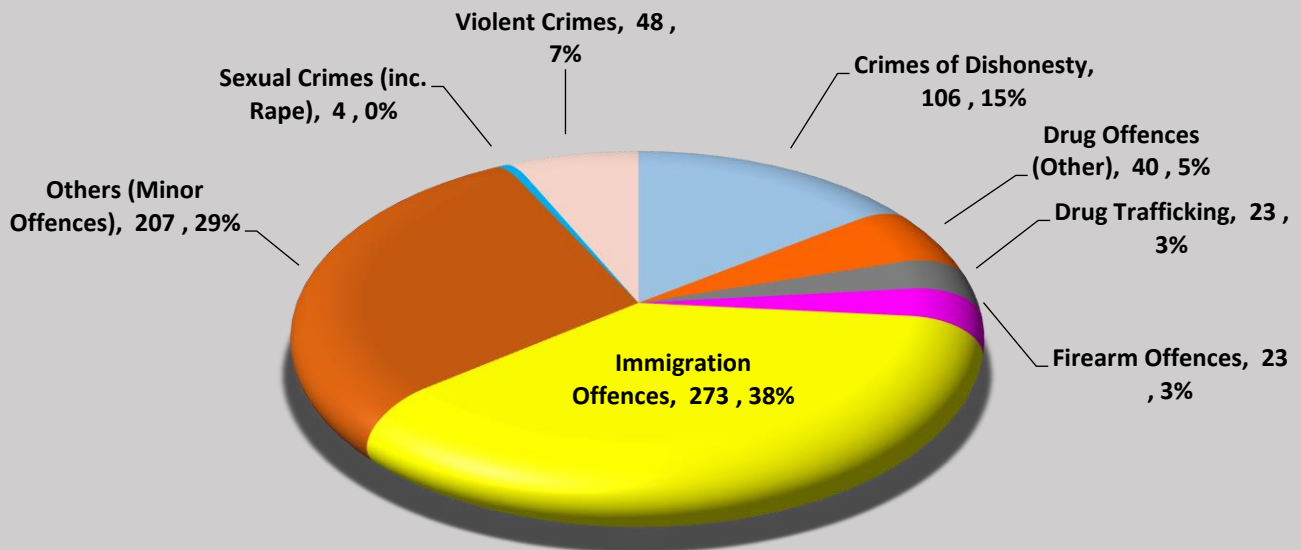


Table 6

Even with 724 persons having been sent to prison on Conviction status, there was a decrease of 202 or 22% less when compared to 2019. There were significant decreases in convictions in almost all offences, except for Other Minor Offences, which saw a seven percent increase due to convictions for Covid-19 Regulations. The offence that saw the most significant decrease was Manslaughter as no one was convicted for this offence in 2020.

(See Table 7)

CONVICTIONS BY OFFENCE STATISTICS - 2020

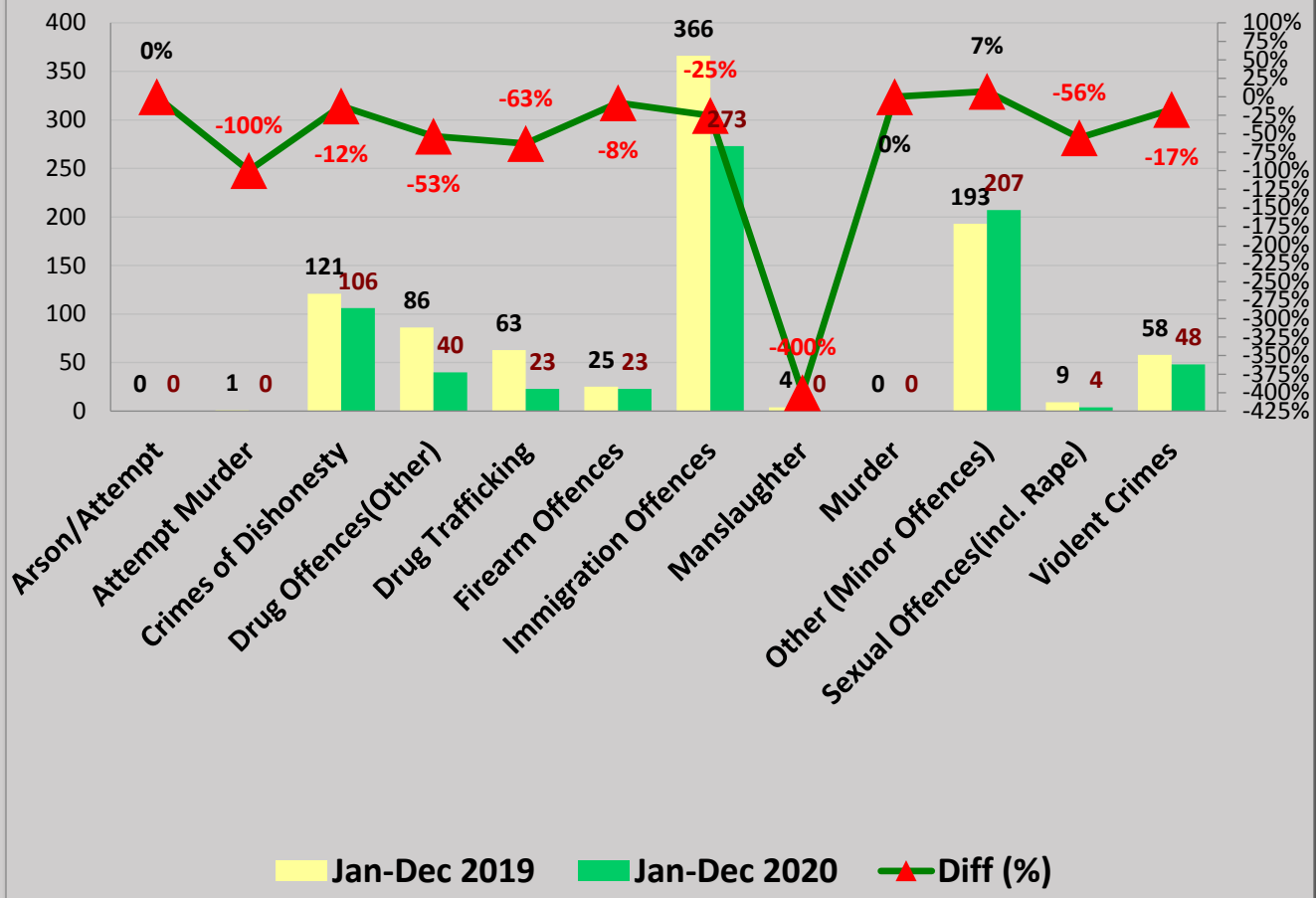


Table 7

Of the 1,099 persons admitted on Remand, a total of 408 or 37% were for Other Minor Offences with the majority of those being consequential to the two gang-related States of Emergency declared for Southside, Belize City in March and July 2020 respectively. These two SOEs raked in a total of 274 gangbangers. The remaining 134 persons were for misdemeanor offences such as Covid-19 Regulations, Debtor, Child Maintenance, etc.; just to mention a few. (See Table 8)

Total Remanded - 2020

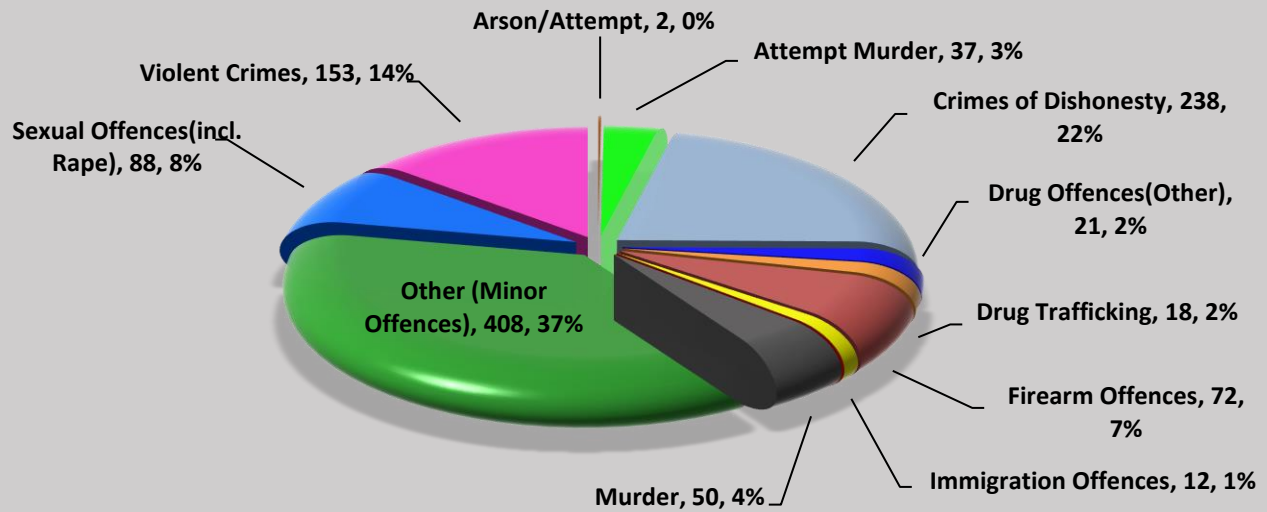


Table 8

The chart below compares those persons remanded in 2020 with those in 2019 by offence. As can be seen Other Minor Offences went through the roof which was as a result of the two States of Emergency instituted for Southside, Belize City caused by the incessant feuding amongst the rivaling gangs in the city. The other large number are for misdemeanor offences, including Covid-19 Regulations violations. There were significant decreases in remands for almost all offences, but more noticeably Crimes of Dishonesty, which we believe was a result of the lockdowns in the country related to curfews to mitigate the spread of the novel Coronavirus. (See Table 9)

REMANDED BY OFFENCE STATISTICS - 2020

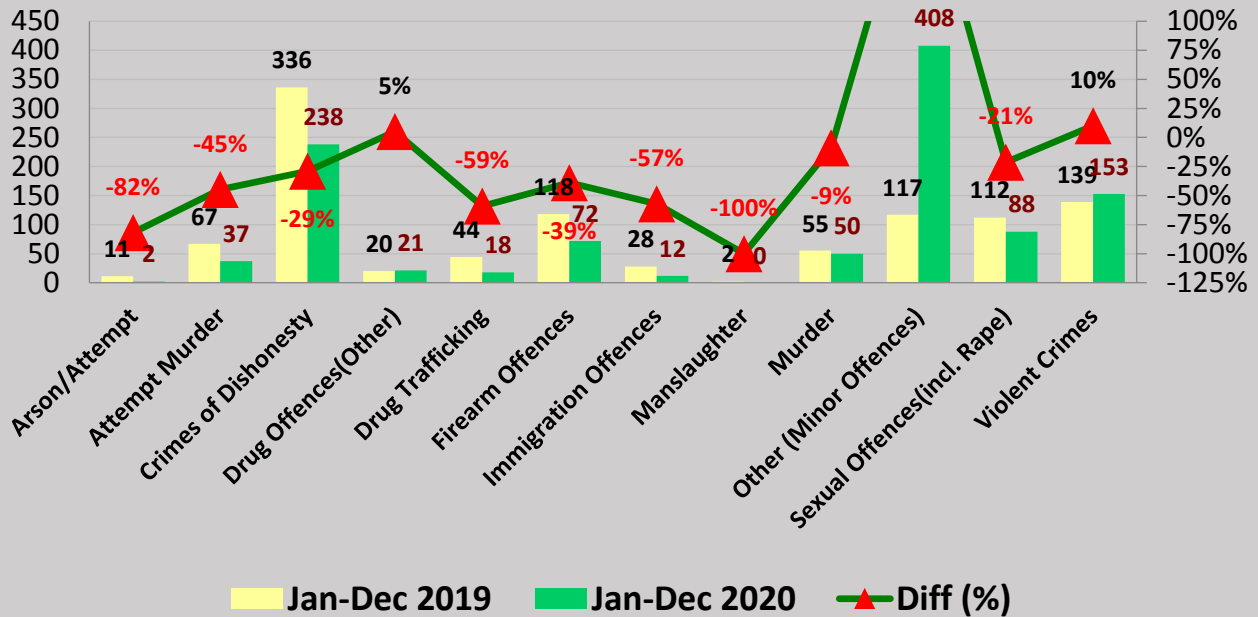


Table 9

As at December 31, 2020 there was a total of 417 persons on remand at the Belize Central Prison with 176 or 42% of them being for the crime of Murder. The next largest number – 89 persons or 21% being for Crimes of Dishonesty (*Robbery, Burglary, and Theft*). When compared to the end of 2019, which had a remanded population of 389 persons, this translates to 28 more persons or 7% being on remand this time around. (See Table 10)

Remanded Population by Offence - December 31, 2020

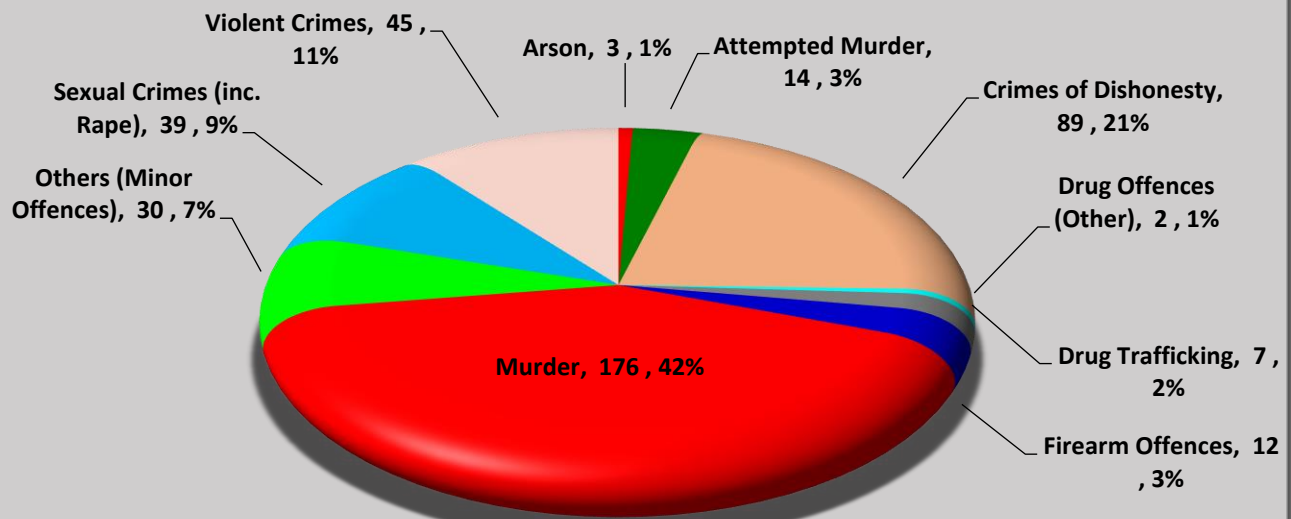


Table 10

As of December 31, 2020, the total inmate population – both convicted and remanded) stood at 1,108 with most inmates (289 or 26%) being in prison for Crimes of Dishonesty (*Robbery, Burglary, and Theft*). The next largest number (245 or 22%) were in prison for the crime of Murder. The breakdown of the population was 1,068 adult males, 25 adult females, and 15 young males (18 years and younger). (Please see table 11)

Inmate Population by Offence - As of December 31, 2020

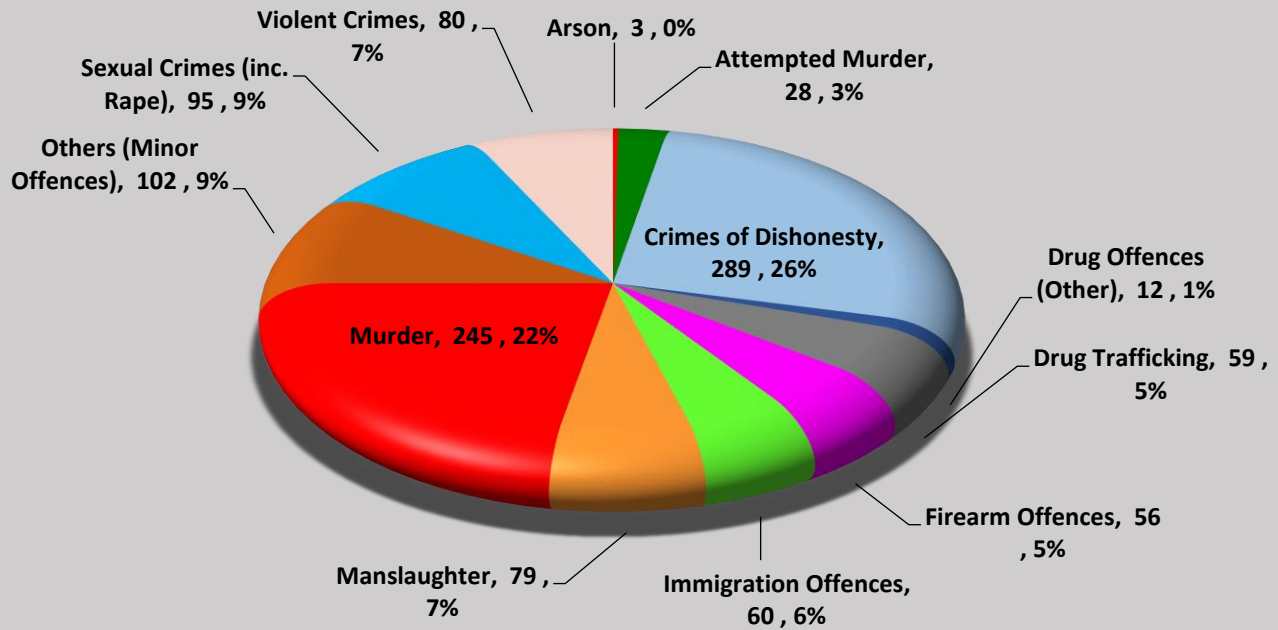


Table 11

Table 12 (below) explains the convicted and remanded inmate population as at the end of each month in 2020. *(Please see Table 12)*

The other one – Table 13 speaks to the overall average inmate population as at the end of each Fiscal Year which is showing an increase of 78 caused primarily as a result of the States of Emergency for Southside, Belize City and Covid-19 Regulations violations in 2020.

The Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) estimated the mid-year population of Belize in 2015 to be 368,000 whilst the prison’s average population for the same period was 1,533. Contrast that with last year’s estimated mid-year population of a whopping 419,000 – and estimated increase of 51,000 inhabitants and a prison average population of 1,211 inmates.

(Please see Table 13)

The newly installed government has indicated that Coronavirus regulations violators will no longer be sent to prison, instead they will be ticketed and as such the forecast, based on historical data is indicating that the headcount will continue to fall, despite the growing Belizean population.

INMATE HEADCOUNT AS AT MONTH'S END - 2020

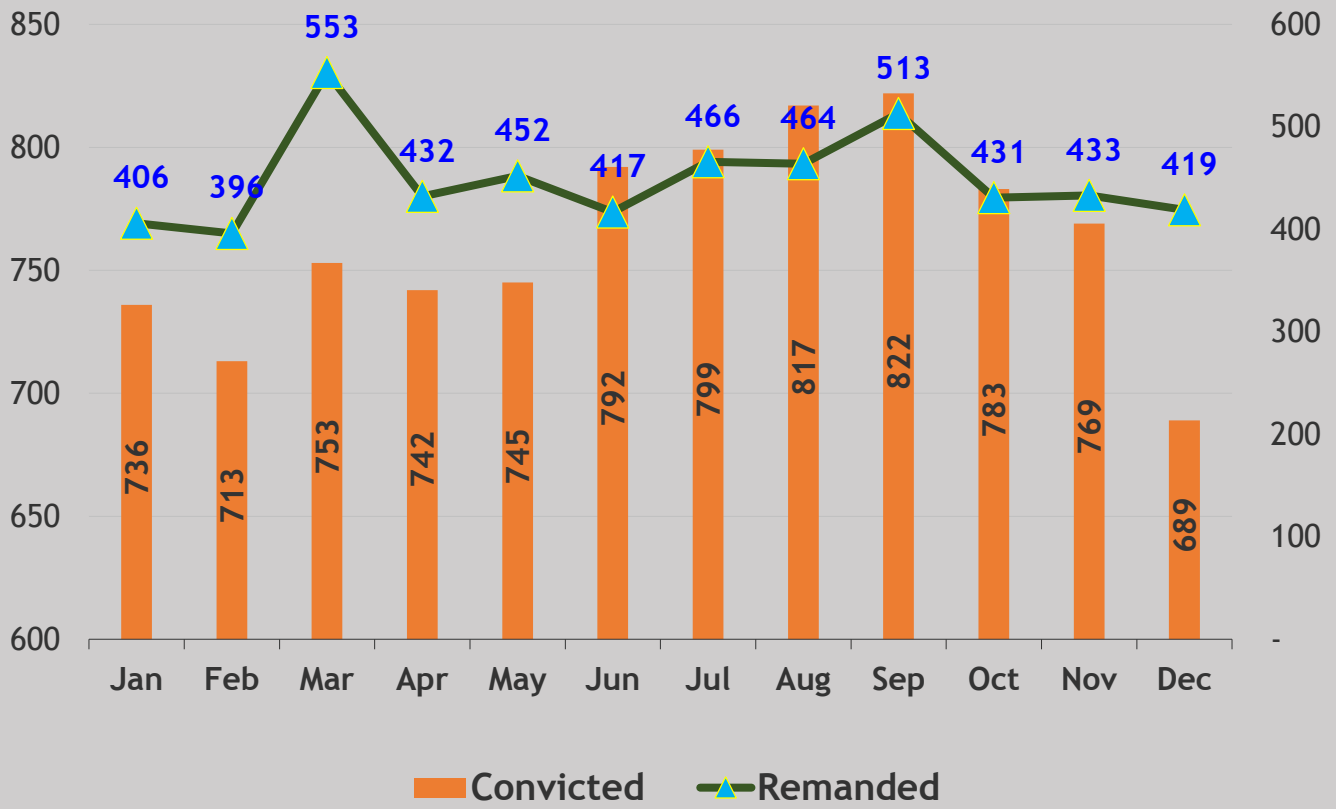


Table 12

YEARLY INMATE AVERAGE POPULATION - FY 03/04 - 20/21

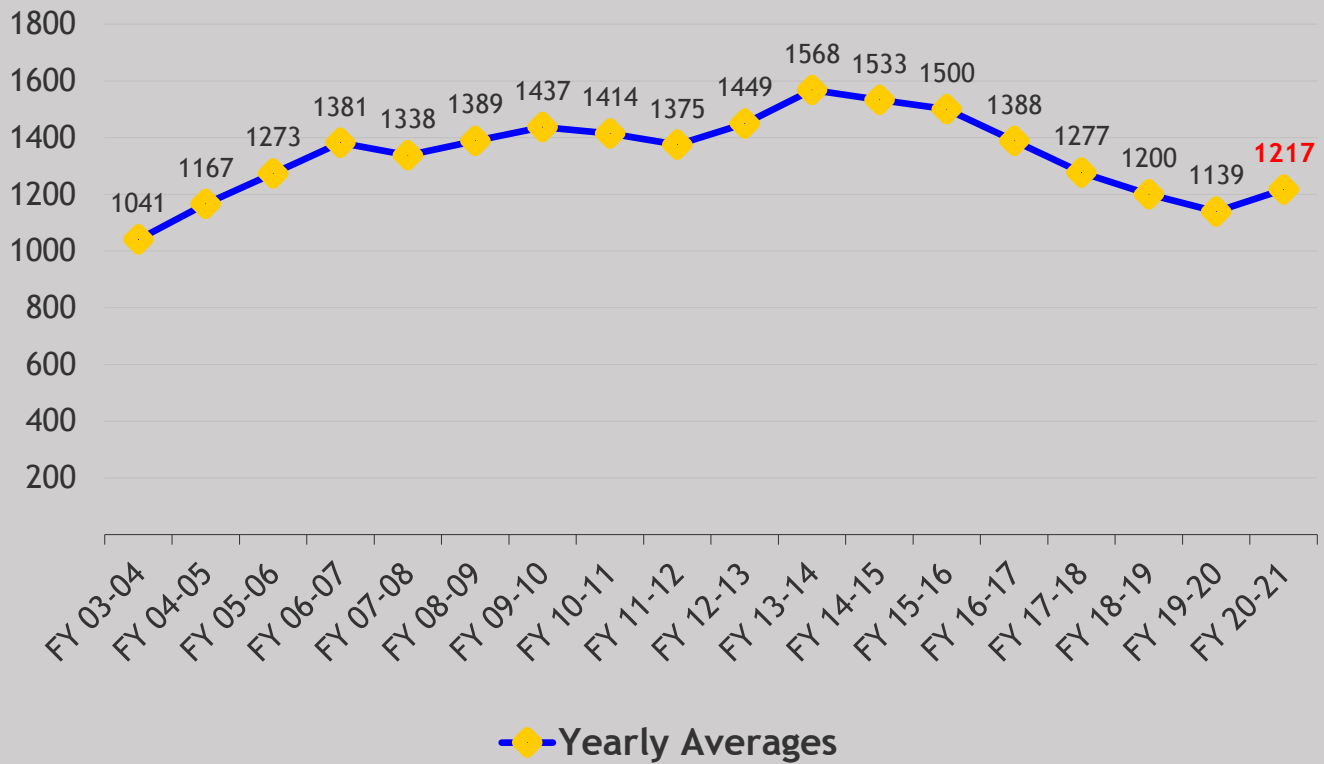


Table 13

PAROLE

In 1998 Mr. Nuri Muhammed said in an article in the Sankufa Journal that, *“For every 10 inmates that leave the Hattieville facility, 6 or 7 return to the system within a year – some as quickly as three months. There is an identifiable set of young people who are revolving through the Criminal Justice System each time becoming more and more hardened and sophisticated in their criminal life.”*

Fast forward to 2019, Dr. Jarrod Sadulski, Faculty Member, Criminal Justice, American Military University highlighted the effects of our rehabilitation efforts by stating in an article he wrote entitled, **“Belize Prison’s Rehabilitation Programs Raise Morale, Lower Recidivism,** that *“Belize Central Prison’s recidivism or re-offending rate is only 10 percent. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, the recidivism rate in the United States was found to be as high as 83 percent. Mexico, which borders both Belize and the United States, has a recidivism rate of between 80 and 90 percent.”*

In 2020 out of 291 applications a total of 97 inmates were paroled after satisfying the Parole Board that they were fit to reenter into their respective communities. This translates to a 33% approval rate and as Table 14 most of them (33 or 34%) were in prison for Crimes of Dishonesty (Robbery, Burglary, and Theft). (Please see Table 14)

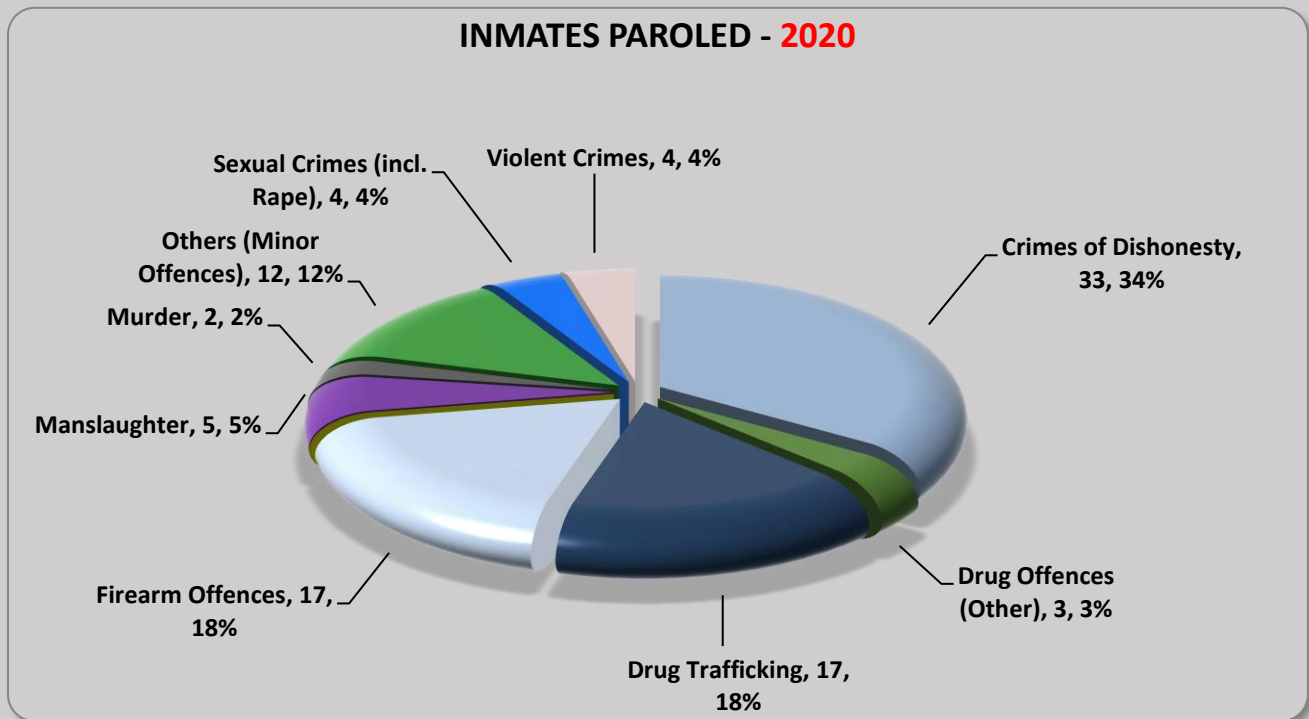


Table 14

The chart below gives an idea of Parole approval rates between 2013 and 2020. As shown, there is an overall approval rate of 38% which should be interpreted as something good for the country as sentences are being completed by offenders who are deemed unsafe for the society.

(Please see Table 15)

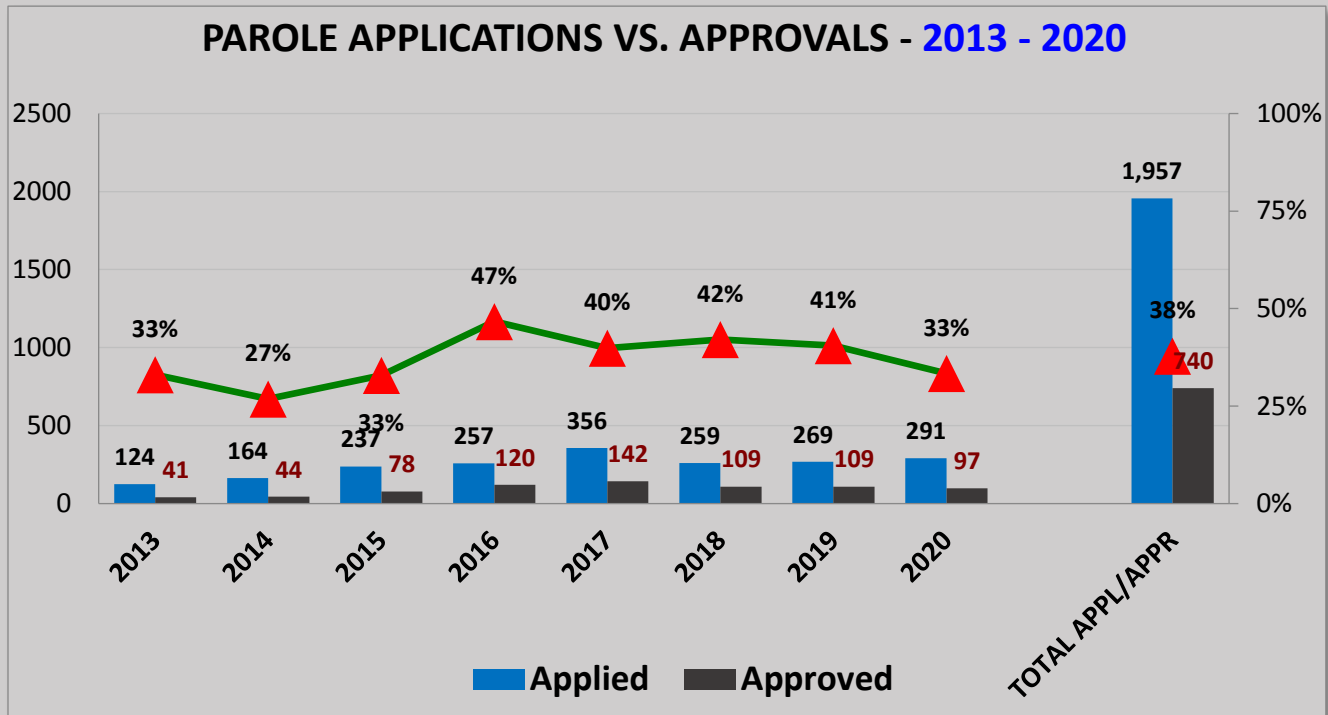


Table 15

Recidivism in general terms is the relapse to crime by an offender, especially if he or she has gone through some form of rehabilitation program for his addictive and criminal behavior. Table 16 (below) is basically a synopsis of our recidivism rate as it relates to parole which shows an overall of 10%. This fact was highlighted by Dr. Jarrod Sadulski in his article as mentioned above and continues to hold true since 2015.

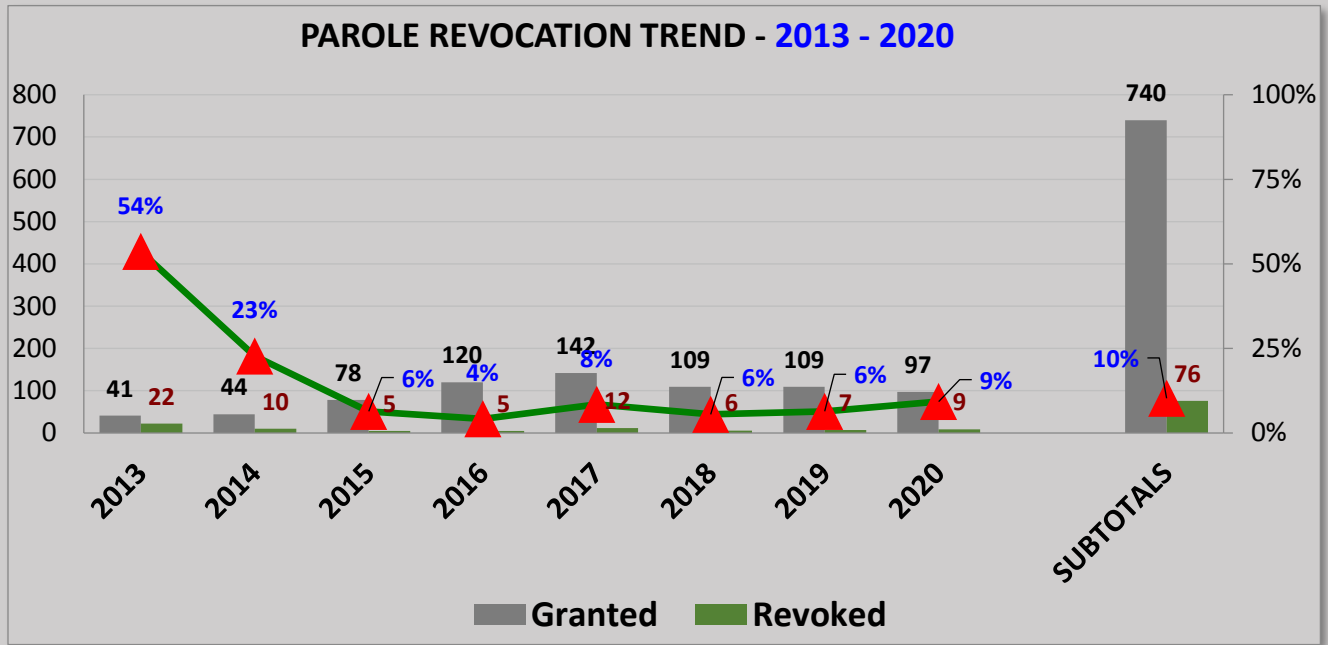


Table 16

Table 17 (below) explains the trends in parole as it relates to Granted, Denied, Completions, and Revocations between 2013 and 2020.

(Please see Table 17)

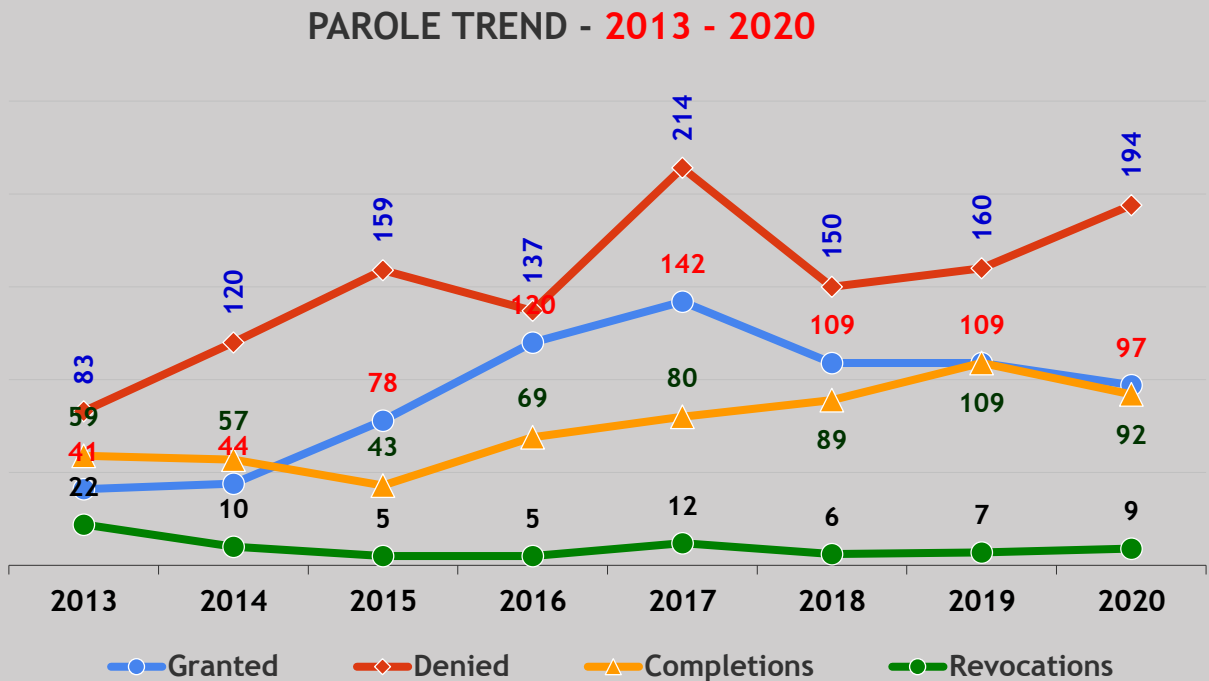


Table 17

MEDICAL DIAGNOSES

The Medic Center saw a total of 1,721 inmates and staff in 2020 who complained of illnesses, fifteen more or a 1% percent increase when compared to 2019. As per the chart below the top diagnosis was the Novel Coronavirus with 225 cases or 13%. (*Please see Table 19*)

Two inmate-deaths were recorded in 2020, one by natural causes and the other by gunshot wound which occurred during the riot at Tango 7.

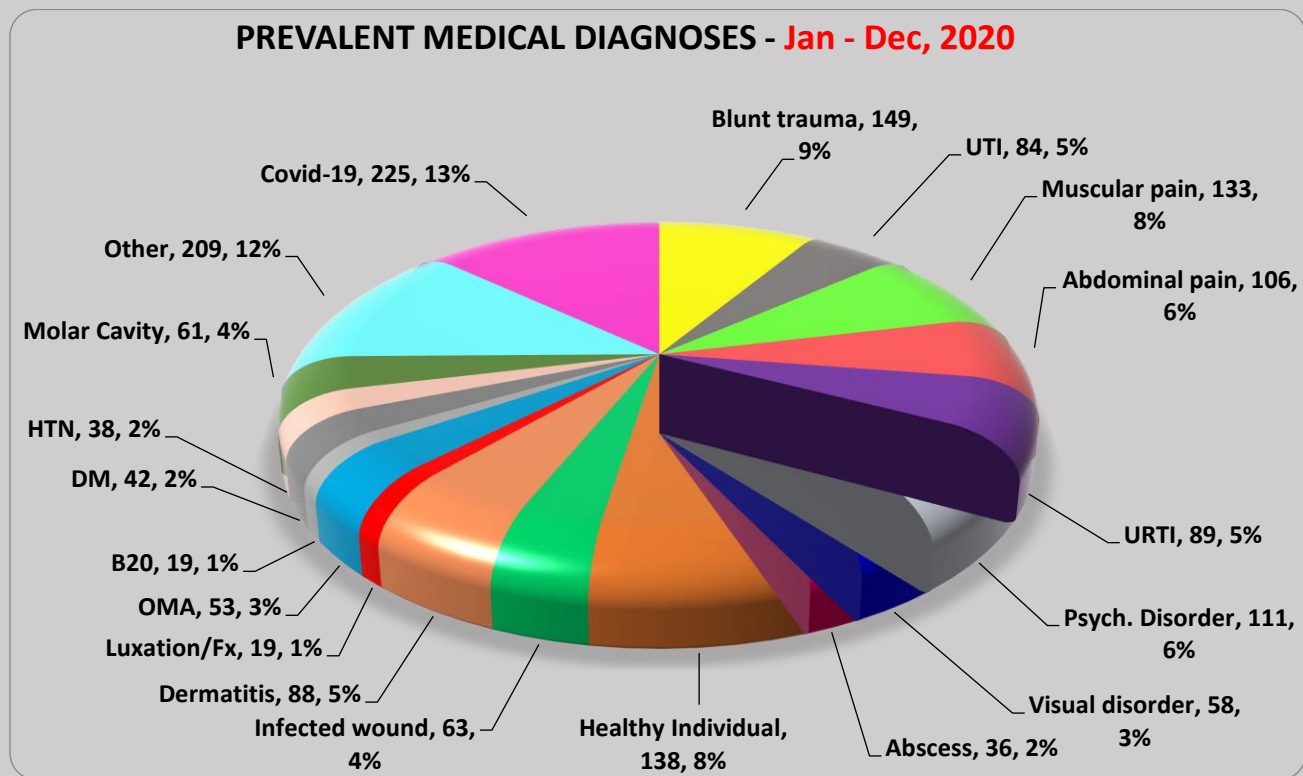


Table 18

GANGS IN PRISON

Gangs in prisons are usually one of the biggest threats to the good order and discipline of the facility. Belize, is a country with almost 20 different gangs, including the Central American ill-reputed MS-13 and 18th Street gangs. For many years now the country has been struggling to keep their killing behavior under a lid, most often to no avail. Since 2018 the government has been using SOEs as a method of dissuading gangs from proliferating and wreaking havoc in the society and 2020 was no different.

In 2020 the government was forced to institute two States of Emergency for Southside, Belize City in an effort to quell the violent feud that was going on amongst the Belize City gangs. In the first SOE, which was in March and lasted one month, the police rounded up a total of 142 gang members and delivered them to the prison on Detention Orders signed by the then Minister of Home Affairs. It is without a doubt that the SOEs are effective as there has been a noticeable decline in homicides when these guys are in prison.

Despite this however, a little over two months after they were released from prison the violence erupted once more, only that this time two very young children – no older than five years old were killed as collateral damages. This prompted the government to once again to get drastic and impose another SOE in July which lasted three months as it was believed that the one-month SOEs were losing their effectiveness. In this SOE a total of 132 gang members was imprisoned including women.

As it relates to gang members already in prison, as at December 31, 2020 there were 109 such persons throughout the prison, 62 being on remand and 47 convicted and the majority being members of the George Street Gang. The prevalent ages of these gang members are between 18 – 30 years old. Despite this number of rival gang members in the prison, there was no gang-related violence that we were aware of and the prison was violent free throughout the year, even with the SOE detainees being held there. *(Please see Table 19)*

GANGS IN PRISON - As of Dec 31, 2020

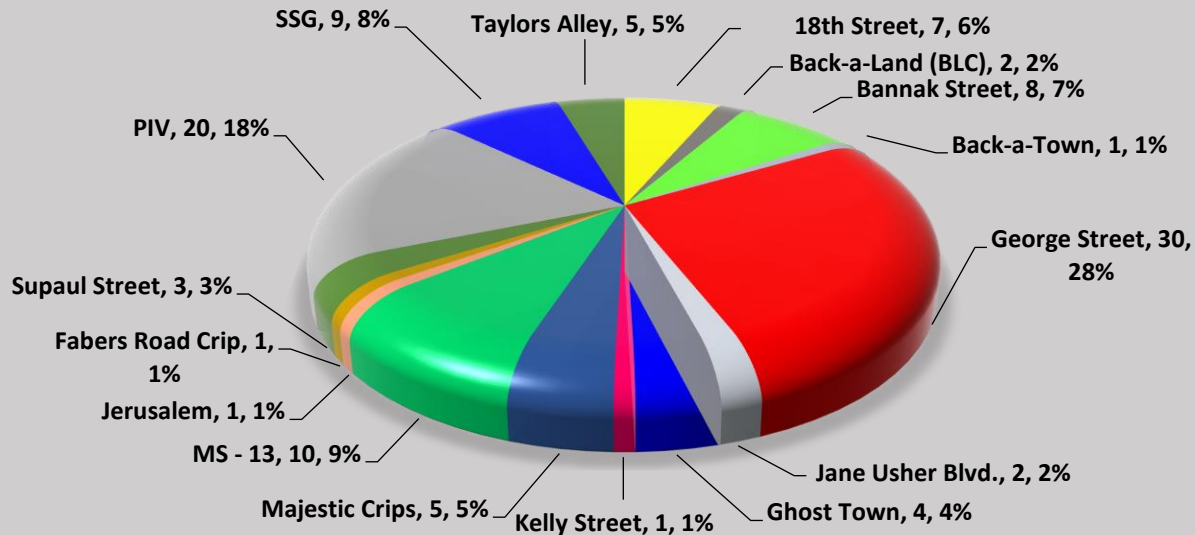


Table 19

OTHER 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

The pandemic brought with it a bunch of woes for the Belize Central Prison that exacerbated our already dreary situation; those being financial, human, material, and otherwise. Quite an amount of our very scarce and unbudgeted prison resources went into efforts to prevent and mitigate the spread of the virus within the prison. It was a sacrifice that was very much worth the pains though, and we must applaud our efforts because when there was the outbreak in October and we did what was necessary, we proved to the world that the virus can be combatted. This episode was a testament of our stern and ferocious leadership to not let the virus consume our prison and we became an example for other prisons to model.

- **RIOT, HOSTAGE-TAKING, AND ESCAPE TRAINING:** We all know that Riots, Hostage-Taking, and Escapes are inevitable in every prison, and another of our admirers and followers – Dr. Jarrod Sadulski, Faculty Member, Criminal Justice, American Military University committed to provide us with a 2-days training in this regard for all staff. After preparing his training package, Dr. Sadulski boarded the aircraft in Florida and headed to the Belize Central Prison at absolutely no cost to the Foundation and the prison. He provided this training at the auditorium to approximately 250 officers and civilian employees between January 23 and 24, 2020. This selfless and incalculable gesture was gladly received and appreciated by the Kolbe Foundation and all its staff.
- **Lord Ashcroft Covid-19 Relief Fund Award:** In June of 2020, through Kolbe Board Member – Mr. Francis Woods, the prison won a bid of \$60,000.00 BZD from the Lord Ashcroft Covid-19 Relief Fund for the inmates to produce 20,000 cloth face masks for the Belizean populace

as part of Lord Ashcroft's Covid-19 prevention and mitigation assistance for Belize. We began making these masks in April 2020 and they became very popular because of the workmanship of the inmates and their cheap price! They were well advertised by the media houses who had done a few articles on the venture and promoted by staff and everyone who came to the prison to buy them. The male inmates sewed the masks whilst the female inmates ironed and packaged them, and we are proud to say that the deadline for producing these masks was properly met.

- **CARICOM PRESENTATION: *SECURING OUR COMMUNITY WITHIN THE ERA OF COVID-19 AND BEYOND*** – On July 31, 2020 the Belize Central Prison was very fortunate to have been one of the very few countries to make a presentation to Caricom countries on the above subject matter in a Virtual Security Conference held from Monday July 27 through Friday July 31, 2020. We were four months into the Coronavirus pandemic and our prison was one of the very few prisons in the Caribbean that was still free of the virus. A very impactful presentation was made to hundreds of people around the world which was live streamed on Facebook and YouTube and a copy of it was requested by the Caricom Secretariat.
- **PODCAST: “*How Belize Central Prison has Mitigated the Spread of Covid-19*”**
On September 8, 2020 the Director of the Prison – Mr. Virgilio Murillo did a podcast, with Dr. Jarrod Sadulski as the host, which focused on how the Belize Central Prison has prevented and mitigated the spread of the Coronavirus. Dr. Sadulski, at the time, said he felt it very important that we shared our strategies, as at this point the prison was still Covid-19 free whilst many other prisons around the world were exploding with the virus and were even having deaths amongst their inmates and staff.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

On February 14, 2020 we inaugurated the newly renovated Female Section which was made possible through a \$62,000.00 USD donation from Mrs. Bobbie Wagner of the Wagner's Foundation in 2019. Kolbe Board Member – Mr. Francis Woods had lobbied Mrs. Bobbie Wagner for a financial donation to overhaul this section of the facility which was in a dire state due to the non-existence of capital funding from government. The Wagner's Foundation has always been an avid supporter of the Kolbe Foundation and its philosophies as it relates to the treatment of prisoners therefore, we were not at all surprised when Mrs. Wagner presented us with the cheque of that amount to do the repairs. The scope of work included:

- Addition of four (4) new prison cells,
- Complete overhaul of all current cells including plumbing, electrical, and painting,
- Replaced the entire roof of the building,
- Remodeled and expanded the kitchen for teaching culinary arts to the female inmates
- Remodeled the visiting box to accommodate four visitors at one time as well as to provide for contact visits for mothers with their children,
- Renovated the recreation and dining area,
- Replaced dilapidated fence facing the storeroom and highway,

- Construction of an all-weather sidewalk and a little landscaping to the yard.



Inauguration of renovated Females Section



Inauguration of new kitchen for the Females Section to teach Culinary Arts

The Belize Central Prison has always been in a financial crunch and survives on a shoe-string budget due to our *per-prisoner-per-day contractual* arrangements with the government. This arrangement is being made worse each year due to the falling inmate headcount and diminishing donations, but there are needs that need to be fulfilled and Kolbe is determined to fulfill them. Like the good old adage goes, “*You cannot plough a field in your mind, you need to get out there and do it!*” With this kind of drive, despite our financial constraints as mentioned above, the Kolbe Foundation continued to make infrastructure improvements in 2020 in order to keep the prison humane and secure for the inmates, staff, and visitors.

GUARD TOWER # 4:

As a consequence of the “Hostage-Taking-Turned-Escape” situation at the Administrative Segregation area of the prison, we started building our fourth guard tower behind that area to prevent something of this magnitude from happening again. Using inmate labour and skills we started it in November some donated materials from businesses such as Progreso Cement, National Aggregates, and the Wood Depot; just to mention a few. It was a very slow start due to some very bad rains we experienced in the latter part of the year, however since the new year has begun we have been doubling up on our efforts to complete the tower by the end of February 2021. If all goes well, it is anticipated that this new tower will be in use by the middle of March 2021.



Construction of Tower #4

EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Not much was done by the administration and inmates as relates to education and rehabilitation programs because of the need for social distancing and hygiene to prevent and mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus. Aside from other Covid-19 protocols, the number of inmates in program buildings such as the ARC (*for convicted inmates*), RRC (*for remanded inmates*), and Tango 1 (*Spiritual program for convicted inmates*) was scaled back to make social distancing possible amongst them.

PSE PROGRAM

Covid-19 seriously affected our PSE program taught at the CGS the very same way it did for the broader society and as such it never yielded any achievements for anyone. The period was used merely to review all subject matters as refreshers for the interns in the program.

KAINA ONLINE ACHIEVEMENT FOR WYF INTERNS

For the second year in a row the young interns at the Wagner's Youth Facility (WYF) have successfully attained their high school Diploma from the Kaina Online High School Program which is sponsored through scholarships from government's Community Rehabilitation Department. Of the approximate seven that were enrolled in 2020, four of them graduated – two having done so with honors in key subjects. These two youths came in first and third respectively from amongst a total of 22 students countrywide! This milestone was dubbed as, “unprecedented” and “historical” for the prison under the management of the Kolbe Foundation, as prior to this, such accomplishment was never heard of!

RACHEL PROGRAM

The Remote Area Community Hotspot for Education and Learning (**RACHEL**) is an electronic offline server filled with library and educational contents for inmates to learn and conduct research using individual tablets and laptop computers. All contents on the server are screened by the administration. We started this program in late 2018 at the Cindy Gregg School and through the Rotary Club of Port Moody, Canada a grant of \$180,000.00 BZD worth of computers, servers, and accessories was received to expand it to the bigger population.

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM PROGRAM

This Program is a pre-requisite program that allows an inmate to evaluate his or her behavior intrinsically and externally so as make a conscious decision about their transformation. It also prepares them for engaging in other core programs such as ARC, RRC, CGS, and Tango 1 and 95 male inmates successfully completed it in 2020.

BTEC ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

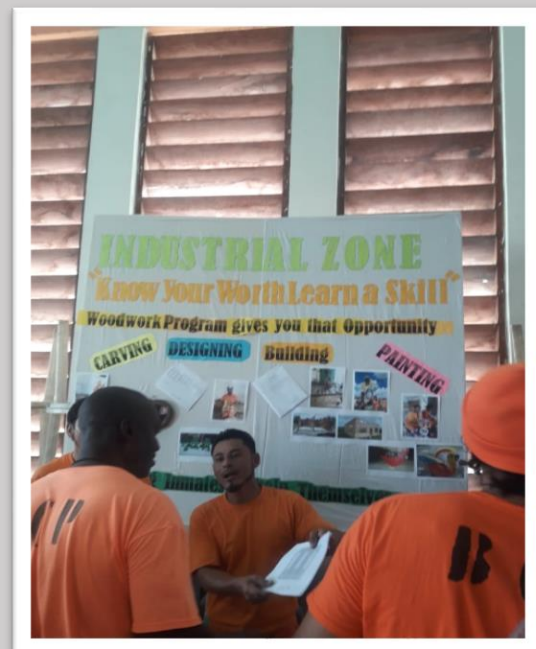
This Entrepreneurship program offered to inmates is conducted by the Belize Training and Employment Center (**BTEC**) in collaboration with the Kolbe Foundation. It teaches inmates business and entrepreneurial skills which they can use upon their return to society so that they be employable and can lead self-sustainable lives. Although we could not have ceremonially recognized them for their successful completion of this program in 2020, a total of fifteen (15) inmates graduated and obtained their certificates.

EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION FAIR

The Education and Rehabilitation Department held an Education and Rehabilitation Fair to educate and sensitize the inmate population on the various programs and services available to them. The opportunity was used to educate them also on medical issues and diseases such HIV/Aids, Diabetes, Hypertension, Cardiovascular diseases, Personal Hygiene, just to name a few.



Education and Rehabilitation Fair



*Education and Rehabilitation Fair
– Industrial Zone*

WYF CALS PROGRAM

The young offenders at the Wagner's Youth Facility using the Computer Assisted Learning Software to aid them in learning to read and solving mathematical problems. In 2020 a total of 16 interns participated and advanced to Level 2, whilst only five (5) of them made it to Level 3. Nonetheless, it is a gain for these youths, who for the very first time in their lives are learning literacy and numeracy in prison.

PRISON INDUSTRIES/INDUSTRIAL ZONE

The Industrial Zone, which is the production and business arm of the prison, continued to assist with generating revenue that helped in paying for operational expenses, as well as teaching the inmates vocational skills which they can use for employment upon their release. An average of 59 inmates remained continuously employed at the Industrial Zone during 2020 working in the areas of woodwork, poultry, piggery, tailoring, block making, or the farm.

CLOTH FACE MASKS AND USED-TIRE ARTS

With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, the prison lost sales in furniture and cement blocks which were our main-sellers in years gone by, however the idea of cloth face masks was brought up by Kolbe Board – Mr. Francis Woods and the inmates were all too eager to take on the challenge! They delved into the mass production of the face masks which were in very high demand by almost every business and organization in the country. The inmates were also challenged to make arts from a truckload of used tires given to the prison by Caribbean Tire Wholesale from Spanish Lookout. This too was very successful, and the demand was very high!

These two projects turned out to have been very good alternatives to keeping the inmates busy during the lockdown. Several of the media outlets did an article on them and they both went viral on Social Media, especially the used-tire arts!

Below are some pictures of the various vocational programs at the Industrial Zone, including the Tire-Arts and Cloth Face Mask projects:



Used-tires Arts



Used-tires Arts by inmates



Face mask making



Face Masks packaged by female inmates for the project received through the Lord Ashcroft Covid-19 Relief Fund.

DONATIONS

Kolbe Foundation takes this opportunity to say a huge “**THANK YOU!!!!**” to those Prison Ministries, Businesses, Government Departments, other organizations, and good Samaritans who generously donated cash or in kind towards our “**life-changing**” efforts during 2020. Their contributions – however small, enabled us to have managed the prison in a decent fashion.

Below is a list of such donors and we apologize in advance if anyone was unintentionally overlooked:

- **January 2020** – Received 75 English and 25 Spanish Audio Bibles from Galcom International Ministries through Pastor Richard Smith which were distributed to Rehabilitation Program buildings, WYF, Females Section and Administrative Segregation.
- **March 13, 2020** – Received \$1,531.00 BZD cash donation from Dr. Jarrod Sadulski to purchase two televisions for any of the Program buildings in need of any. He also donated \$2,000.00 BZD worth of medical, hygiene, and stationery supplies to the prison.
- **June 3, 2020** – Pursuant to a Pre-Covid-19 virtual meeting involving all Caricom Heads of Prison Services held on March 25, 2020 and with the support of the British High Commission, Port of Spain, we received a donation of \$15,000.00 BZD worth of Covid-19 supplies from Caricom IMPACS. The freight was provided by the French Government.
- **June 10, 2020** – Kolbe Board Member – Mr. Rene Villanueva provided labour and technical services in the upgrading the prison studio’s broadcasting system to a newer version.
- **October 7, 2020** – Commissioner of Police donated 3,000 disposable face masks to assist the prison with its Covid -19 mitigation efforts: \$3,000.00 BZD
- **December 14, 2020** – Received an estimated \$35,000.00 BZD worth of Covid-19 supplies including disposable gloves and face masks, PPEs, etc. from Minister of Home Affairs – Hon. Kareem Musa.
- Donations from Cisco Construction Ltd. throughout the year as listed below:
 - Assorted steel – \$14,500.00 BZD
 - Rental of Caterpillar heavy duty equipment - \$19,000.00 BZD
 - Donated 22 pairs scaffolds - \$22,000.00 BZD
- Rotary Club of Port Moody, Canada: RACHEL Program \$180,000.00
 - 250 Chromebook Laptop Computers
 - 10 RACHEL Servers
 - 10 X 60” Flatscreen Television Sets
 - 250 headsets
- Progresso Cement – Cement: \$7,000.00 BZD
- National Aggregates – Concrete Mix & Hardcore Material: \$6,000.00 BZD
- Donations from The Word at Work Ministries (**TWAW**) throughout the year – too numerous to quantify.
- Pastor Ken Barber of Grace House – TVs, Hygiene, clothing, & footwears for WYF.
- Pastor John McGee – 2 bales Inmates’ uniform cloth material
- Ms. Gretchen Smith – 100 Bibles
- The Jesuit Diocese and Community – Mentorship and counseling by Jesuit Volunteers
- Community Rehabilitation Department (CRD) – Scholarships for Kaina Online Highschool
- Ministry of Human Development – Hygiene supplies and clothing for youths at WYF

- Dr. Jarrod Sadulski – Faculty Member, Criminal Justice, American Military University – Trained 250 staff in Hostage-Taking, Riots, and Escapes (2 days).
- John May (ACA) – Covid-19 Supplies
- Taiwanese Embassy – 2,000 disposable face masks (\$2,000.00 BZD)
- Belize Red Cross – Covid-19 Supplies
- Evangel Temple – Hygiene kits for female inmates.
- Mr. Norman Willacey – 273 bibles
- Kerm Thimbriel – 100 Bibles
- Timmy Braun – 44 Bibles



Inmates offloading donated Covid-19 supplies from British High Commission, Port of Spain through Caricom IMPACS at the Phillip Goldson International Airport (PGIA).



Donated Covid-19 supplies from British High Commission, Port of Spain through Caricom IMPACS



French Military Aircraft that transported Covid-19 supplies from Caricom IMPACS. (from left to right: Mr. Ernesto Vasquez, Mrs. Mala Vasquez – Wife of Mr. Vasquez and Honorary Consul to France, Aircraft Captain, and Kolbe’s CEO – Mr. Virgilio Murillo)



Donated Chrome Books for RACHEL Program



Donation of Covid-19 supplies to the prison by Hon. Kareem Musa



Cisco's Heavy Equipment utilized for setting up foundation for Tower #4

CONCLUSION

As we move into 2021, we are very hopeful that the pandemic will subside, and that things will get better for the prison and the country as a whole. In the meantime however, since the hostage-taking, break out, and riot incidents we have reviewed our standard operating procedures and with the recommendations from the Training in January of 2020, taken measures to prevent a recurrence. We look forward to continuing the great social work we are so used to doing – of rebuilding lives; not destroying them, and to the great collaboration with other stakeholders of the Criminal Justice System and the Government of Belize as we strive to make Belize safer and the Belize Central Prison a model for the world to emulate.

A tremendous ***THANK YOU*** to our Board of Directors who have freely given of their time and resources to help shaping the philosophies and strategies of the Kolbe Foundation as it works towards maintaining and/or enhancing its image in prison management for the world to see. And last, but not least, our staff; whom are responsible for carrying out the mandates set by the Board and government, as without them we could not have been where we are today!