

# BELIZE

## Analysis of the State of the Violence and Citizen Security (January to June 2021)

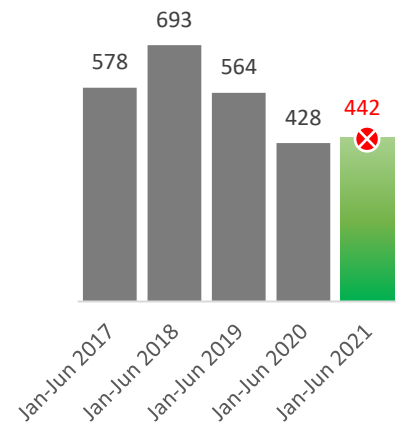


**infoSEGURA**

### Highlights

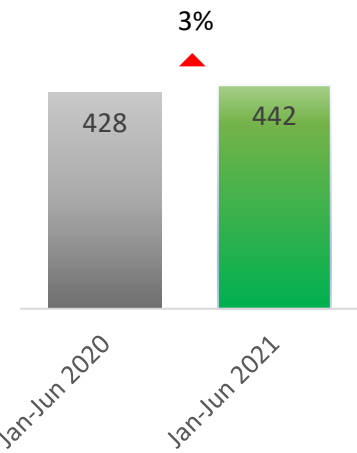
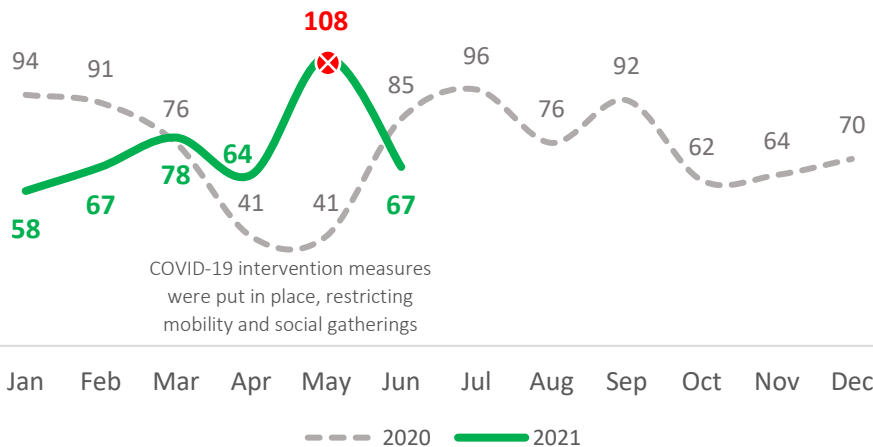
- Belize has been seeing a consistent overall decline in Major Crimes<sup>1</sup> since 2018, which went on record as the most violent year since 2017, due to an escalation in Major Crimes.
- However, Major Crimes fell by 19% during the first half of 2019, relative to the first half of 2018. There was a further 24% decline during January to June 2020, relative to the first half of 2019.
- This marked decline which the Belize Police Department registered during January to June 2020—despite an increase in murders during the pre-COVID-19 period in the early part of 2020—coincided with multiple interventions to address gang violence coupled with movement restrictions enforced to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- However, following the two successive mid-year declines, Belize recorded an overall increase in Major Crimes for the first half of 2021, from 428 during January to June 2020 to 442 for January to June 2021 (an increase of 14 incidents or +3%).

### MAJOR CRIMES



Data Source: Belize Police Department

The spike in Major Crimes, and particularly murders, during May 2021 contrasts sharply with the decline registered around the same time in the previous year (2020).

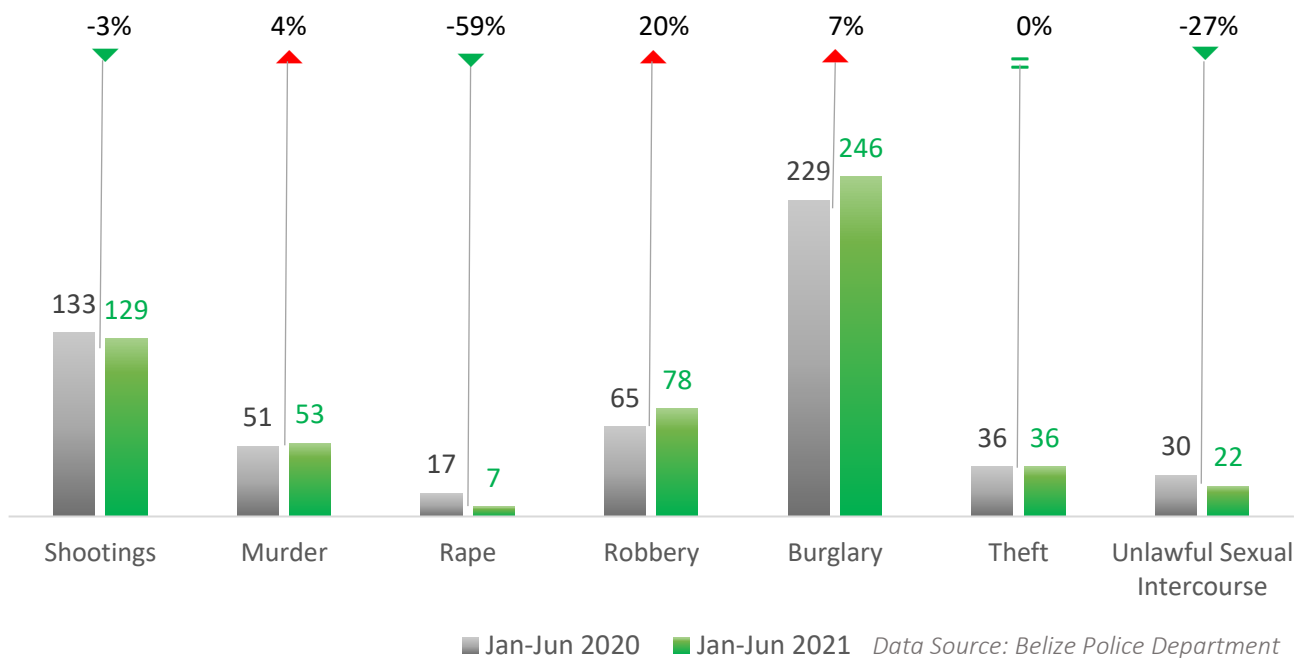


Data Source: Belize Police Department

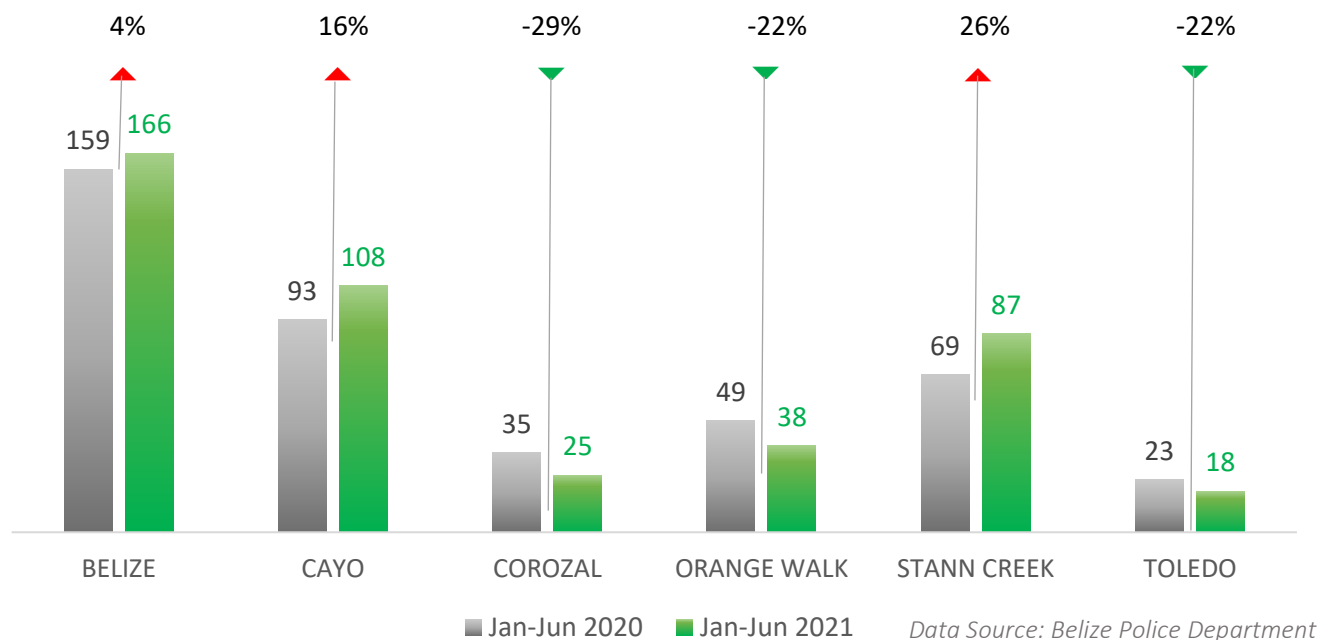
<sup>1</sup> The Belize Police Department lists 6 categories of crimes as “Major Crimes”: murder, rape, unlawful sexual intercourse, robbery, burglary, and theft. Unlawful sexual intercourse is a charge levied against someone who has been accused of having sexual relations with a person under the age of 16.

## MAJOR CRIMES

Within the Major Crimes category, Police registered a decline in sexual violence cases. However, increases were recorded for murder, robbery, and burglary. There was no overall change in the number of theft cases. The number of police-recorded shootings declined.



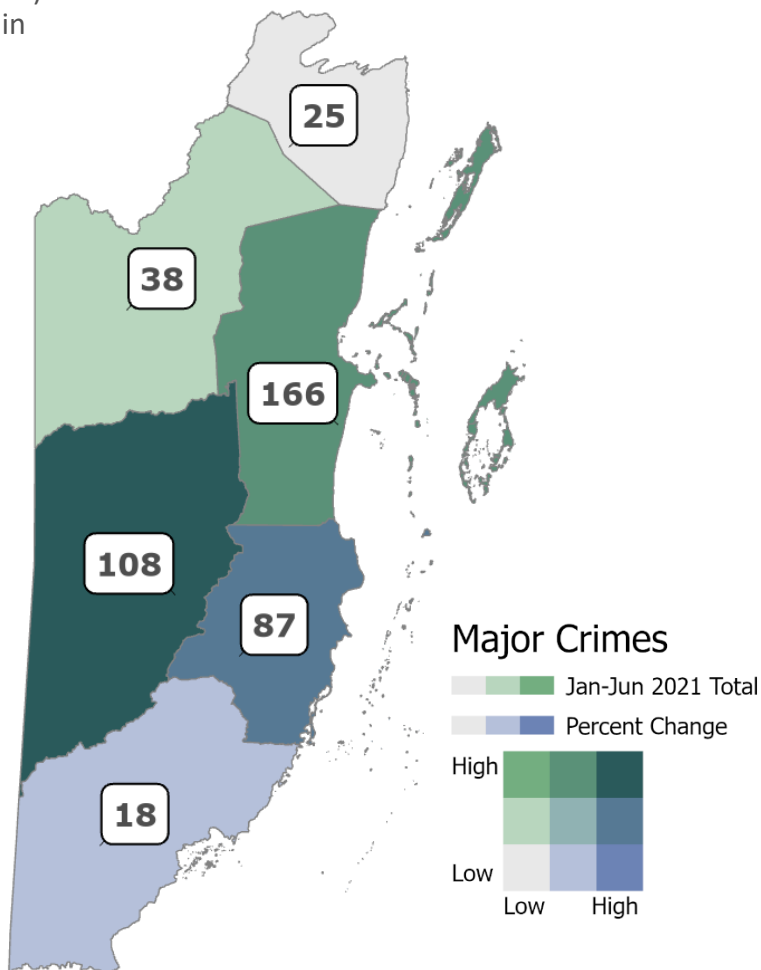
The Stann Creek District registered the most notable increase, relative to the same period in the previous year, largely due to an escalation in property crimes. The two largest districts (Belize and Cayo) also registered increases. However, declines were recorded for the northern districts (Corozal and Orange Walk) as well as the southernmost district (Toledo).



Central Belize (the Cayo and Belize Districts) continued to register an overall increase in Major Crimes

Although the Belize District, the most populous district, registered the most Major Crimes, the Cayo District, the second most populous district, registered a more marked increase relative to the same period in 2020.

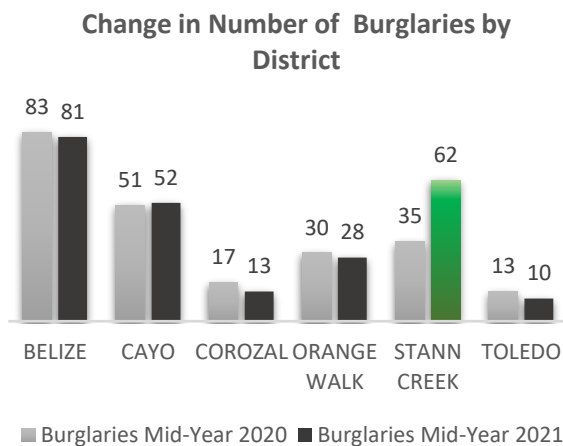
The bivariate visualization (see map on the right) demonstrates that the Belize, Stann Creek and Cayo Districts remain of greatest concern, with respect to the overall increase in Major Crimes.



Data Source: Belize Police Department

Although it ranked third among the districts with respect to the total number of Major Crimes recorded for the period, the Stann Creek District registered the largest percent increase, relative to the same period in the previous year. An escalation in burglaries was of greatest concern.

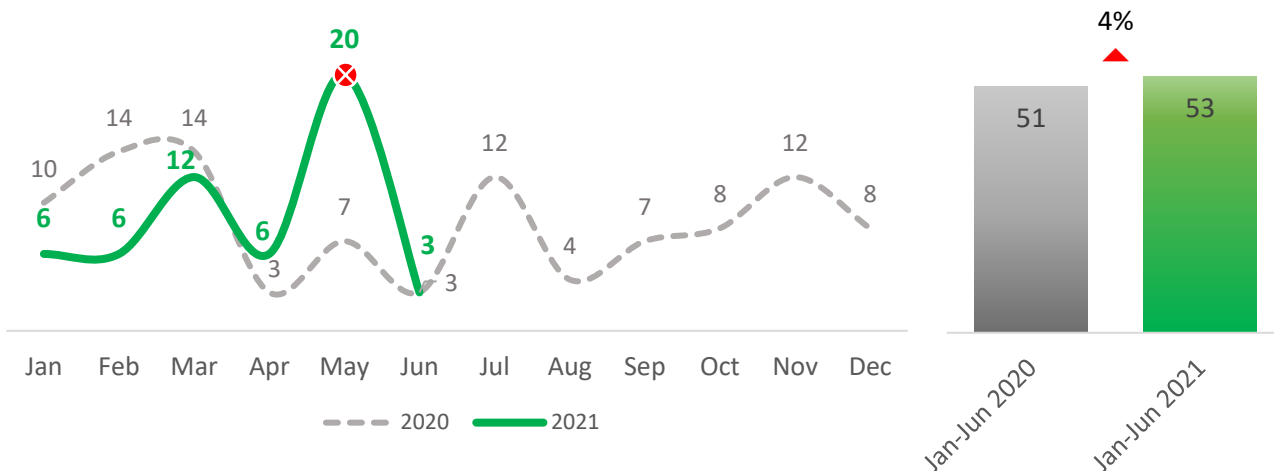
The northern districts of Corozal and Orange Walk registered the greatest gains in crime reduction. Toledo also registered an overall decline in Major Crimes, although murders increased.



Data Source: Belize Police Department

# MURDER

May 2021 registered the highest murder count since March 2018, when 21 murders were recorded. (Previously, 21 murders were registered for May 2021, as quoted in the BCO's Mid-Year 2021 Crime Analysis Report; however, the Belize Police Department revised the figure to 20 after the June 2021 data was released. The total mid-year figure of 55 was revised downward to 53, after the Belize Police Department reclassified another homicide listed as a murder during the half-year period.)

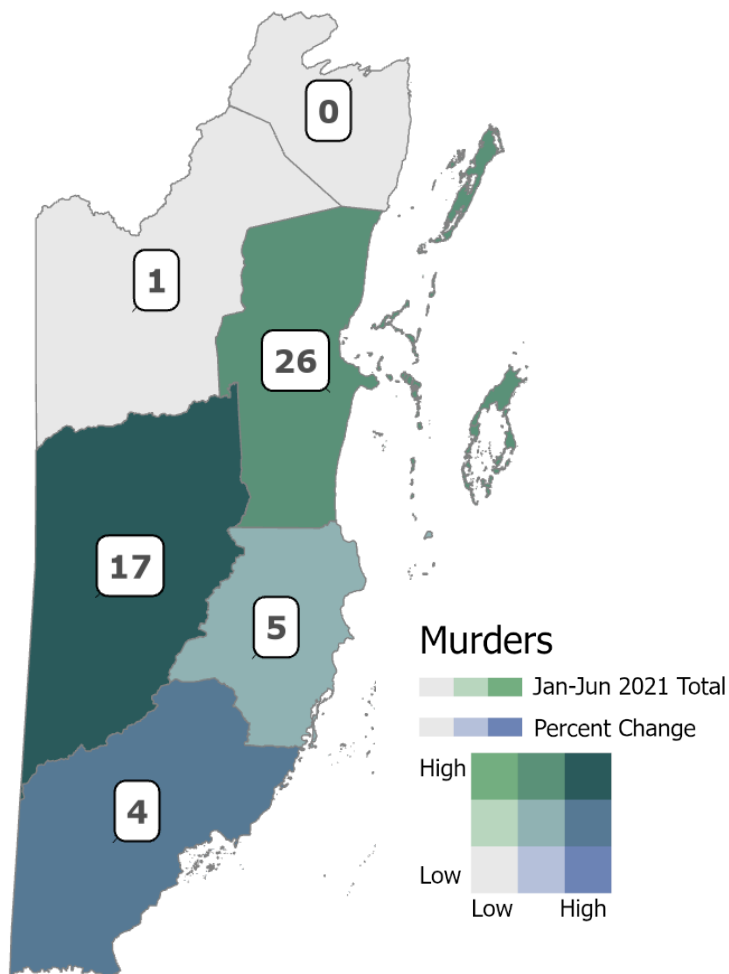


Data Source: Belize Police Department

Again, the Cayo District stands out as a district of concern. Murders more than doubled in the Cayo District for the period January to June 2021 when compared to January to June 2020 (with an increase from 7 to 17 incidents).

The northern districts recorded the least murders for the period.

Stann Creek registered a decline, while Toledo registered an increase.



Data Source: Belize Police Department

The heat maps below demonstrate the change in distribution of murders, with emphasis on the *Belmopan*, *San Ignacio*, and *Benque Viejo del Carmen* policing areas of the Cayo District, during the first half of 2021 relative to the same period during the previous year.

During the first half of 2021, the Belmopan

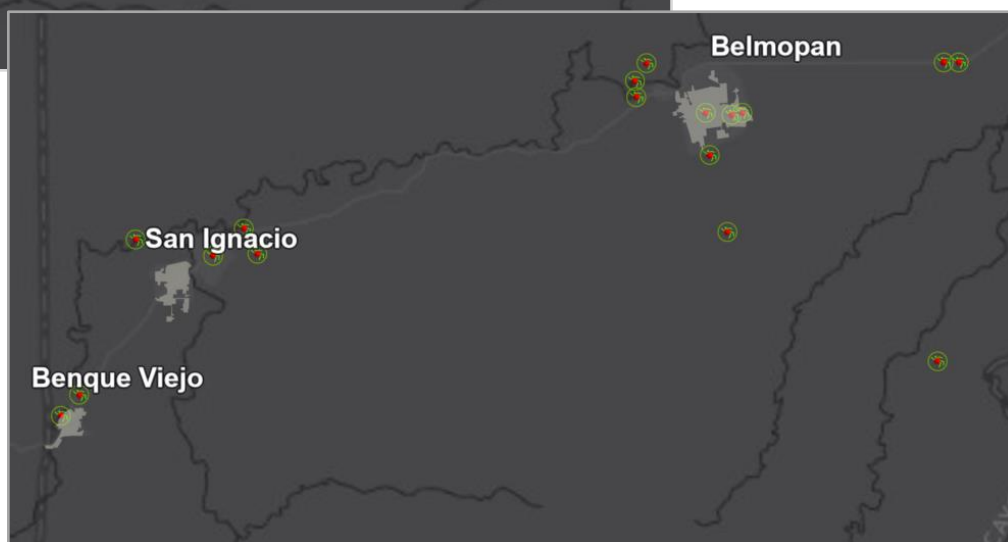
policing area, which includes Roaring Creek and other surrounding communities, saw a notable upsurge in murders.

While most killings were perpetrated with a firearm, sharp objects (particularly knives and machetes) were also used as murder weapons.



Generally, there was a substantial reduction in Major Crimes in the Belmopan area during 2020.

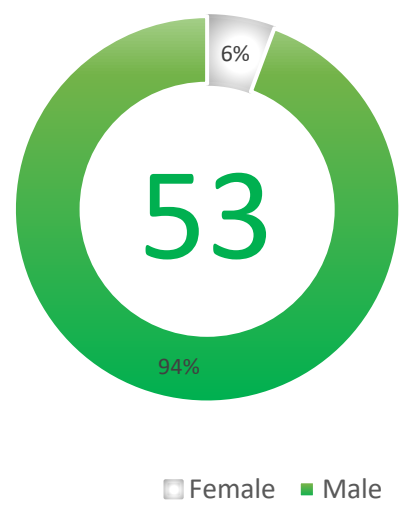
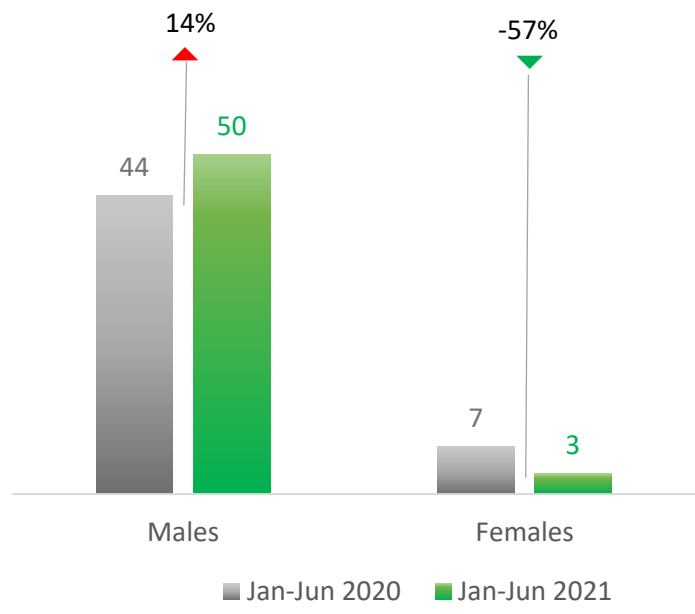
The western portion of the Cayo District recorded the same number of murders, although the distribution across the San Ignacio/Santa Elena and Benque Viejo del Carmen area was wider and extended more deeply into rural areas.



*Data Source: Belize Police Department*

There was an increase in the number of males murdered but a decrease in the number of females murdered.

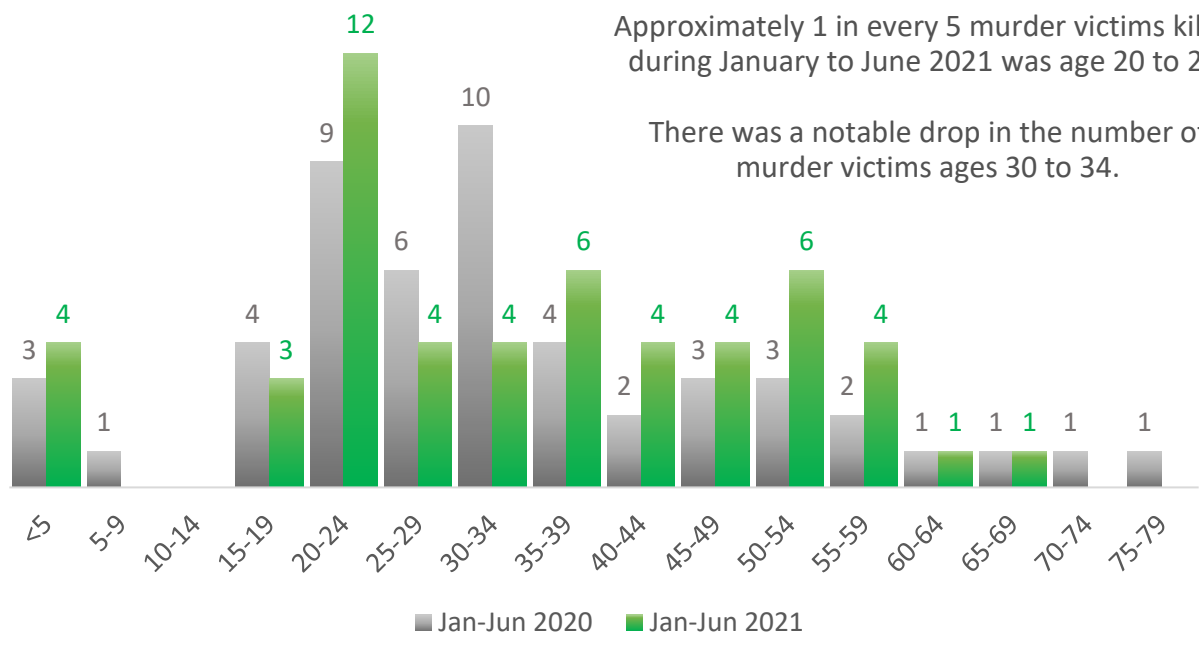
Males continued to account for the vast majority of victims: in this case, roughly 9 in every 10.



Data Source: Belize Police Department

Approximately 1 in every 5 murder victims killed during January to June 2021 was age 20 to 24.

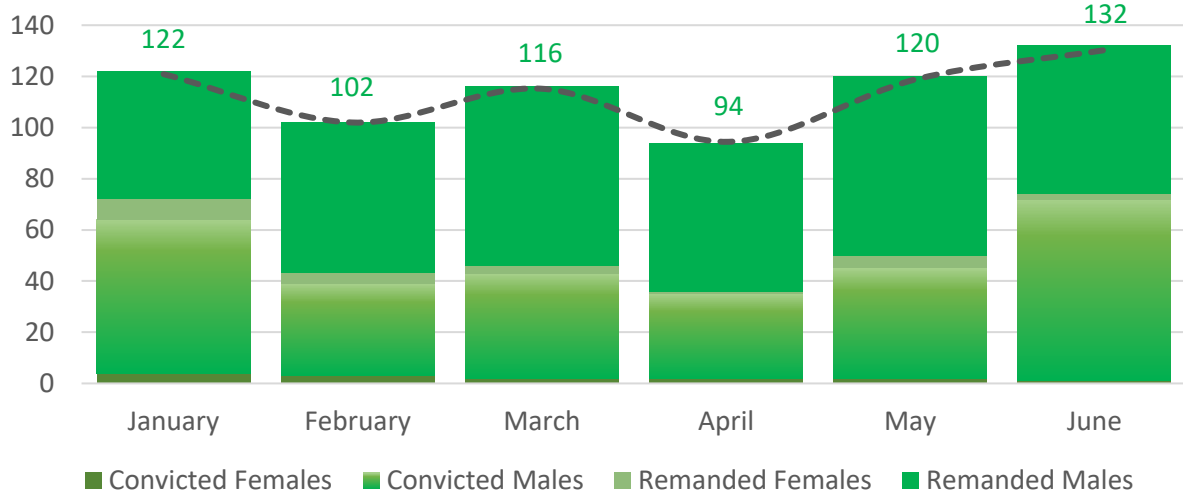
There was a notable drop in the number of murder victims ages 30 to 34.



Data Source: Belize Police Department

# INCARCERATION

Incarceration continued to fluctuate from month to month and peaked in June 2021, largely due to a substantial increase in the number of convicted males. A third of the persons incarcerated in June were sentenced for illegal entry. The illegal migrants originated from the nearby Central American nations of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. They were all working-age males, mostly ages 18 to 30.

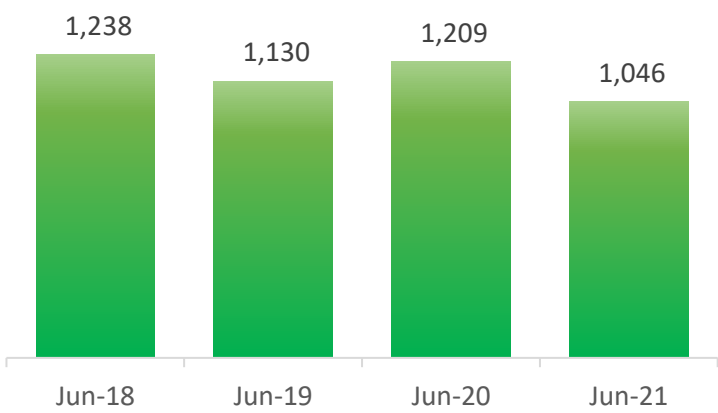
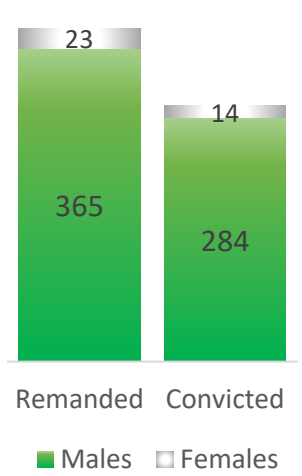


Data Source: Belize Central Prison

Males continue to comprise more than **90%** of incarcerated inmates (Jan-Jun 2021)

There has been an overall decline in the mid-year prison population over the past 4 years, as shown below. From June 2020 to June 2021, the mid-year population declined by 163 persons or 13.5%.

The increase during the first half of 2020 was attributable to incarceration related to the preventative detention of persons deemed to be gang members and/or associates, as well as persons remanded for alleged violations of COVID-19 regulations.



Data Source: Belize Central Prison