

CENTRAL AMERICA

Analysis of the state of homicidal violence

January-March 2023

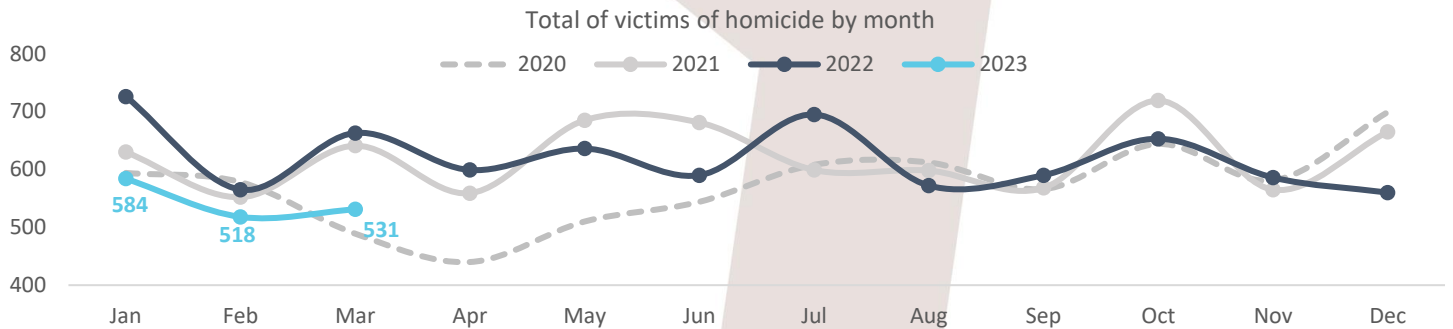
Highlights

- Between January and March, 1,671 victims of homicide were registered, 614 fewer victims than the same period last year ⁱ.
- A total of 200 women and 1,424 men were recorded as homicide victims in the countries where data is disaggregated by sex ⁱⁱ.
- The main homicide victims were people between 30 and 49 years old.
- Firearms were present in the vast majority (79.6%) of the homicides.
- Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras recorded a decrease in the total number of homicide victims. Costa Rica was the only country that registered an increase compared to the same period of the previous year.
- Most territories (67.2%), namely departments, provinces, and districts, recorded decreases in the number of homicide victims during the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. In the remaining territories, an increase was registered (32.8%).

Evidence

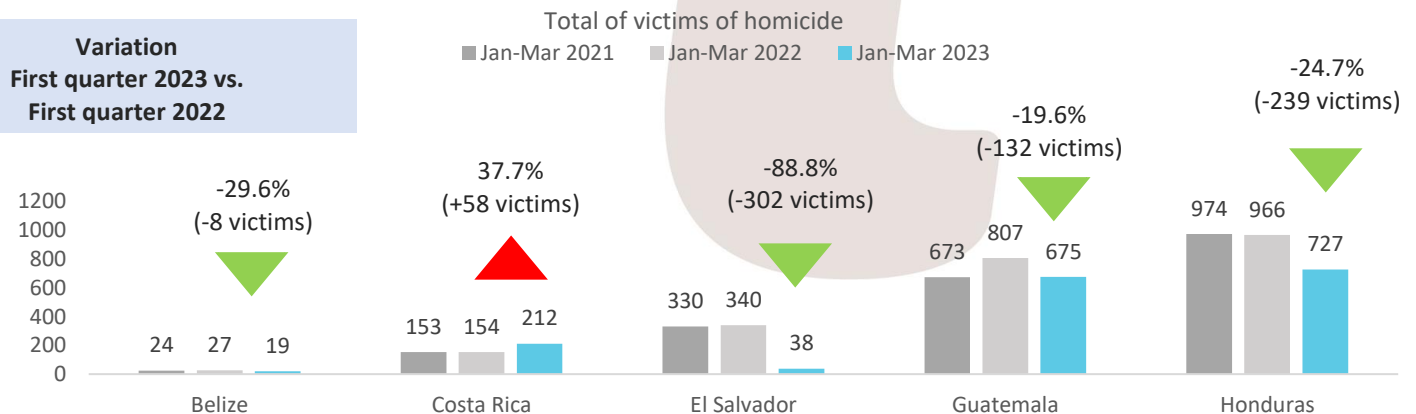
During the first three months of 2023, there were 1,671 victims of homicidal violence in the Central American region -- approximately 19 victims per day and 614 fewer victims than the same period in 2022.

When compared to 2020 - an atypical year due to the pandemic - it can be observed that in the first months of 2023, there were fewer victims than in the first three months of 2020. The year 2020 witnessed notable reductions, especially from March onward, due to mobility restrictions imposed in the countries of the subregion.



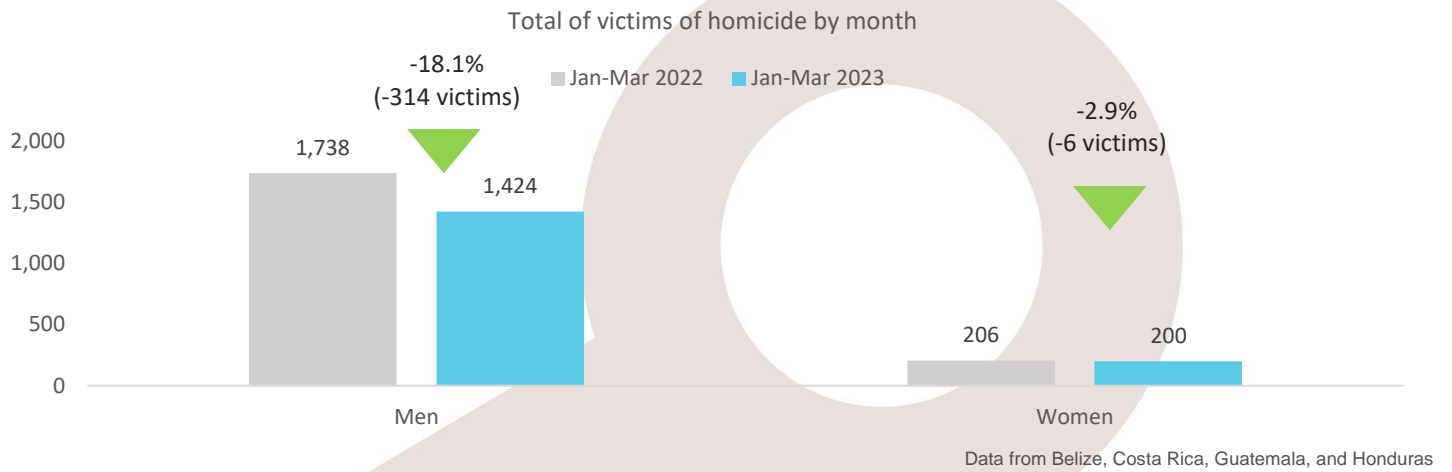
Data from Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras

The behavior among countries was similar: Belize (-8 victims), El Salvador (-302 victims), Guatemala (-132 victims), and Honduras (-239 victims) recorded a decrease in the total number of homicide victims during the first three months of 2023 compared to the previous year. Costa Rica diverges from the regional trend, as it registered an increase of 58 more homicide victims during the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same period of the previous year.

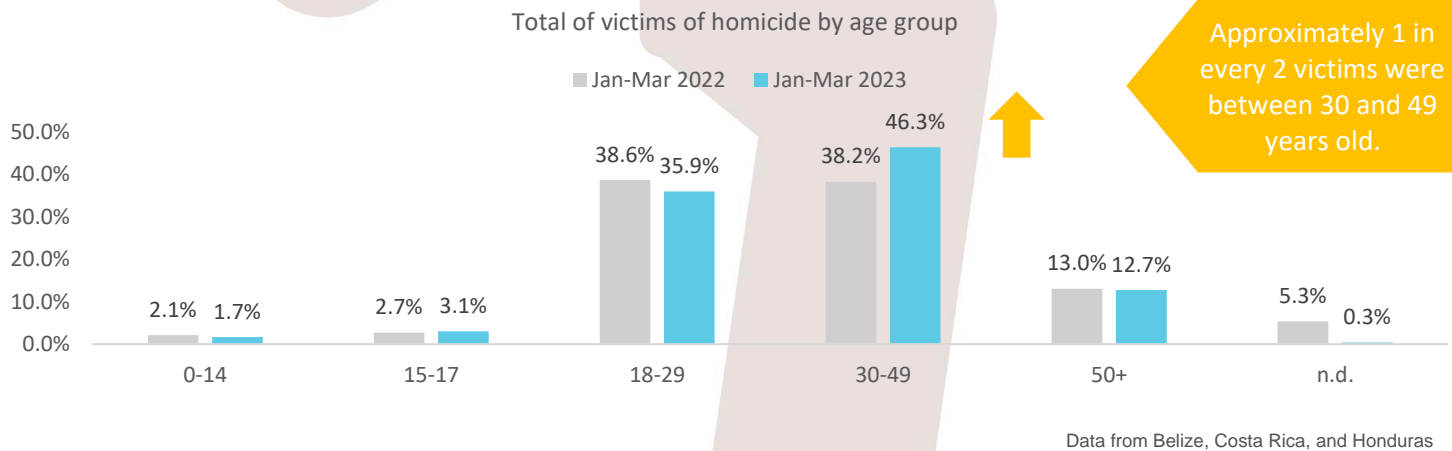


Variation
First quarter 2023 vs.
First quarter 2022

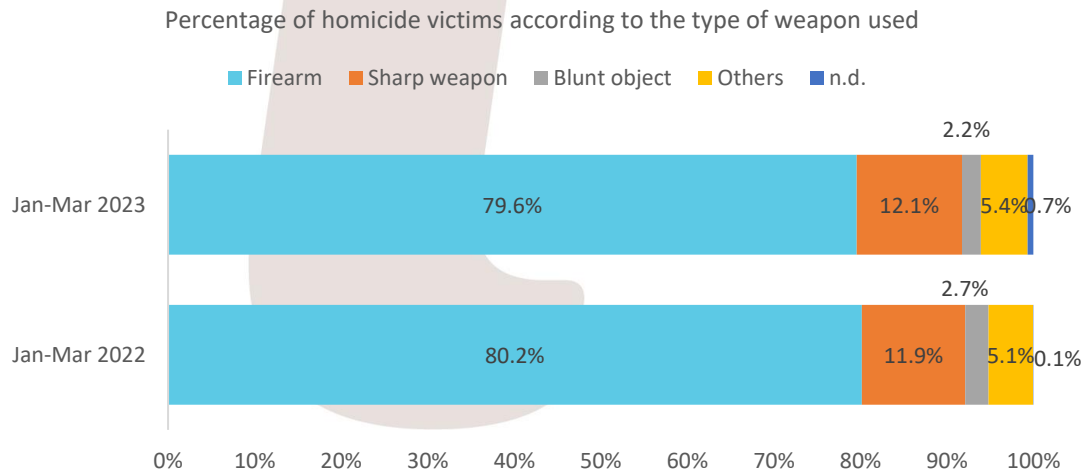
Between January and March of 2023, approximately 16 men and 2 women died each day due to homicidal violenceⁱⁱⁱ in the region. Homicides of men decreased by 18.1% (314 victims) compared to the same period of the previous year, while homicides of women showed a decrease of -2.9% (6 victims).



Between January and March of 2023, 46.3% of the recorded victims were between 30 and 49 years old. This represents an increase compared to the same period the previous year, where the total number of victims in the same age group accounted for 38.2% of the homicides. For these first three months of 2023, data on age are only available for three countries: Belize, Costa Rica, and Honduras.



Firearms were present in 4 out of every 5 homicides during the first quarter of 2023. This percentage is similar to what was observed during the first quarter of 2022.



Data from Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras

50% of homicides were recorded in rural areas during the first quarter of 2023. This represents an increase compared to the same period of the previous year when 57% of homicides were recorded in urban areas and 43% in rural areas.

Most territories (departments, provinces, and districts) (67.2%) registered decreases in the number of homicide victims during the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. The remaining territories recorded an increase (32.8%).

In Belize, the districts of Belize and Cayo account for 73.7% of the homicides. Half of the districts recorded increases, while the other half recorded decreases. The districts that registered increases are Cayo (+2 victims), Orange Walk (+3 victims), and Toledo (+1 victim), all three being bordering districts with Guatemala.

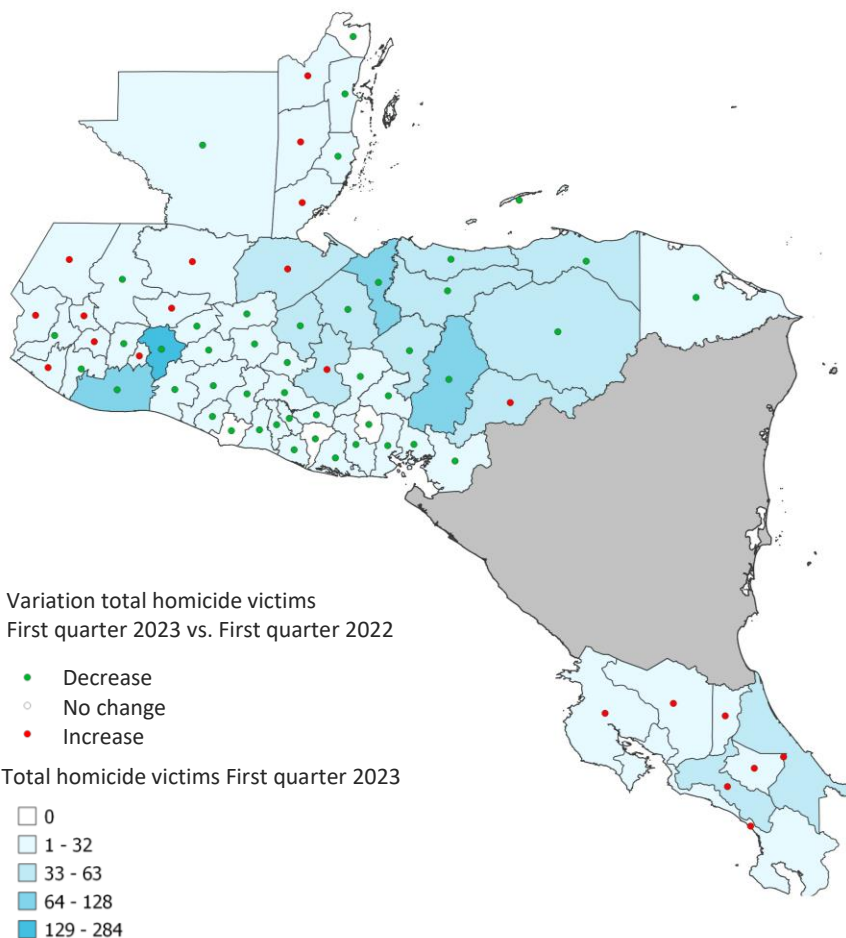
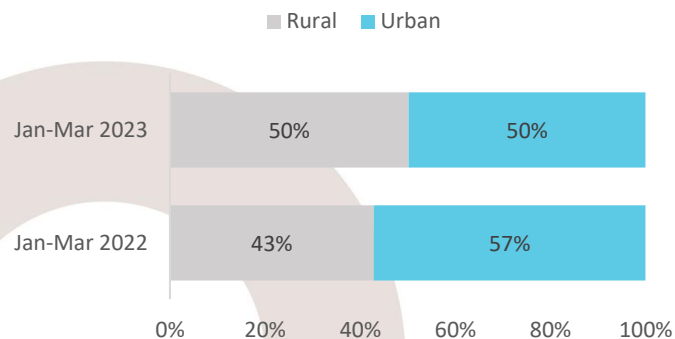
In Guatemala, homicides were concentrated in the Guatemala department, where approximately 4 out of every 10 homicides in the country occurred. It is important to note that the Guatemala department also recorded the largest total reduction in homicides with 72 fewer victims compared to the same period in 2022. There is an increase in homicide victims in the departments bordering Mexico, such as Huehuetenango (+2 victims) and San Marcos (+4 victims), and with Belize and Honduras: Izabal (+5 victims).

In the case of Honduras, 15 out of the 18 departments registered a decrease in the total number of homicide victims, while 3 recorded increases: El Paraíso, Copán, and Lempira.

In El Salvador, all 14 departments recorded a decrease in the total number of homicide victims during the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same period of the previous year.

In Costa Rica, all seven provinces that make up the territory recorded an increase compared to the first quarter of 2022. The provinces of San José and Limón account for 50% of the homicides. The largest increase in the total number of victims was in the province of San José, with 18 more victims than the same period of the previous year; Guanacaste and Limón reported increases of 12 victims each. Overall, in the country, the increase is explained by a rise in the registration of homicides linked to organized crime (victims of retaliation or revenge and those with professional motives).

Percentage of homicide victims according to the type of weapon used



i Data from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

ii Data available for Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras.

iii The sum equals 17 daily victims because it was based solely on the disaggregated data by sex available in the subregion.



Source: Prepared by UNDP InfoSegura with BPD information from Belize (provided by the BCO); Costa Rica, OIJ; El Salvador, Working Group on Homicide Facts and Figures, PNC and FGR; Guatemala, PNC (Statistics Section, INE validation pending); Honduras, Working Group on Violent Deaths: National Police, Public Ministry/Forensic Medicine Administration, National Registry of Persons, Citizen Coexistence and Security Observatories, National Statistics Institute, IUDPAS/UNAH. Technical Inter-Institutional Coordination Unit (UTECI)/Sub-Secretary for Inter-Institutional Affairs

The analysis was conducted using data available up to the following dates:

- Belize: May 16, 2023
- Guatemala: April 10, 2023
- El Salvador: May 25, 2023
- Honduras: July 20, 2023
- Costa Rica: May 9, 2023