

GUATEMALA

Analysis of the State of homicidal violence

January-December 2023



Ministerio de **Gobernación**

2,944

People who became victims of homicide in 2023



8

Every day, approximately eight people lose their lives as a consequence of violence.



7

Every day, seven men lose their lives in a violent way.



1

Every day, one woman loses her life in a violent way.

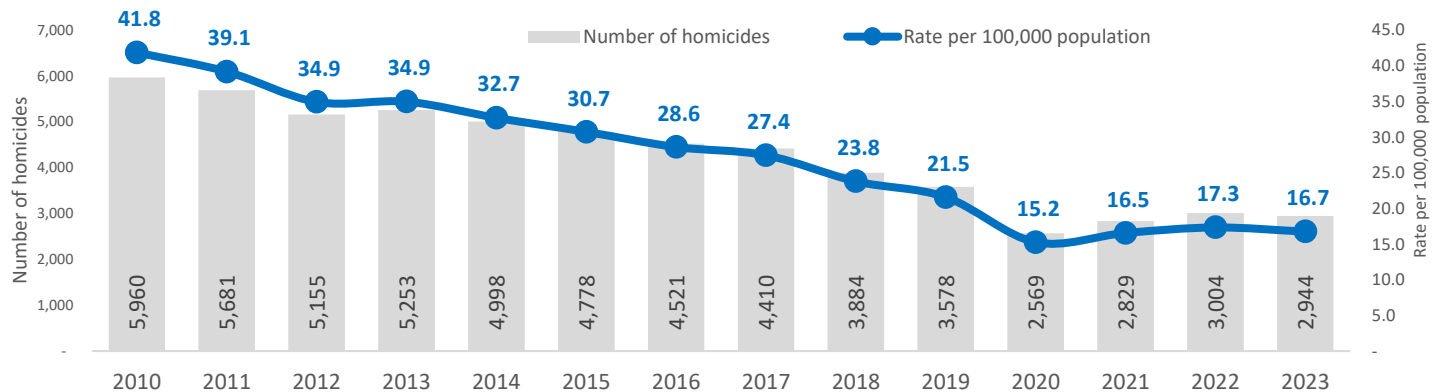
Overview

- At the close of 2023, there were 2,944 people who became victims of homicide, that is a 2.0 per cent decrease compared to 2022, translating to 60 fewer victims of homicide.
- There was a noticeable 16.7 per cent drop in the female homicide rate, while male homicides declined 1.1 per cent compared to 2022.
- Firearms played a fundamental role in homicides, as their use rose overall. Homicides of men involving firearms experienced an increase with regard to 2022.
- The last quarter of 2023 witnessed a rise in the number of homicides, primarily in the departments of Guatemala and Santa Rosa.
- Quetzaltenango, Chiquimula y Escuintla are the three departments that exhibited a greater reduction in homicides compared to 2022.
- The department of Guatemala accounted for 44.3 per cent of all homicides in 2023, but trends in its municipalities were not uniform. While some experienced important reductions, others showed evidence of important gains, which is suggestive of a possible displacement of homicides towards those areas.

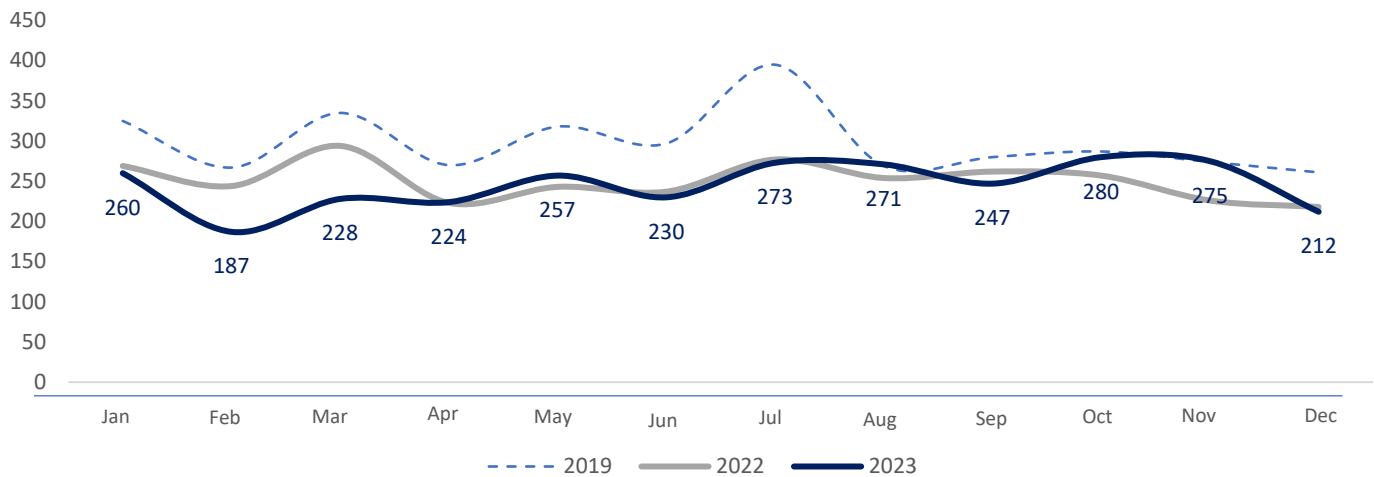
Homicides

Guatemala closed 2023 with a homicide rate of 16.7 per 100,000 population, which is a 0.6-point reduction in comparison with the previous year. This rate is equivalent to 2,944 people per day who lost their lives in a violent way. The homicide total for 2023 remains below pre-pandemic figures registered in 2019. It should be pointed out that, starting in 2021, there had been a slight upward trend in homicides, but this was reversed by the 2023 rate.

Homicide rate and figures (2010-2023)

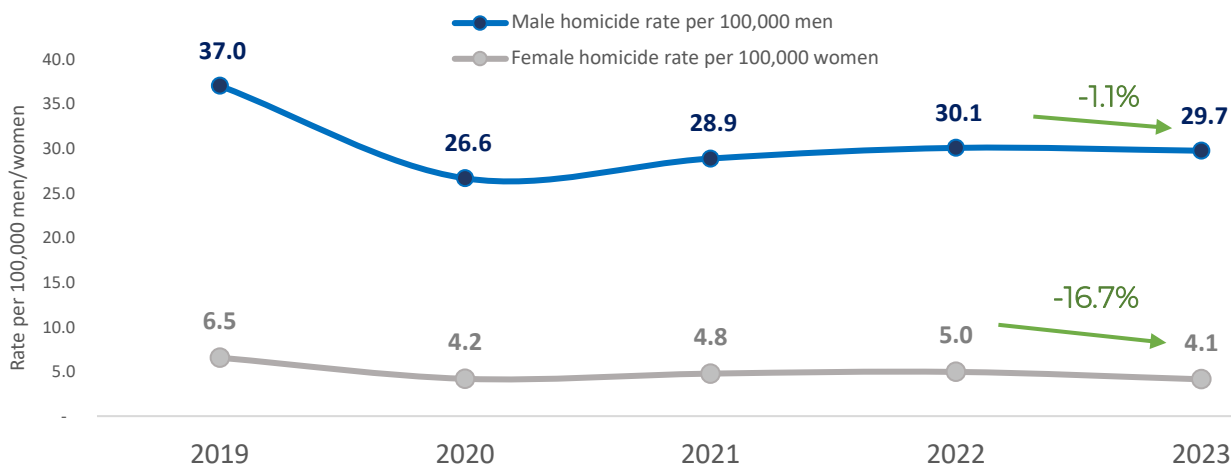


Number of homicides per month



In the first three months of 2023, records show a decline in the number of homicides as compared to the previous year. The figures reported in the following months were very similar figures, with a slight rise in the last quarter of the year when October and November 2023 reported the greatest increases in homicides compared to the previous year, with 23 and 49 additional homicides, respectively. General elections were held in June and August 2023 in Guatemala. However, the first eight months of the year showed no rise in homicides, suggesting that the elections had no immediate impact on the homicide rate.

Out of every 10 victims of homicide registered in 2023, approximately 9 were men.



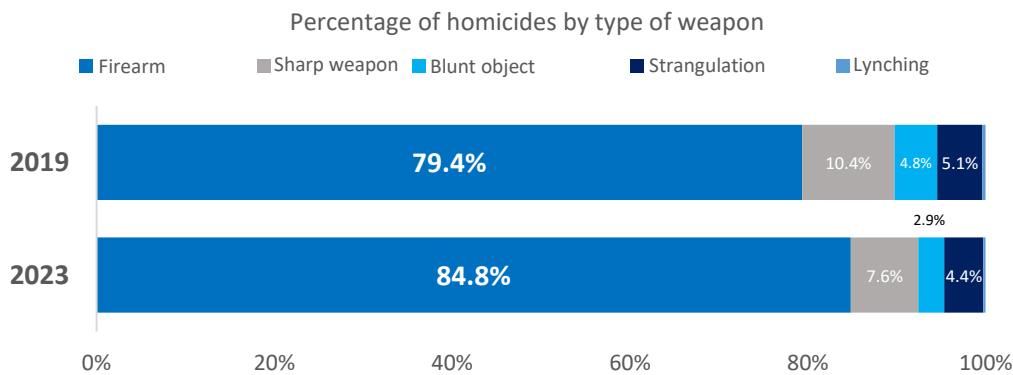
The female homicide rate registered its lowest level in 14 years, down to a rate of 4.1 homicides per 100,000 women, lower even than the figure reported in 2020, the year affected by lockdown measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, dropping 16.7 per cent with regard to 2022 and a striking 37.0 per cent as compared to 2019.

At the departmental level, in comparison with 2022, there were relevant reductions in homicides of women in the departments of Guatemala (-52), Chiquimula (-14) and San Marcos (-13).



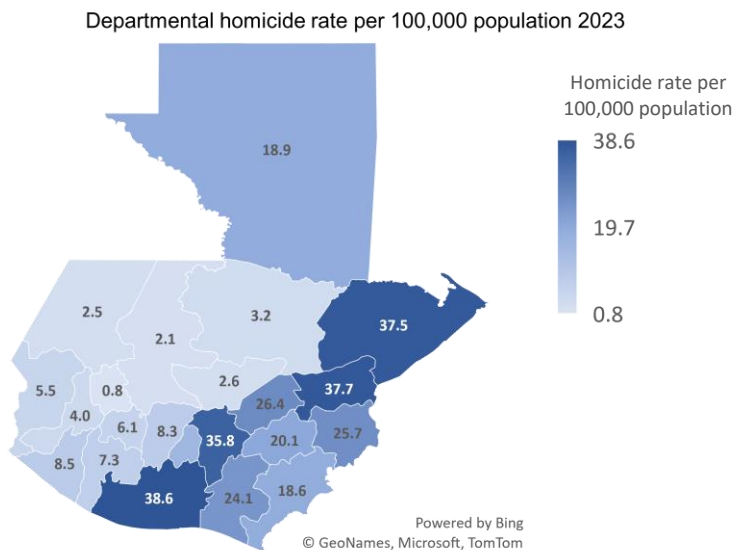
The male homicide rate dipped slightly, that is, 1.1 per cent lower in comparison with the previous year and 19.7 per cent lower compared with 2019, pre-pandemic, records.

In 2023, the greatest reductions in male homicides were in the departments of Quetzaltenango (-54), Escuintla (-43) and Chiquimula (-31) in relation to 2022. Nevertheless, the departments of Guatemala (+49), Izabal (+30) and Santa Rosa (+23) reported important surges that offset the reductions that were mentioned previously.



Throughout 2023, at least **8 in 10** homicides were committed with firearms. The percentage of homicides involving firearms climbed from 79.4 per cent in 2019 to 84.8 per cent in 2023. This ascent indicates that firearms have an ever growing role in the total number of cases of homicide.

Compared to 2022, a general reduction in the use of all types of weapons and modalities was observed in homicides of women. The biggest reduction is in the use of firearms, where there were 41 fewer instances. But in the case of men, the opposite is discernible. There was a rise in homicides committed with a firearm, with 50 more cases. Only homicides involving sharp weapons or lynching exhibited a reduction with regard to 2022.



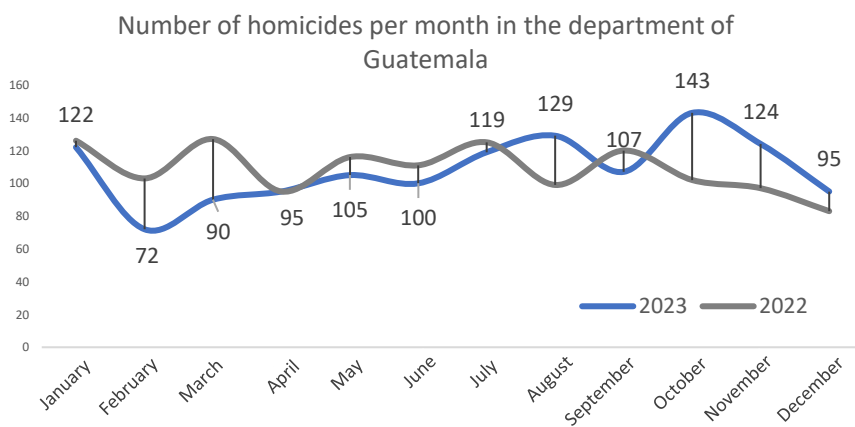
The homicide trend was not even in all departments. Homicides fell in half of them, and increased in the rest as compared to 2022.

The departments of Escuintla, Zacapa, Izabal and Guatemala registered the highest homicide rates per 100,000 population, double the country's average (16.7).

Accordingly, the departments of Izabal (+29), Zacapa (+24) and Santa Rosa (+23) experienced the sharpest increases in the number of homicides relative to 2022.

Conversely, the departments of Quetzaltenango (-59), Chiquimula (-45) and Escuintla (-32) registered the deepest reductions in the number of homicides compared to 2022.

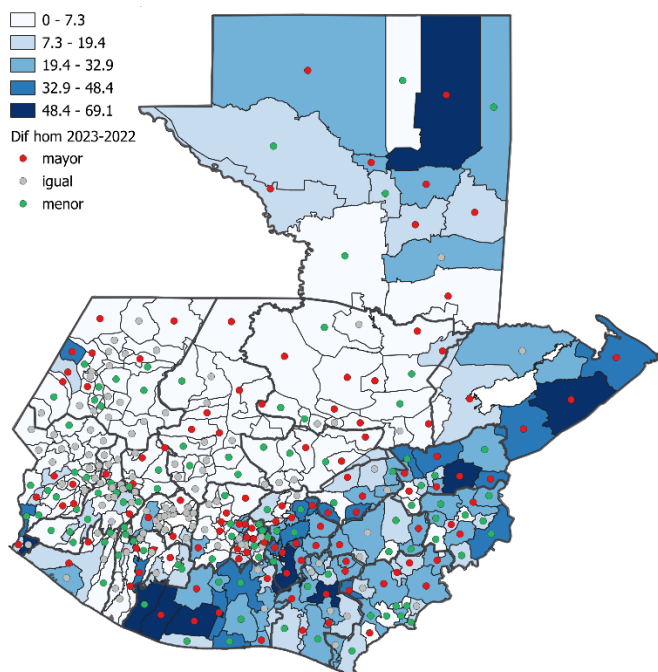
During 2023, **one** in every **two** incidents of homicide took place in the departments of Guatemala or Escuintla, accounting for 55.1 per cent of all homicides.



In the department of Guatemala, homicides reported from January through July 2023 exhibited a downturn in comparison with the same period in 2022. This notwithstanding, figures rose in the last months of the year with regard to the previous year.

Although there were three fewer homicides overall in the department of Guatemala as compared to 2022, the numbers rose significantly in some municipalities. Villa Canales recorded 35 more homicides, with 12 more in San Miguel Petapa and 11 additional homicides reported Santa Catarina Pinula compared to 2022.

Homicide rate per 100 thou. Population, 2023



In 2023, the number of homicides rose in 118 municipalities, which represents 34.7 per cent of the national total, compared to 2022. Hotspots are found mostly in the central region of the country, as well as in some of the municipalities on the borders with Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico.

An analysis of the homicide rate in 2023 reveals a geographic concentration in the north and across the north-eastern and south-eastern corridors, from Izabal to the southern coast, straight through the centre of the country where the department of Guatemala is. These municipalities reported the highest homicide rates.

The municipalities of Zacapa-Zacapa (69.1), Tiquisate-Escuintla (66.6) and Villa Canales-Guatemala (56.9) reported the highest homicide rates in the country, more than three times the national average (16.7).

Top 10 municipalities with the deepest reduction in numbers of homicides (2023 compared to 2022)

Municipality, Department	Number of homicides 2023	Number of homicides 2022	Diff 2023-2022
Guatemala, Guatemala	584	618	-34
San Pedro Ayampuc, Guatemala	32	59	-27
Escuintla, Escuintla	67	91	-24
Chiquimula, Chiquimula	38	61	-23
Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango	6	28	-22
Tiquisate, Escuintla	43	64	-21
Colomba Costa Cuca, Quetzaltenango	7	27	-20
La Libertad, Petén	17	36	-19
Mixco, Guatemala	147	160	-13
San Marcos, San Marcos	0	12	-12

The top 10 municipalities with the highest rise in numbers of homicides (2023 compared to 2022)

Municipality, Department	Number of homicides 2023	Number of homicides 2022	Diff 2023-2022
Villa Canales, Guatemala	96	61	35
Morales, Izabal	62	44	18
Cuilapa, Santa Rosa	26	12	14
La Gomera, Escuintla	30	17	13
Flores, Petén	25	12	13
La Unión, Zacapa	18	5	13
San Miguel Petapa, Guatemala	36	24	12
Santa Catarina Pinula, Guatemala	38	27	11
Zacapa, Zacapa	47	36	11
San Benito, Petén	17	8	9

There is a marked reduction in the municipality of Guatemala, accounting for approximately 20 per cent of homicides nationwide. In the case of San Marcos, the reduction could be attributed to joint security operations implemented in the department all throughout 2023.

Villa Canales experienced a remarkable uptick in homicides, ranking third among municipalities with the highest rates in the country. It has to be noted that, although homicides have dropped in some municipalities in the department of Guatemala, they have risen others, indicating a possible displacement of this crime.

Source: 2010-2022 INE with data provided by National Civil Police. Jan-December 2023 National Civil Police with data downloaded on 17 January 2024 from the internet: <https://pladeic.mingob.gob.gt/> output tables by the Statistics Section at the National Civil Police.

Note: There is a difference of one case when using municipal data due to the delay in the adjustments in the databases published in PLADEIC and the output tables provided by the Statistics Section of the National Civil Police.

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