

# CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

## Preliminary analysis of the State of the Violence and Citizen Security

January to December 2022

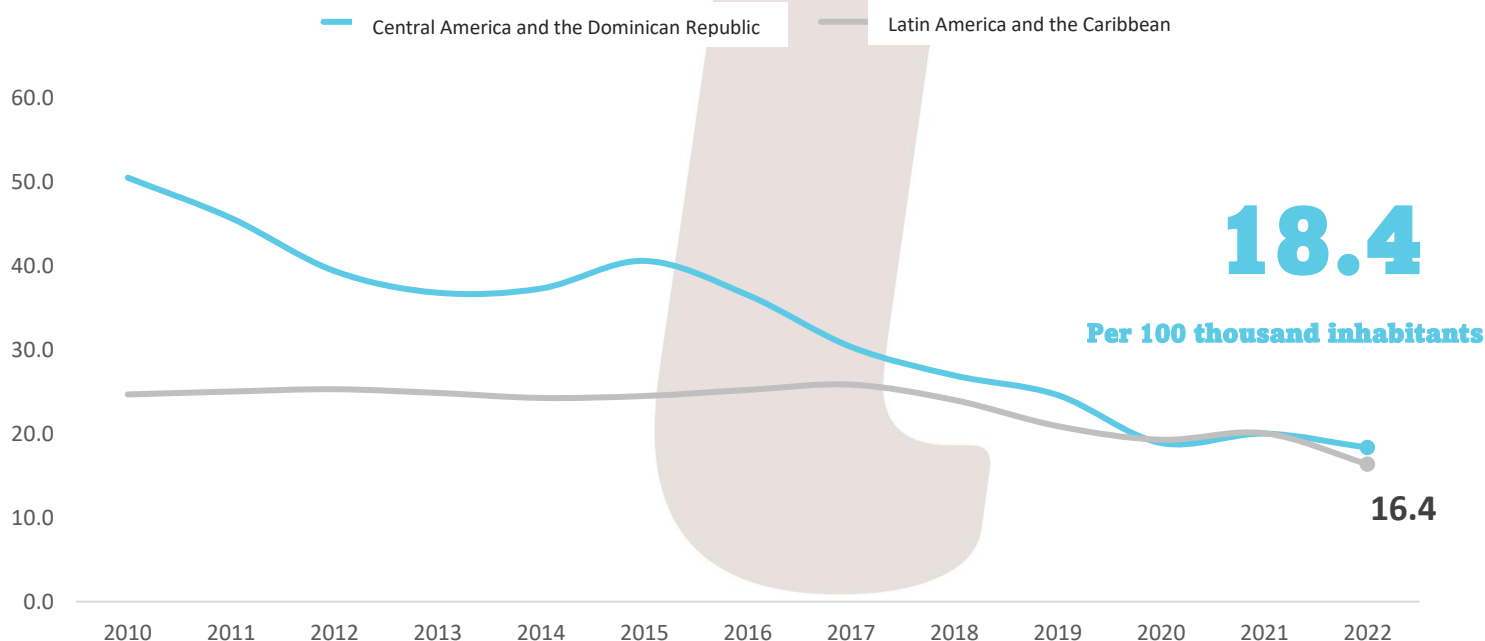
### Highlights

- In 2022, Latin America and the Caribbean registered a rate of homicide of 16.4 victims per 100 thousand inhabitants<sup>i</sup>.
- Latin America and the Caribbean shows heterogeneous changes in the total number of homicide victims. Some countries such as Ecuador, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and Guatemala registered increases in relation to the total of 2019, the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries such as El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Belice, Brazil, and Mexico show reductions.
- On average, 25 persons per day lost their lives to violence throughout the subregion of Central America and the Dominican Republic<sup>ii</sup> in 2022. This is accounts for 9,097 victims of homicide which is equivalent to a rate of 18.4 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.
- 9 out of 10 homicide victims are men and 1 out of 10 are women in Central America and the Dominican Republic<sup>iii</sup>.
- Young people continue to be the primary victims of homicide. Some 40% of victims were 18 to 30 years of age.
- Firearms were involved in most homicides: Four in five homicides involved this type of weapon.
- The total number of homicides has not been homogeneous at the territorial level in the subregion, both within countries and between countries. A decrease is reported in 42% of the territories<sup>iv</sup>.

### Evidence

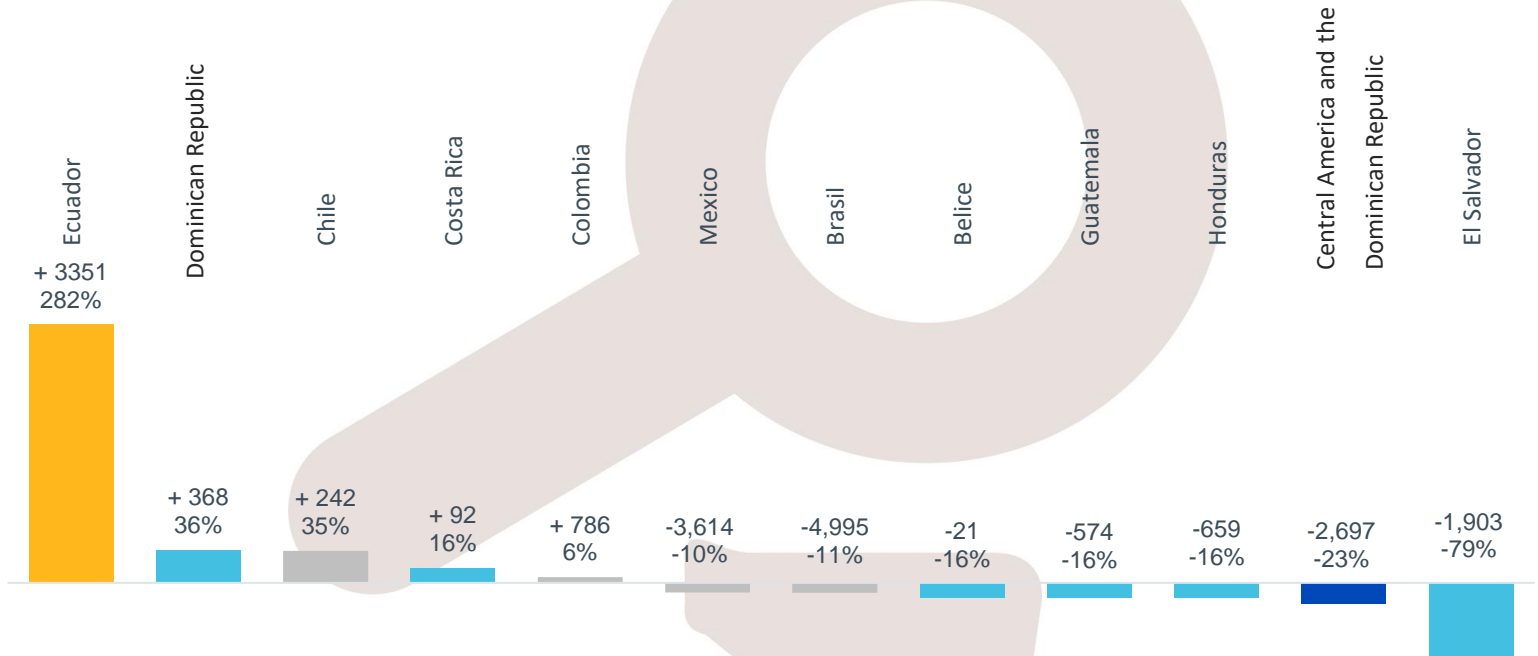
In 2021, for the first time since 2010, the subregion registered a homicide rate lower than the Latin American rate<sup>vi</sup>. In 2022, the rate for Central America and the Dominican Republic is estimated to be 2.0 percentage points above the Latin American rate.

Homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants in Central America vs. Latin America 2010 vs. 2022



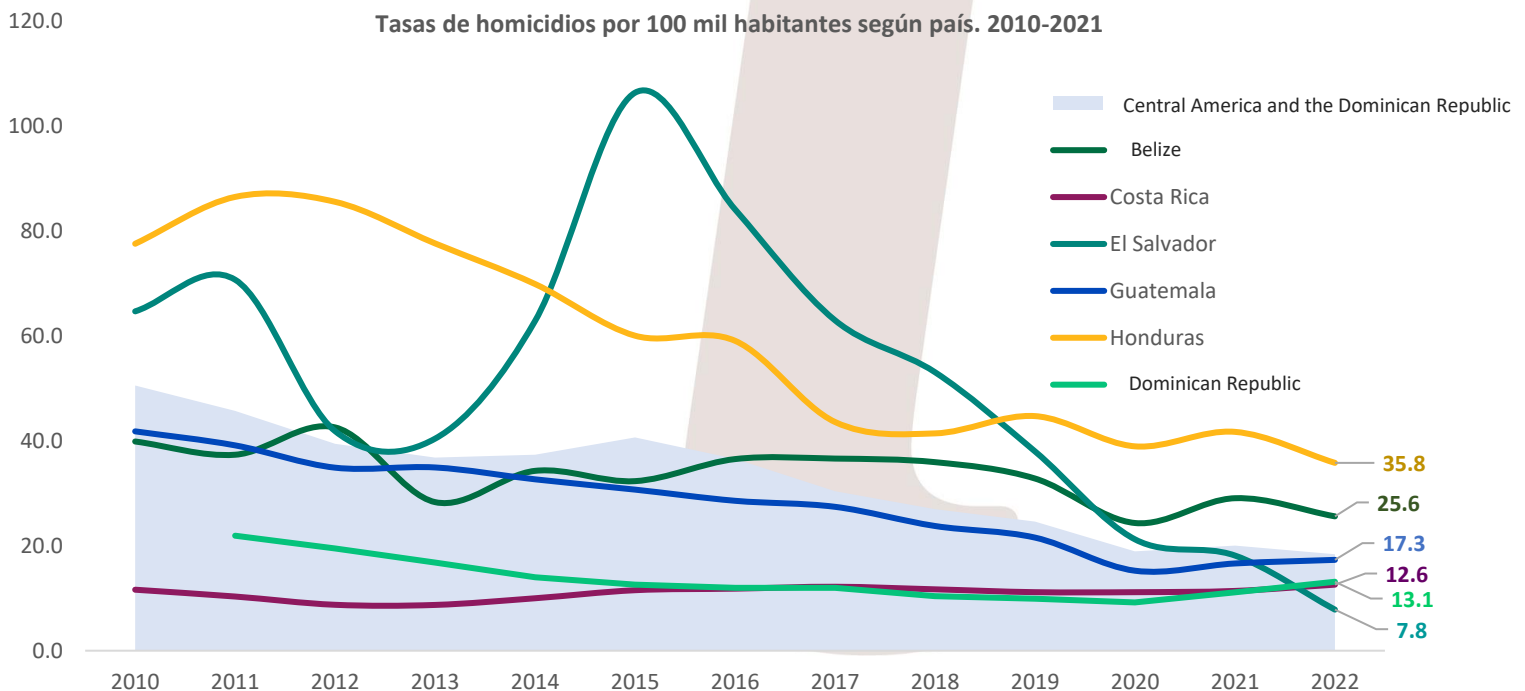
Latin America exhibits heterogeneous changes in the total number of homicide victims. While some countries register reductions when compared to the data for 2019 -the last year before the pandemic-, others report increases. Ecuador stands out with an increase of 282%, which is equivalent to 3,351 more victims in 2022 than in 2019, and El Salvador, with a reduction of 79%, which is equivalent to 1,903 fewer victims than the same year.

Variation in total homicide victims 2019-2022



The downward trend in homicides registered in the subregion of Central America and the Dominican Republic since 2015 has stabilized in 2021 but will continue to decline in 2022. The regional rate fell by 1.6 points and went from 20.0 to 18.4 homicides per 100 thousand inhabitants; the lowest in the last nine years.

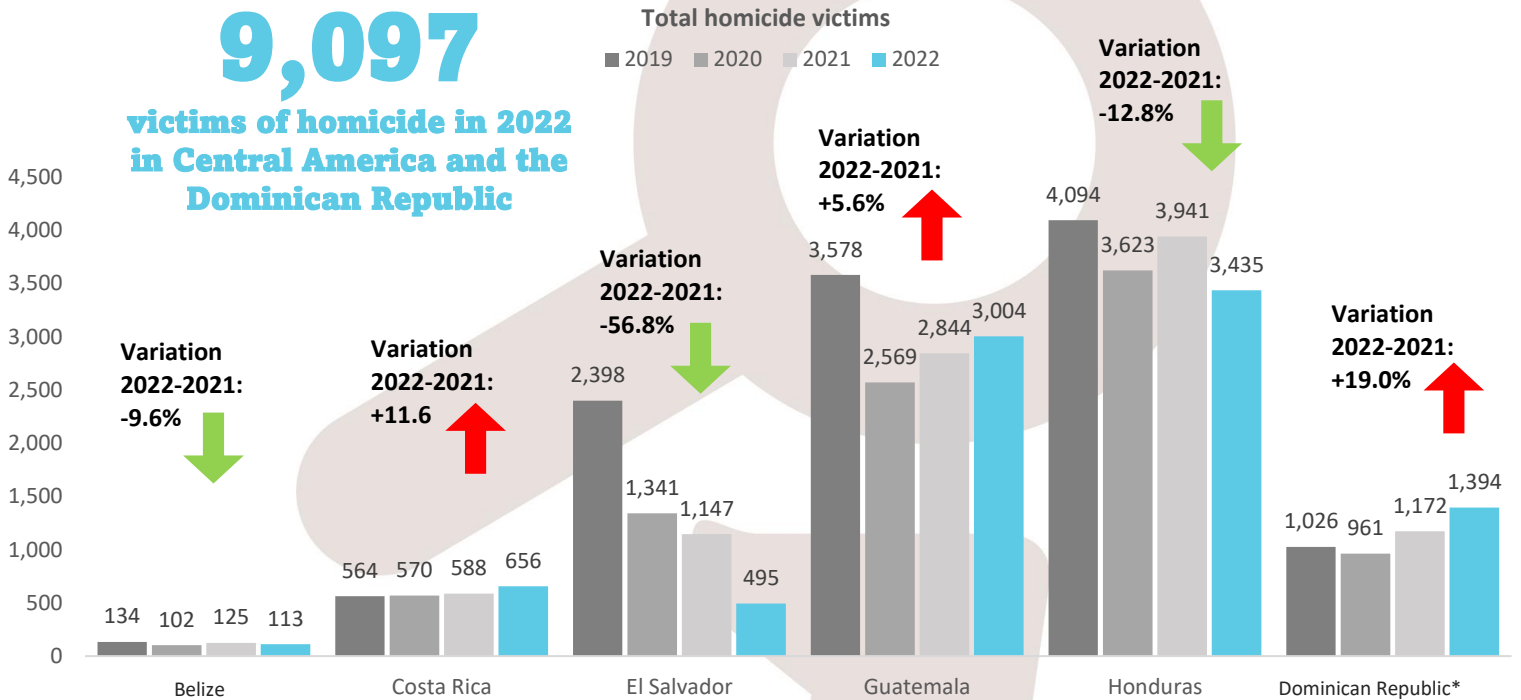
Tasas de homicidios por 100 mil habitantes según país. 2010-2021



In Central America and the Dominican Republic, during 2022, a total of 9,097 homicide victims were registered in Central America and the Dominican Republic, 720 fewer (-7.3%) than in 2021. Homicide rates have not been consistent across the subregion. While Belize, El Salvador and Honduras register a reduction in the number of victims of homicide in relation with the previous year, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic show an increase. When analyzing the data since 2019, in the case of Guatemala, the total for 2022 is below the figure for that year, while Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic have registered continuous increases since 2019.

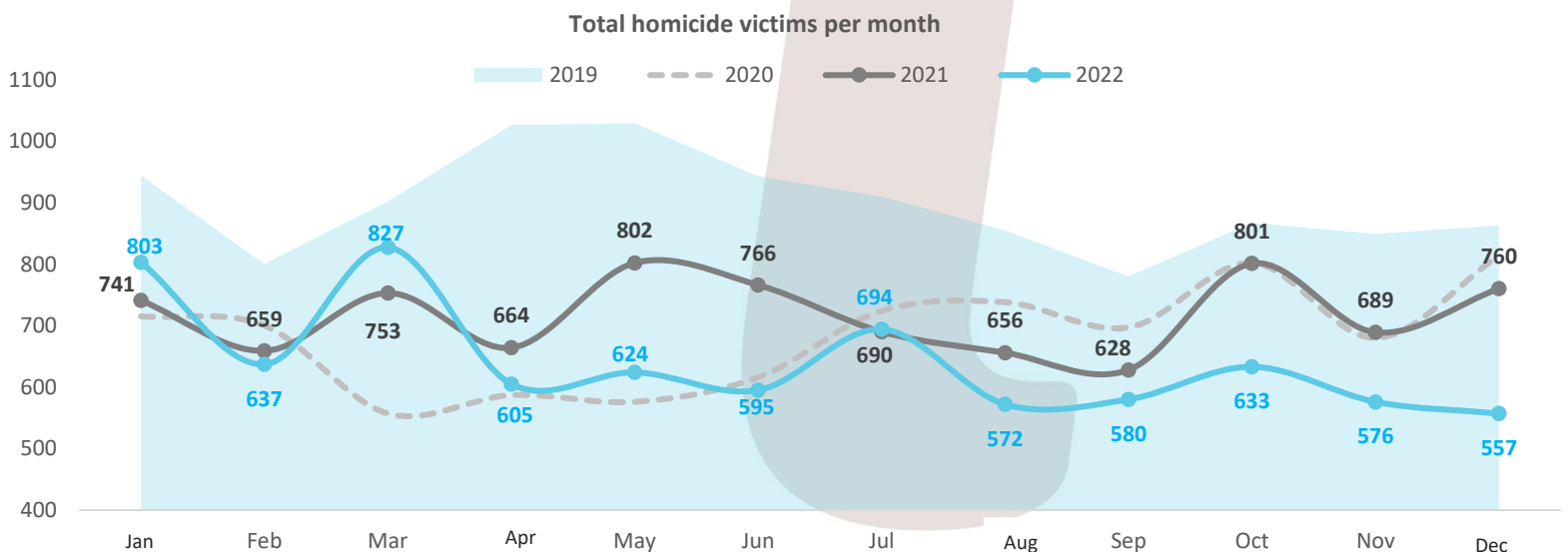
# 9,097

## victims of homicide in 2022 in Central America and the Dominican Republic



The total number of homicides in El Salvador does not include deaths in combat of gang members.  
 \*Total homicides for the Dominican Republic are a projection based on the most recent data available.

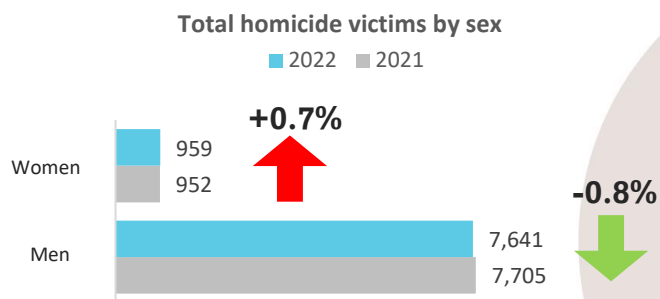
All the months of 2022 register fewer deaths than those of 2021, except January, March, and July. The largest difference is registered during the months of December (-203 victims), May (-178 victims) and October (-168 victims). The 2022 records are lower than those of 2019, the last year before the start of the pandemic.



Data available for Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

In Central America and the Dominican Republic, in 2022, approximately 21 men and 3 women lost their lives every day. There was a decrease in the total number of male homicide victims. The total number of female victims registered an increase of 0.7% compared to the previous year.

In Central America and the Dominican Republic, firearms were used in 78.8% of all homicides. The rest were committed with a knife (13.0%) and blunt objects (2.7%). Other weapons and records without data represent 5.4%.

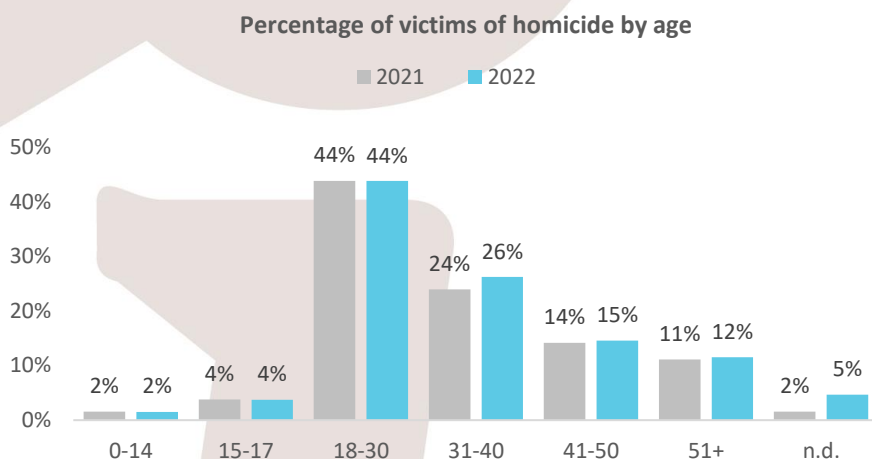


**Four in five homicides were committed with a firearm.**

Data available for Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic <sup>vii</sup>.

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

In Central America and the Dominican Republic, between January and December 2022, approximately 2 out of 5 homicide victims were young people between the ages of 18 and 30.



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

## Territorial analysis of homicidal violence

The subregion exhibited heterogeneous changes in the total number of homicide victims at a territorial level in Central America and the Dominican Republic in 2022.

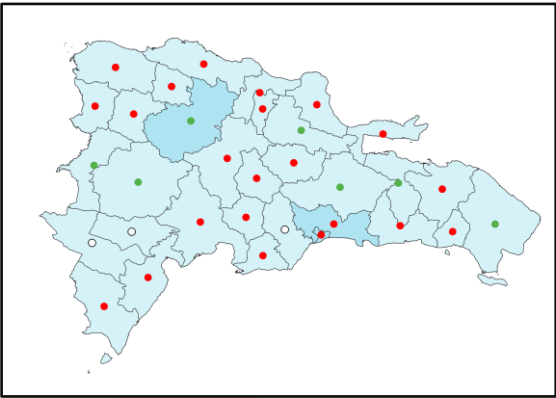
Belize registers decreases in 3 of 6 of its districts and one district showed no change from the previous year.

In Costa Rica, 5 out of 7 provinces register an increase in 2022 compared to 2021. These are located in border areas with Nicaragua and in coastal areas.

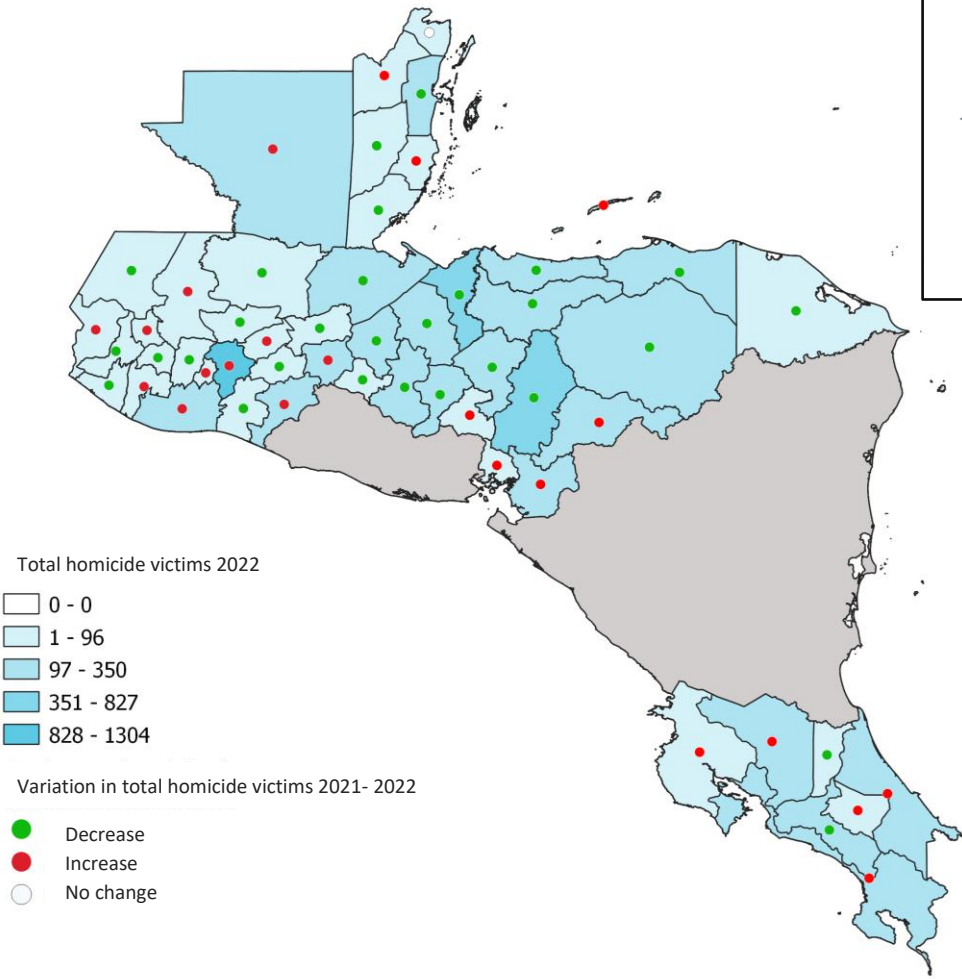
In 10 of the 22 departments of Guatemala, more than 25% of its municipalities registered a higher number of homicides than in 2021 and 2019; the border departments with El Salvador stand out. For their part, departments such as San Marcos and Totonicapán report upward trends in homicides since 2019, after several years of continuous decrease.

In the case of Honduras, 13 of the 18 departments register decreases. The departments that register increases are located on the border with El Salvador and Nicaragua.

In 2022, according to the data available from January to September of that same year, in the Dominican Republic, 7 out of 10 provinces registered increases in the total number of registered homicide victims with respect to the same period of the previous year. The provinces that concentrate the total number of homicide victims are located mainly in the south coast of the country, as well as the center and, to a lesser extent, the north coast. These are characterized by being points of high population volume and having important exit points from the country (ports and airports).



With data available from January to September 2022.



Source: Prepared by UNDP InfoSegura with BPD information from Belize (provided by the BCO); Costa Rica, OIJ; El Salvador, PNC by Twitter; 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 and the Dominican Republic, projection using January to September 2022 data from Center for Analysis of Citizen Security Data (CADSECI)

<sup>i</sup> Estimated based on the information available for 26 countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region (2010-2022).  
<sup>ii</sup> Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic are included (projection with data available as of September 2022).  
<sup>iii</sup> The following countries have information disaggregated by sex: Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic.  
<sup>iv</sup> Departments, provinces, and districts.  
<sup>v</sup> Data are available for Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic. For the Dominican Republic, it is estimated from the difference between January-September 2021 and January-September 2022.  
<sup>vi</sup> Own calculations based on preliminary data from 29 countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region (2014-2022).  
<sup>vii</sup> The total number of victims by sex in the Dominican Republic responds to a projection made from the data available to date.

*This analysis is based on data available on the following dates:*

- Belize: January 20, 2022
- Costa Rica: January 26, 2022
- El Salvador: January 1, 2022
- Guatemala: January 15, 2022
- Honduras: January 17, 2022
- Dominican Republic: February 13, 2022