

Preliminary Considerations

- Between March 26 and 28, 2022 El Salvador reported a considerable surge in homicides. A total of 87 persons were victims of homicidal violence that weekend.
- Against this backdrop, on March 27, 2022, the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador approved a State of Exception, curtailing certain civil rights. As of this deadline, it has been extended consecutively 10 times¹.
- Since April 2022, homicidal violence is monitored with data from the official Twitter account of the National Civil Police (PNC). This account publishes homicide figures on a daily basis. The report includes two figures: 1) violent deaths of persons not linked to gangs, and 2) violent deaths of persons the PNC categorizes as gang members or terrorists². Neither are disaggregated by victim age and sex. The homicide figure reported by the PNC is used in this brief.
- This report includes references to data on intentional homicide³ that are registered for 2022 by the Prosecutor General of the Republic (FGR) and published on its web page⁴. In this register, intentional homicide is disaggregated into three categories: General crime, social intolerance and family intolerance; it is not disaggregated by victim age or sex.
- This summary also takes information from reports of opinion surveys by academic institutions⁵ to understand public perception of citizen security.

State of citizen security

Homicidal Violence

- The PNC Twitter account reported 495 homicides⁶ at the end of 2022 (a 56% reduction compared to 1,147 violent deaths in 2021). This was presented as the official figure by the Security Cabinet of the Government of El Salvador in January 2023⁷.
- According to these figures, El Salvador closed 2022 with an official homicide rate of 7.8 homicides per 100,000 population (see Figure 1). This is the lowest homicide rate on record since 1994⁸.
- The disaggregation of intentional homicides published by the FGR show 86.5% are classified as violent deaths due to general crime, 7.3% to social intolerance and 6.3% to family intolerance.
- According to the “Semiannual report on violence against women” that the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP) publishes⁹, in the first half of 2022, there were 47 female victims of homicidal violence (see Figure 2). This is 35 fewer cases than the first half of 2021 (a 42.7% reduction).
- The report also notes that in the first six months of 2022, seven out of every ten cases of violent death of women were typified as femicide. The first semester closed with 33 feminicides (see Figure 2), that makes for a 36.5% reduction when compared to 52 feminicides between January and June 2021.
- Women under the age of 40 have a greater likelihood of becoming victims of homicide or femicide: Two in ten female victims of homicidal violence are between the ages of 15 and 29, and three in ten are between 30 and 39 years old.

¹ Available at: <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/node/12626>

² For instance:

<https://twitter.com/PNCNSV/status/1598195922089160705?s=20&t=iOUdyD12lwhf2p71Ua96-Q>

³ International Classification of Crimes for Statistical Purposes defines intentional homicide as “unlawful death of a person with the intent of causing death or serious injuries” (UNODC, 2015, p. 33).

⁴ Available at: <https://www.fiscalia.gob.sv/estadisticas/> As of this deadline, the site reported 496 intentional homicides in 2022.

⁵ University Public Opinion Institute (IUDOP)(2023) The Salvadoran public assessed the state of the country at the end of 2022. Available at: <https://uca.edu.sv/iudop/publicacion/evaluacion-de-ano-2022>

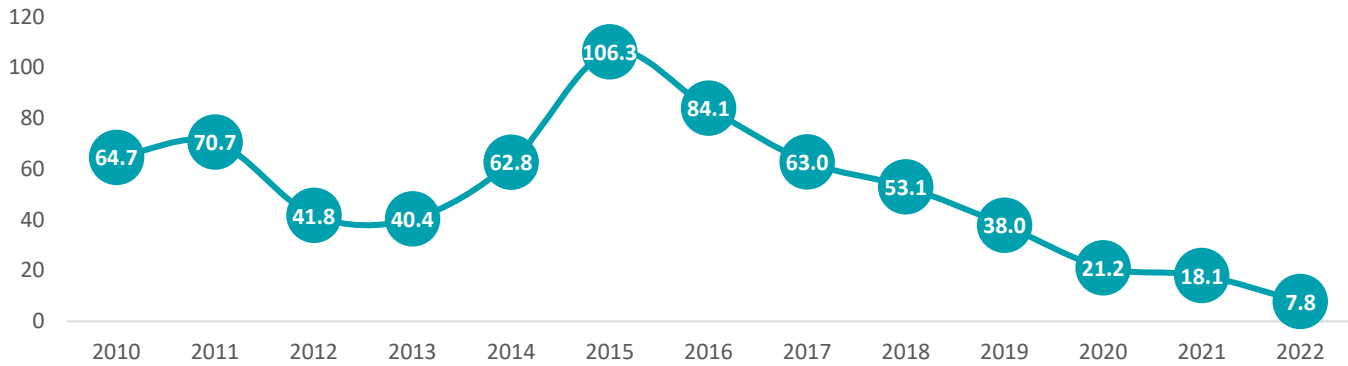
⁶ Between April and December 2022, the PNC Twitter account reported an additional 82 homicides of persons the institution categorized gang members or terrorists.

⁷ “Security Cabinet presents historical data on the fight against crime in the country”. Available at (in Spanish): <https://www.seguridad.gob.sv/gabinete-de-seguridad-presenta-balance-con-datos-historicos-en-materia-de-combate-a-la-criminalidad-en-el-pais/>

⁸ World Bank data series, based on figures from UNODC, since 1994: <https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/VC.IHR.PSRC.P5?locations=SV>

⁹ Available at: <https://www.seguridad.gob.sv/dia/informe-de-hechos-de-violencia-contra-las-mujeres>

Figure 1. El Salvador. Homicide rate per 100,000 people (2010-2022)



Source: Prepared by UNDP through InfoSegura based on data from the Working Group on Homicide Facts and Figures (2010 to January-March 2022), data published on Twitter by the National Civil Police (April-December 2022) and demographic projections by the DIGESTYC (reviewed in 2021).

Sexual violence against women

- According to the MJSP “Semiannual report on acts of violence against women,” records for the first six months in 2022, show 2,997 cases of female victims of sexual violence, 116 fewer reports as compared to 3,113 complaints filed by women in the same period in 2021 (a 3.7% reduction).
- In the first part of 2022, four in ten (38%) female victims of sexual violence were minors under the age of 15, and about four in ten (46%) were women between 15 and 29 years old (See Figure 3). This distribution is similar to what was registered in the same period in 2021.

Figure 2. El Salvador. Number of women victims of homicide y feminicide (January-June 2021-2022)

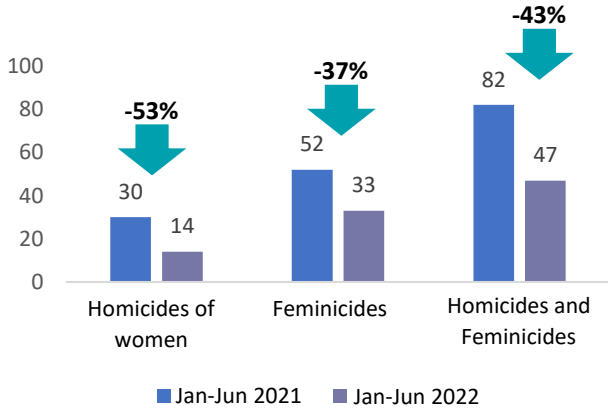
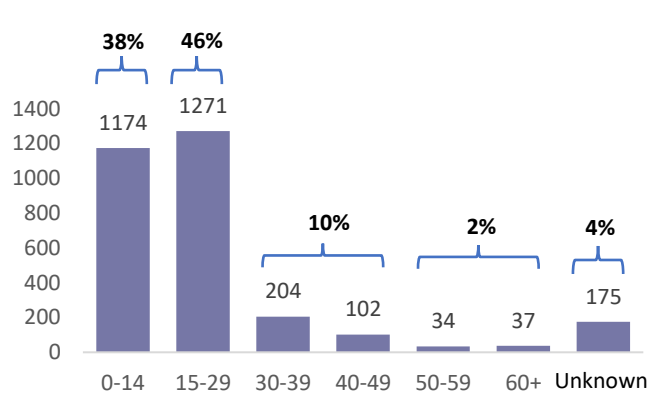


Figure 3. El Salvador. Number of sexual crimes reported by women, by age (January-June 2022)



Source: Prepared by UNDP through InfoSegura based on Semestral Report on “Acts of violence against Women. El Salvador, January to June” (2021 and 2022) by the MJSP.

Property Crimes

- Between January and September 2022, the PNC recorded 8,562 cases of property crime, a 12% reduction with regard to same period in 2021.
- There were reductions in all property crime types, except for theft and extortion, which registered a 2% and 3% increase, respectively (see Figure 4).

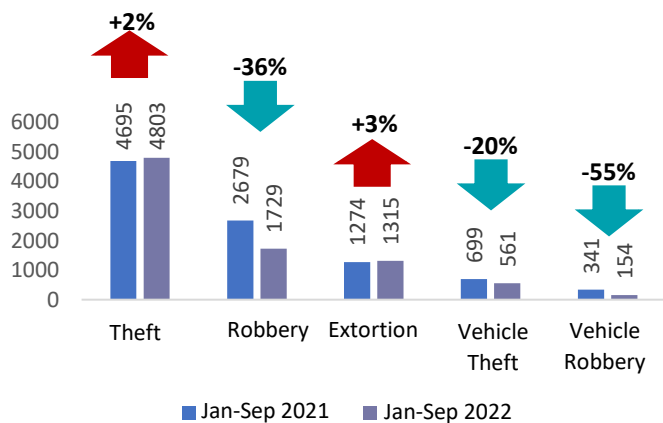
Perception of Public Safety and Victimization (Guatemala)

- According to the IUDOP, nine out of every ten Salvadorans (88.2%) stated they felt safe at the end of 2022. The perception of security among citizens in 2022 increased 26.7 percentage points above 2021 (61.5%).
- At the end of 2022, 11.3% of the population stated they had been the victim of a crime in the previous 12 months, according to IUDOP studies (see Figure 5). Victimization by crime in 2022, increased 3.2 percentage points with regards to 2021.
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Migration and Returnees

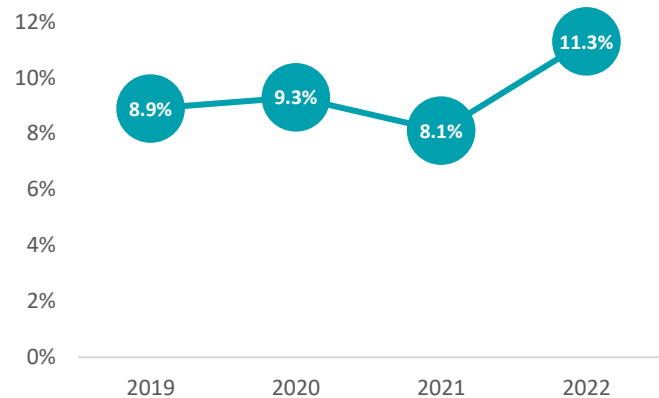
- According to the IUDOP, one in five Salvadorans (21.4%) stated they intended to migrate next year. Six in ten Salvadorans stated they would do so to improve family finances.
- In FY¹⁰ 2022, 97,030 Salvadorans were intercepted at the southern border of the United States (see Figure 6). This is the second highest figure in the last 12 years.
- In 2022, General Directorate for Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME)¹¹ reported 14,442 Salvadoran returnees back in the country, that means 40 persons per day, on average. Four in ten were female and a third were under the age of 18.

Figure 4. El Salvador. Number of property crimes January-September 2021-2022



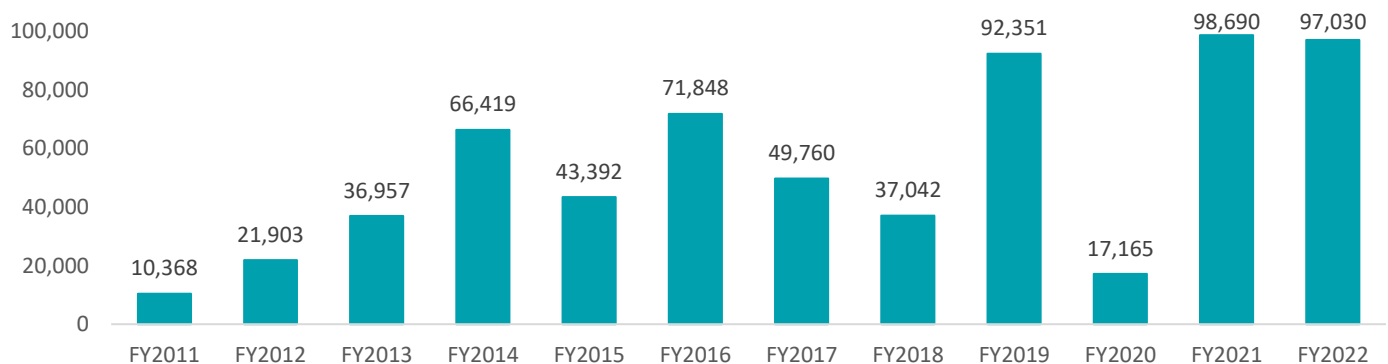
Source: Prepared by UNDP through InfoSegura based on information requests PNC-UAIP-519-2022 and PNC-UAIP-562-2022.

Figure 5. El Salvador. Percentage of the population who reported having been a victim of a crime in last 12 months (2019-2022)



Source: Prepared by UNDP through InfoSegura based on IUDOP 2022 Assessment Survey.

Figure 6. El Salvador. Salvadorans intercepted at the southern border of the United States by fiscal year



Source: Prepared by UNDP through InfoSegura based on figures from the U.S. Border Patrol.

¹⁰ FY stands for Fiscal Year. This is the federal fiscal year in the United States, beginning the first of October 2021 and ending on September 30, 2022. The fiscal year is the calendar year that it ends in (Cornell Law School, n.d.).

¹¹ Information request 02-2023-UAIP-DGME.