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# BELIZE

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, 2022

- Insights on Violence Against Women and Girls
- Preliminary Considerations
- Advances and Challenges
- The Continuum of Violence:
  - Domestic Violence
  - Sexual Violence
  - Femicide/Feminicide

**Data Sources:** Belize Police Department through the Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center.



# INSIGHTS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

- In Belize, women and girls continue to be the main victims of both Domestic and Sexual Violence.
- Intimate partner violence continues to be a main arising concern within the continuum of violence.
- A significant percentage of victims of Domestic Violence constitute of at least one type of abuse such as physical, psychological, verbal, or financial.
- Majority of the victims of Sexual Violence are girls of ages less than 20 years.
- The predominant weapon used in both male and female murders was a firearm. However, female murders committed with a sharp object were twice as much than that of male murders.
- In Belize, Violence Against Women and Girls prove to be of concern hence, the Domestic Violence in Belize Motion of Parliament was launched to prioritize Domestic Violence as a national issue of significance. This bill sets out specific measures and commitments that the government is taking against this national issue.

# PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

## Concepts and approaches for analysis

### What is Violence Against Women and Girls?

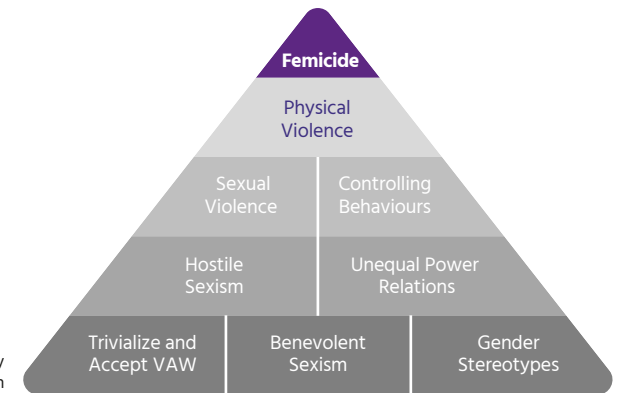
Violence Against Women and Girls is understood to be “any action or conduct, based on gender, that causes death, harm or physical, sexual, or psychological suffering to women, both in the public and private spheres.”

Source: The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against women, better known as the Belém do Pará Convention, 1994

### Continuum of Violence

“The attainment of the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs), and its promise – to leave no one behind – cannot be fulfilled without putting an end to violence against women and girls.... [Rape is an] extreme manifestation of the continuum of violence against women and girls.”

UN Deputy Secretary General (Nov. 2019)



Graphic adapted by the Belize Crime Observatory with information published by Women's Health

### Why is it necessary to generate robust information on Violence Against Women and Girls?

**1.**

It is the result of a system that is based on **unequal power relations** between the sexes.

**2.**

Exposure to a series of **specific risks** coupled with other forms of **discrimination and social exclusion** to generate high and multiple vulnerability.

**3.**

It is urgent to develop **gender-sensitive indicators** that make it possible to characterize this reality and design effective **public policies**.

## ADVANCES AND CHALLENGES Legal framework, information management and victimization

### Belize's Policy and Legal Framework

● **1996**

Protection Against Sexual Harassment Act

● **2000**

Families and Children Act Revised

● **2002**

Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy

● **2007**

New Domestic Violence Act

● **2013**

- Trafficking in Persons Act
- Revised National Gender Policy

● **2014**

Criminal Code Amendments

● **2017**

National Gender-based Violence Plan of Action

● **2020**

- Cybercrime Act
- Spotlight Project Intervention

● **2022**

Domestic Violence in Belize Motion of Parliament

● **2023**

Anti Human Trafficking Geo-Spatial Mapping exercise

### 5 Actions Being Taken:

**1.**

Enhancing the capture and reporting of multidimensional data.

**2.**

Strengthening the capacity and applying a more gender-sensitive approach to information management.

**3.**

Promoting and supporting data sharing to improve surveillance and intervention.

**4.**

Enhancing the Inter-agency data sharing to improve evidence-based decisions and policies

**5.**

Improving the availability of data in specific offences such as Human Trafficking, Missing Person, etc.

# THE CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

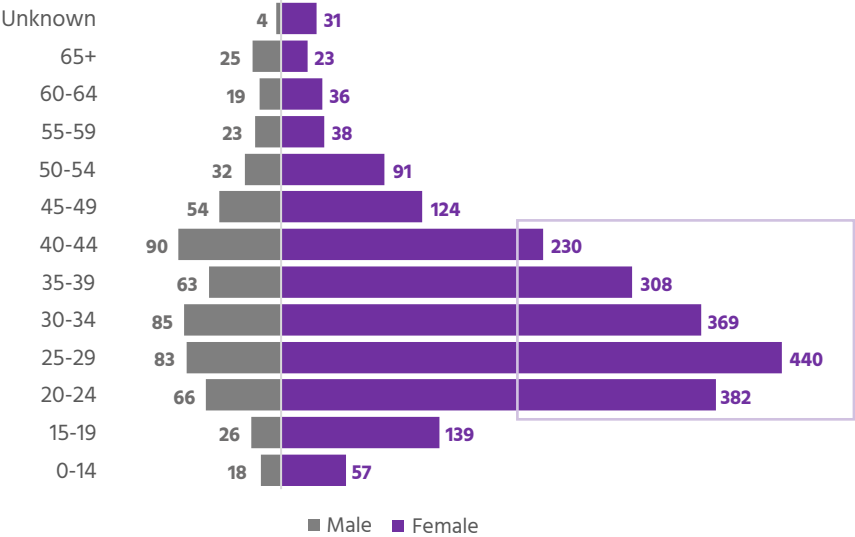
## How is the continuum of violence against women and girls manifested?

### Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence in Belize Law refers to “...physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or financial abuse committed by a person against a spouse, child, de facto spouse, or any other person who is a member of the household of the applicant or the respondent.”

Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Belize)

- During 2022, **women and girls** were the main victims of Domestic Violence accounting for **79%** of the reports.
- 76%** of all reports were filed by women aged **20 to 44 years**.



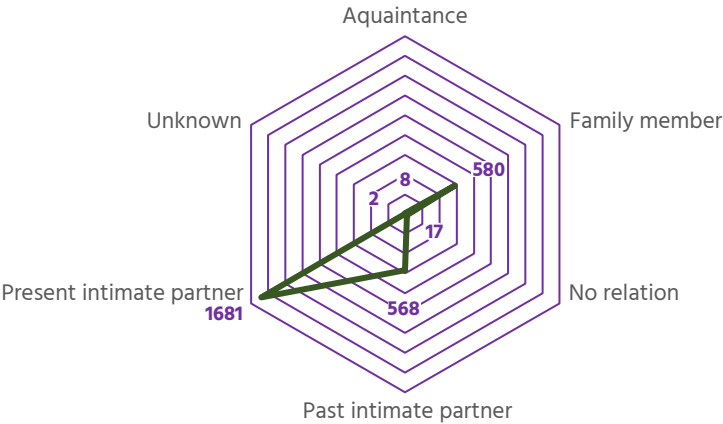
Domestic Violence by Age and Sex, 2022

- In 2022, **95%** of the Domestic Violence reports occurred **in the residence** of either the victim or the perpetrator.



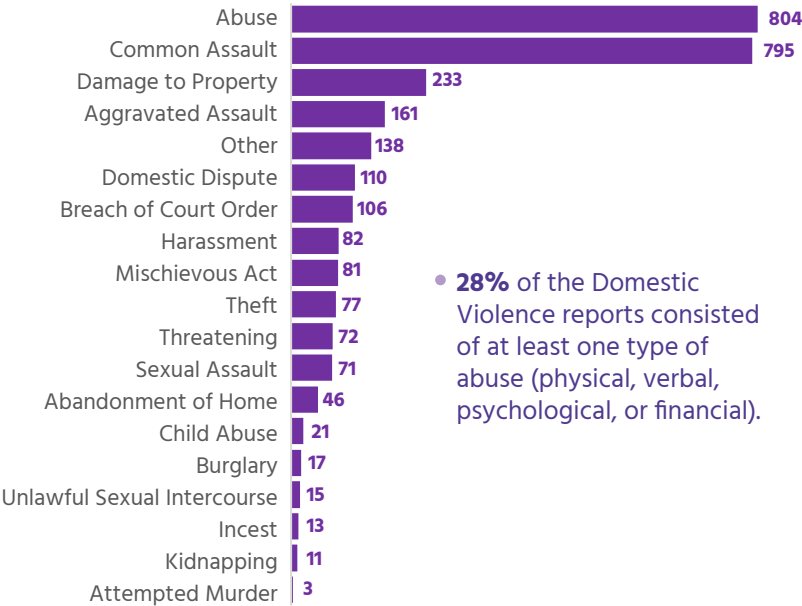
Domestic Violence according to place of occurrence, 2022

- 8 in 10** Domestic Violence reports were levied against a present or past intimate partner.
- 2 in 10** Domestic Violence reports were levied against a family member.



Domestic Violence according to relationship to offender, 2022

Note: Family member includes any individual in the household that has direct or familial contact with the accuser.



- 28%** of the Domestic Violence reports consisted of at least one type of abuse (physical, verbal, psychological, or financial).

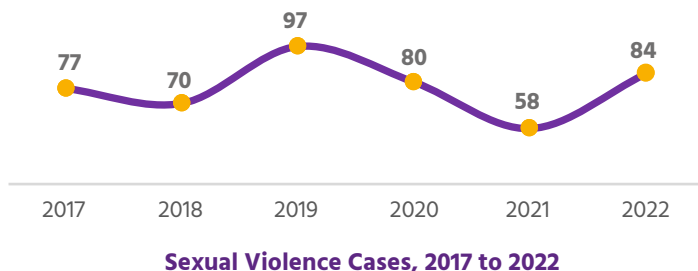
Domestic Violence by factor, 2022

## Sexual violence

"Sexual violence is any act, attempted or threatened, that is sexual in nature and carried out without the consent of the victim. Sexual violence includes rape, sexual abuse and harassment, exploitation, and forced prostitution. It can happen within marriages, especially when there is a lack of consent for sexual activity by one of the spouses."

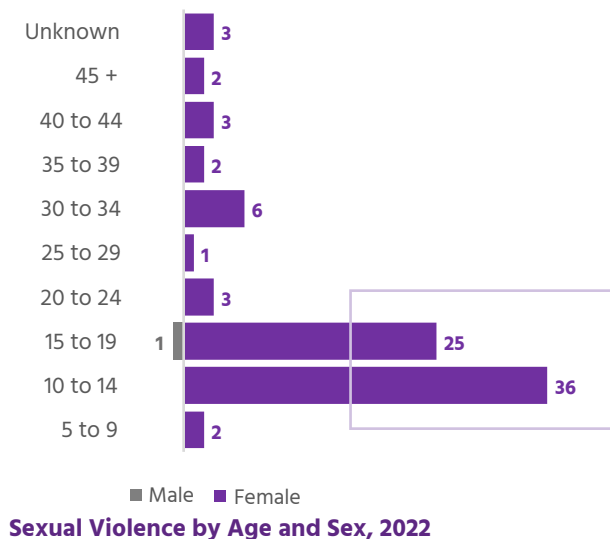
UNCHR, The UN Refugee Agency (2023)

- **Cases of sexual violence** in major crimes category **increased** in 2022.
- Sexual Violence cases accounted for **8%** in the major crimes category.



Note: Major Crimes in Belize includes Murder, Rape, Robbery, Burglary, Theft and Unlawful Sexual Intercourse.

- During 2022, **99%** of the victims of sexual violence were **females**.
- **73%** of all victims of sexual violence were females aged **10 to 19 years**.



## Femicide/Feminicide

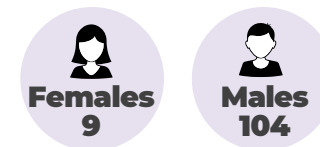
Femicide is generally understood to involve intentional murder of women, but broader definitions include any killing of women or girls.

Femicide differs from male homicide in specific ways. For example, most cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners, and involve ongoing abuse in the home, threats or intimidation, sexual violence, or situations where women have less power or fewer resources than their partner.

Understanding and addressing violence against women, WHO (2012)

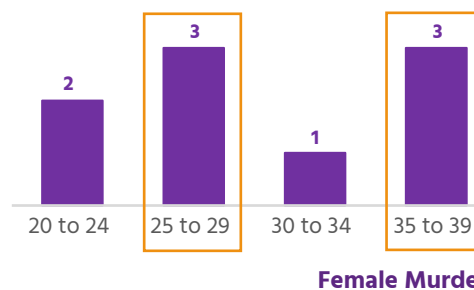
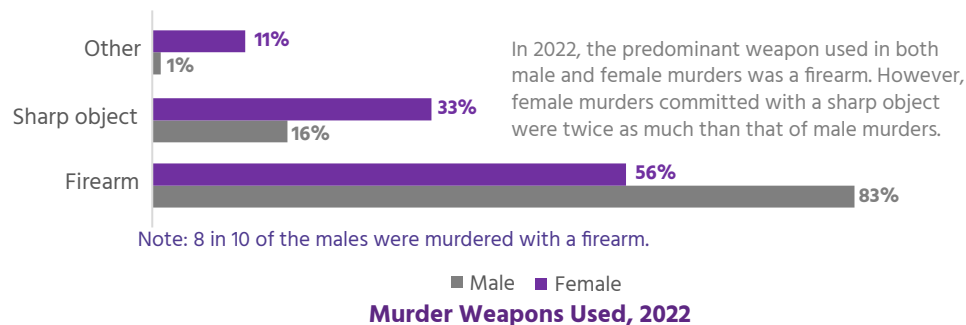
Note: Femicides is not legally defined in Belize but instead it is characterized based on international standard definition.

- Females accounted for **8%** of the murder victims in 2022.



- ▶ In 2022, **22%** of the females who were murdered were victims of gender-related murders or femicides.

- **2 in 10** of the females were murdered **by an intimate partner**.
- **6 in 10** of the females were murdered **with a firearm**.
- **3 in 10** of the females were murdered **with a sharp object**.
- **1 in 10** of the females were murdered **by other weapons**.



**9** During 2022, the age groups 25 to 29 years and 35 to 39 years both accounted for 33% of the female murder victims.