

# REGIONAL

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

### January to December 2023

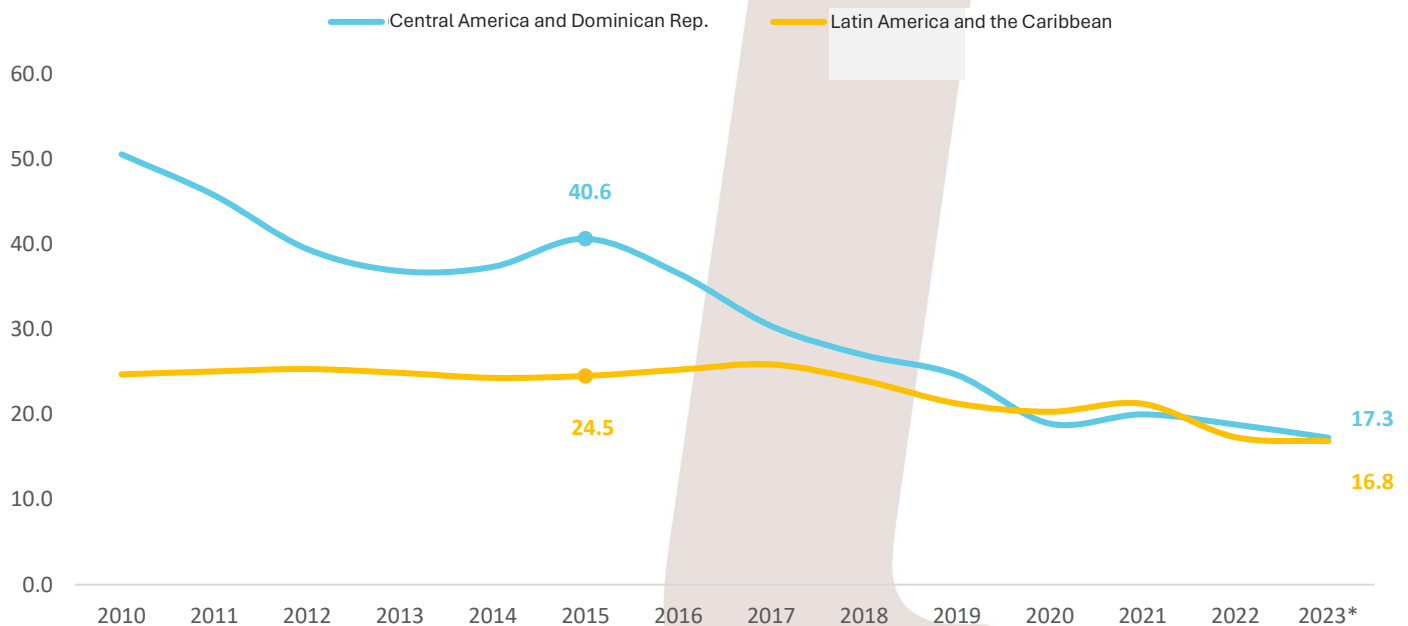
#### Overview

- In 2023, lives were lost to violence at an average rate of 20 people per day in the region.
- Estimates point to a total of 8,597 victims of homicide in the CARD subregion comprising Central America and the Dominican Republic. CARD This is a rate of 17.3 homicides per 100,000 population.
- In 2023, the projected rate is 16.8 homicides per 100,000 population in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).
- On record in countries that provide data disaggregated by sex, there were 814 women and 6,024 men homicide victims.<sup>i</sup>
- June was the month with the highest number of victims of homicide throughout the region. May, June and August reported higher figures as compared to 2022.
- Homicide rates have not been homogeneous both between and within countries. Analysis of data at the local level reveals differences among territories that register increases and those that have had no change or even have had a reduction.

#### Evidence

Since 2015, with the decline of homicides in CARD, the gap between homicide rates in LAC and CARD has been gradually closing. In 2015, the difference was 16.1 points and by the end of 2023, just a 0.5-point gap is expected.

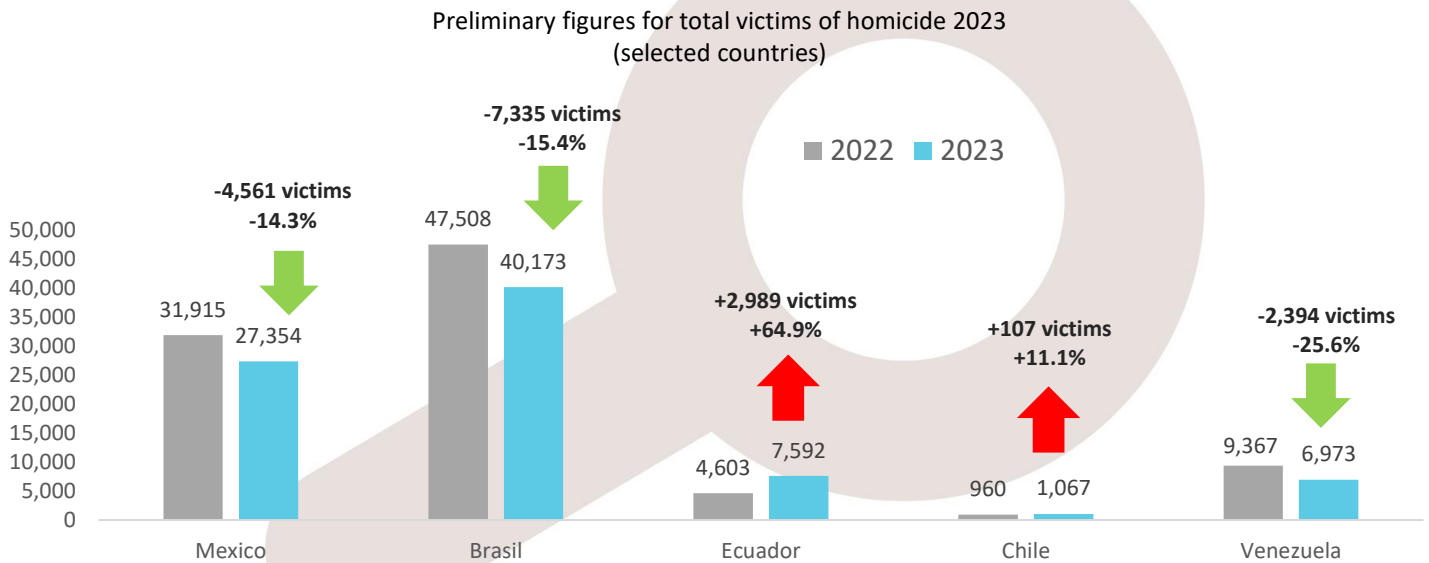
Homicide rate trends in Central America and the Dominican Republic, and in Latin America and the Caribbean (2014-2023)—100,000 population.



As for Central America, preliminary data is available for Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and the Dominican Republic. LAC projections are based on historical data, starting in 2010.

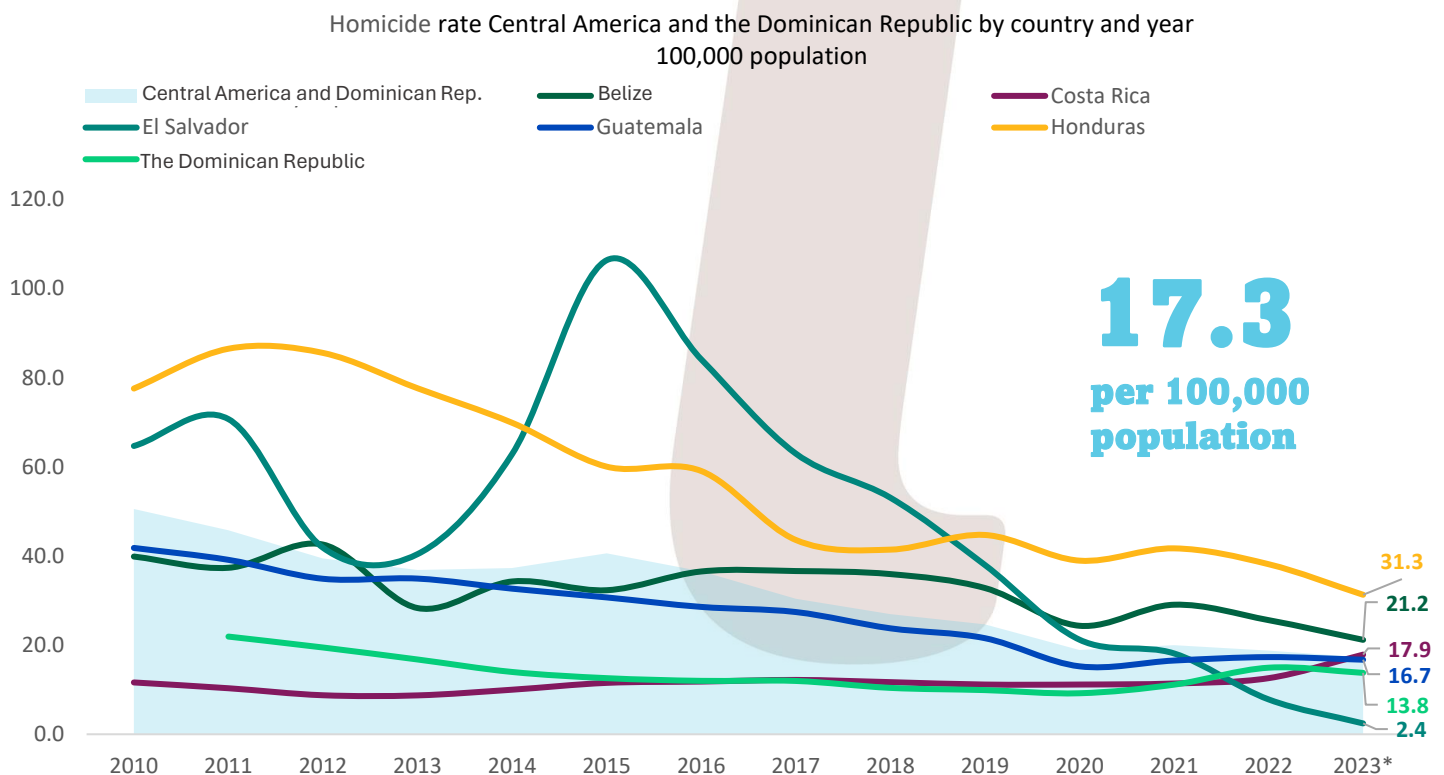
If preliminary data for 2023 is compared to 2022 data, there is an overall reduction in victims of homicide in Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela. Otherwise, Ecuador and Chile register increases.

The case of Ecuador is worth noting, with almost three thousand more victims of homicide in 2023 than 2022. This represents an increase of 65 per cent.



- **Mexico**, Secretariat for Security and Citizen Protection: <https://www.gob.mx/sesnsp/acciones-y-programas/victimas-nueva-metodologia?state=published>
- **Brazil**, Ministry of Justice and Public Security: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2023-12/projecao-indica-queda-de-6-no-numero-de-assassinatos-em-2023>
- **Ecuador**, Police and Associated Press: <https://apnews.com/world-news/general-news-0ff8a41cc645e3fb0c3e3df5ec3507dc>
- **Chile**, Subsecretariat for Crime Prevention Centre for Crime Studies and Analysis: <https://cead.spd.gov.cl/estadisticas-delictuales/>
- **Venezuela**, Venezuelan Violence Observatory: <https://observatoriodeviolencia.org.ve/news/informe-anual-de-violencia-2023>

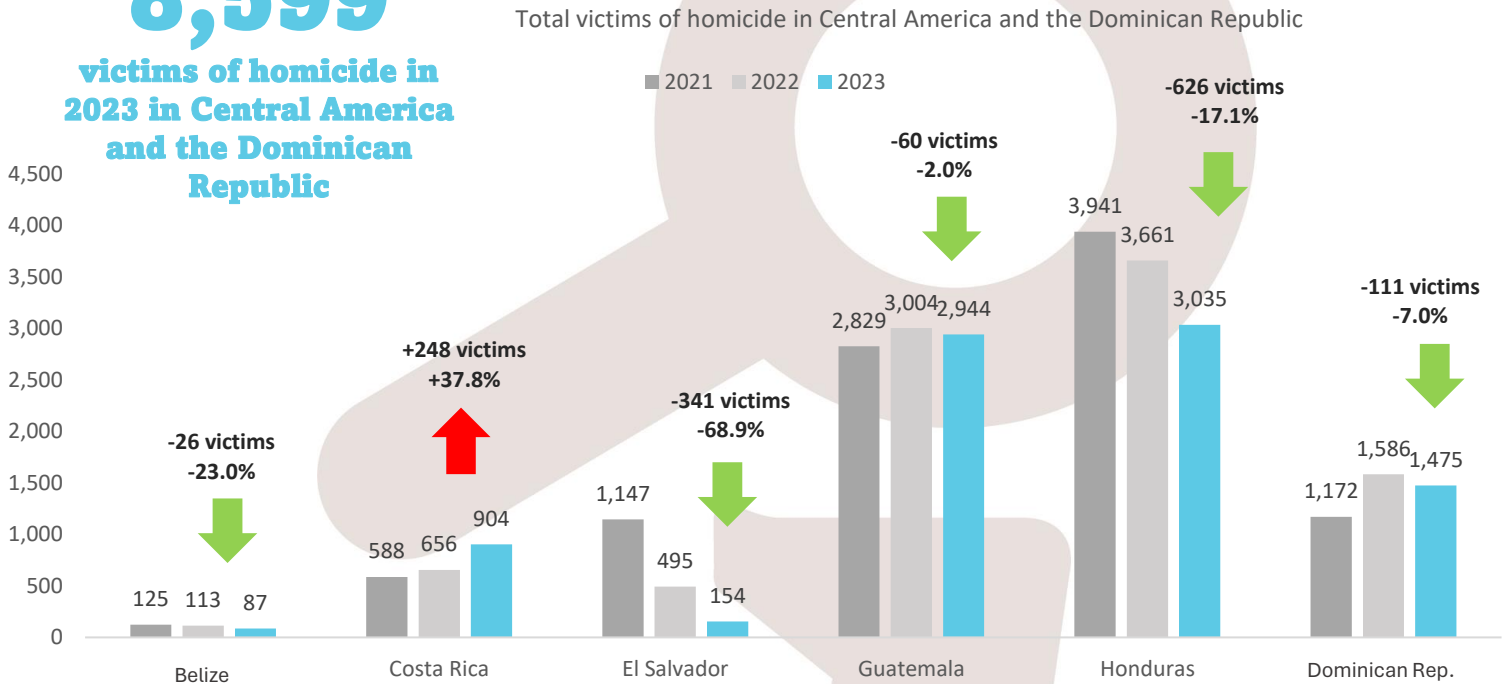
The 2023 homicide rate is estimated at 17.3 per 100,000 population in the Central America and Dominican Republic subregion. This is a 1.5 point reduction as regards to 2022. This is the second consecutive year, since 2021, that there is a reduction in the homicide rate on record in the subregion. When comparing the 2023 rate (17.3) with that of 2015 (40.6), records show it more than halved (-57.5%) over the last 9 years.



Preliminary 2023 figures for the subregion comprising Central America and the Dominican Republic show that there were 8,597 victims of homicide, that is 111 fewer (-7.0%) than in 2022. All of the countries in the subregion—Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and the Dominican Republic—exhibit reductions, except for Costa Rica, where there were 248 more victims as regards to 2022, that is, a 37.8 per cent increase. 2023 is the fourth consecutive year that Costa Rica registers a rise in the total number of victims of homicide.

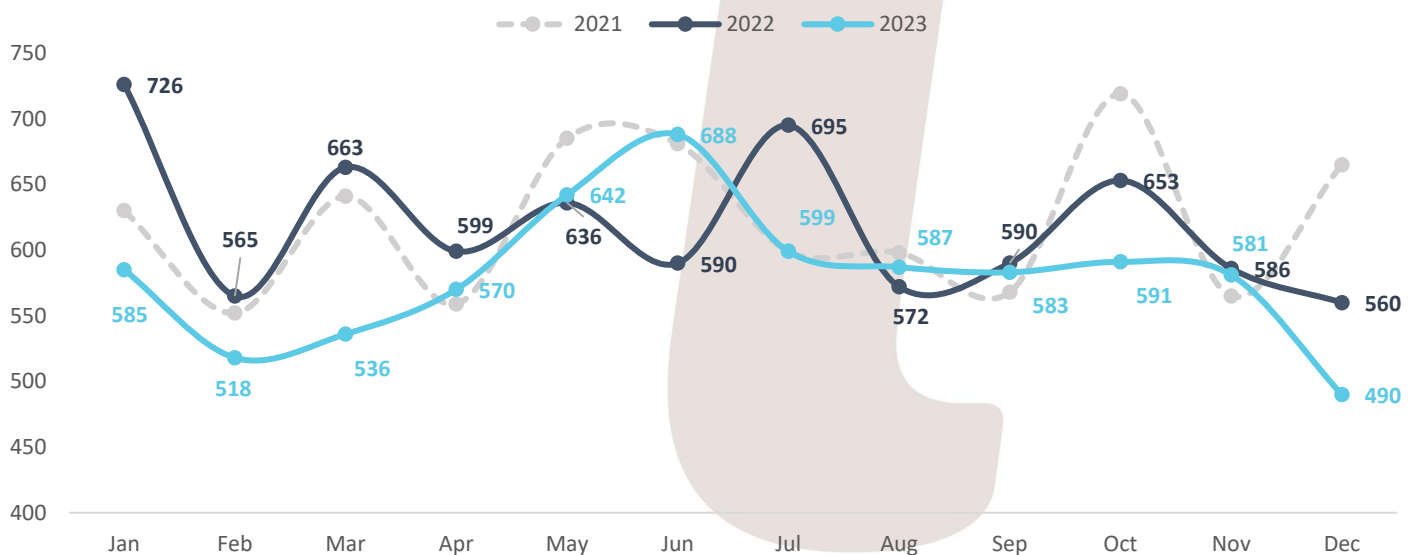
# 8,599

## victims of homicide in 2023 in Central America and the Dominican Republic



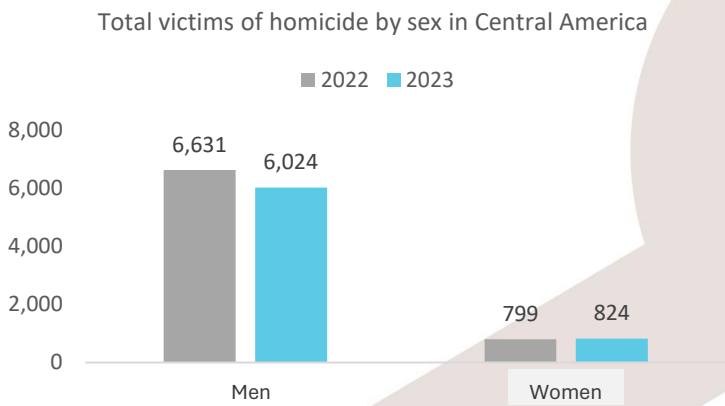
At the regional level, most months during 2023 exhibit totals that are lower than 2022, the exceptions are May, June and August. June was the month with the highest number of victims in 2023—688—which is a 16.6 per cent increase as regards to the same month the previous year.

Total victims of homicide by month of occurrence in Central America



This includes data from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and

From January to December 2023, with available data disaggregated by sex for Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras, records show there was a total of 6,024 male victims of homicide and 824 women victims of violent deaths. In 2023, the number of male victims declined by 607 cases (-9.2%) with regard to 2022, while the total amount of female victims rose by 25 victims (3.2%) as compared to 2022.



This includes data provided by Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras.

**25 more female victims +3.2%**

**607 fewer male victims -9.2%**

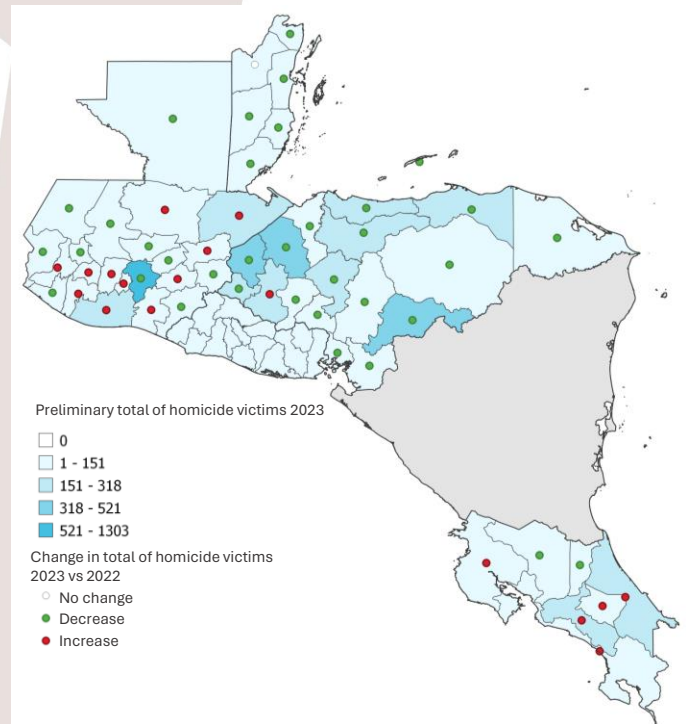
In two out of three (66.0%) territories (departments, provinces and districts) there was a drop in the number of victims of homicidal violence during 2023 in relation to 2022. The rest of the territories registered increases (32.1%) or remained the same (1.9%). Territories that account for most homicides in the subregion are characterized as having high demographic concentrations, like cities, or high productive activity, and are located on borders or coasts, particularly in the cases of Costa Rica and Honduras.

In Belize, eight in 10 murders took place in the districts of Belize and Cayo. Five districts recorded lower figures: Belize (-5 victims), Cayo (-6 victims), Corozal (-3 victims), Stann Creek (-12 victims), Toledo (-1 victim). Orange Walk—on the border with Guatemala and Mexico—had the same number of murders as in 2022 (7).

In Guatemala, 44.3 per cent of homicides recorded between January and December throughout the country, took place in the department of Guatemala. There was a rise in the number of homicides in the departments of Izabal, Alta Verapaz and Zacapa, which were characterized as high risk due to election-related conflict and violence.<sup>1</sup>

In Honduras, 17 of 18 departments registered fewer victims of homicide. Lempira—on the border with El Salvador—is the only department where there were 11 more victims.

In El Salvador, approximately four in 10 homicides (37.7%) took place either La Libertad or San Salvador. Cuscatlán and Morazan have the lowest records with two homicides each in 2023.



In Costa Rica, five provinces recorded higher figures compared to 2022. Alajuela and Heredia reported 4 and 1 fewer victims respectively. Some two in three homicides were registered in San Jose, Limon or Puntarenas. The largest increase in the total number of victims was in the province of San Jose, with 96 more victims than in the previous year. Across the country, the rise in homicides is linked to organized crime (victims of score settling or revenge or contract killing).

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

- *Belize: January 16, 2024*
- *Guatemala: January 15, 2024*
- *El Salvador: January 1, 2024*
- *Honduras: January 16, 2024*
- *Costa Rica: January 17, 2024*
- *Dominican Republic: January 2, 2024*

<sup>i</sup> *This classification corresponds to the Seventh Report, Election Observation Mission of Guatemala (2023), which constitutes a consortium of seven civil society organizations, available at: <https://dialogos.org.gt/2023/08/17/lamision-de-observacion-electoral-de-guatemala-moe-gt-presento-su-informe-sobre-las-condiciones-previas-al-balotaje-presidencial/>*