

Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries

Annual Technical Report

2021

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Minister's Message

It is with great pride that I provide you a report on the efforts and accomplishments of the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries for the year 2021. To say the least, the year 2021 was a tumultuous one, which provided many opportunities for introspection and change.

Regionally, the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) nations continued to fight the good fight against their common threats: transnational organized crimes, violence, corruption, and natural disasters. However, it was the COVID-19 Pandemic that emerged as a dominant public policy issue. Nation-states had to confront and grapple with fundamental questions, concerns and solutions to return to some type of normalcy and rebuild economies.

At the local level, the COVID-19 pandemic brought people together in an unprecedented way. While it enabled more support for each other, more people began to think consciously, purposefully and creatively in adjusting to new opportunities. Like other Government Ministries, the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries was challenged by the COVID-19 Pandemic which placed additional significant strains on human and material resources and our response to provide a safe and secure society. In efforts to adjust to the economic crisis, the Government of Belize made the decision to implement cost saving measures that placed additional strains on the availability of resources needed to carry out essential duties. Nonetheless, the Ministry and its Departments adjusted and went beyond the call-of-duty to deliver.

Despite constraints, the Ministry reports several significant strides in fulfilling its mandate of ensuring a safe and secure Belize for its citizenry and visitors. A significant achievement for the Belize Police was the recruitment of over (200) additional Police Officers who underwent classroom and field training instructions in a number of key areas. The focus on Community Policing would enable these recruits to become effective agents for positive change within the communities. Noteworthy is that a significant number of these recruits have entered the Department with advanced degrees and qualifications, which highlights the ever growing technical and professional competence of our human resources.

The National Forensic Science Services hosted its annual Symposium virtually for the first time and reports great success in reaching an even wider audience. There was participation from countries as far east such as South Africa, the Caribbean, North, South and Central American nations.

The Belize Crime Observatory (BCO) continues to support evidence-based decision making, through interagency collaboration with key public sector and development partners. The core work of the BCO is financed by the United States Agency for International Development, with technical support from the United Nations Development Programme, through the InfoSegura Project. Through this initiative, the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries is leading

the charge in bringing innovation and technology to the delivery of crime data and information services for a wide array of decision-makers, policymakers and stakeholders. The virtualization of crime data and information services, which aligns with the BCO's plans to establish Belize's Crime Intelligence Architecture by 2023, will help to deliver upon the Government's new digitalization agenda.

In keeping with its mandate of generating new opportunities for Belize, the New Growth Industries arm of the Ministry was successful in passing legislation on the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control Bill and formation of the Cohune Industry Committee. This is only the beginning for this Unit as I am very optimistic of the many opportunities that will be created for the Belizean people with our continued efforts in creating and investing in new and emerging ventures.

While 2021 was challenging, the Ministry made resounding efforts and strides to protect the lives and property of our citizenry, in assisting other key agencies and stakeholders, and in providing the best quality services to the public. Our successes prove that we are a resilient people and as the country and world reopens and continues to recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic, so will the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries. We will continue to expand on our existing efforts in ensuring results-oriented service to the people of Belize and creating the kind of opportunities our people deserve.



Hon. Kareem Musa
Minister of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries

Abbreviations

AAFS	American Academy of Forensic Science
ANU	Anti-Narcotics Unit
BCO	Belize Crime Observatory
BPD	Belize Police Department
BZ\$	Belizean Dollar
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CIA	Crime Intelligence Architecture
CIRT	Critical Infrastructure Response Team
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DPP	Director of Public Prosecutions
GI ³	Gang Intelligence, Investigation and Intervention
GoB	Government of Belize
HNCIB	Head National Crimes Investigation Branch
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IIMP	Integrated Information Management Platform
INL	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
KHMH	Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital
MEO	Medical Examiner's Office
MHANGI	Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries
MIT	Mobile Interdiction Team
MLDI COP	Medicolegal Death Investigation International Community of Practice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFSS	National Forensic Science Services
NPTA	National Police Training Academy
OW	Orange Walk
RIBIN	Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SICA	Central American Integration System
SOC	Scenes of Crime
TPU	Tourism Police Unit
UB	University of Belize
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

In the context of #planBelize, citizen security and public safety are considered the main challenges that threaten a country's growth and Belize is no exception to this challenge. During the year 2021 the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries (MHANGI) undertook initiatives that would rethink approaches of tackling crime and violence to improve citizen security and public safety by utilizing evidence-based analysis for innovative policymaking. With the continued implementation and funding of the InfoSegura Project through the Belize Crime Observatory there was successful deployment of the Integrated Information Management Platform (IIMP) in partnership with 4 other pilot agencies namely the Belize Central Prison, the Belize Police Department, the National Forensic Science Service and the Epidemiology Unit in the Ministry of Health and Wellness. There was also collaboration with the Police Information Technology and Cyber Unit of the Belize Police Department to advance integration of GIS into the Crime Information Management System (CIMS).

The Ministry, through its New Growth Industries Unit, embraced innovation and successfully legislated the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control Bill, creating a new industry with a wide array of opportunities. The Ministry will continue to expand on this industry amongst others into 2022.

With the continued COVID-19 restrictions on restaurants, cafes and entertainment venues and the continued use of a national curfew in place, the Belize Police Department continued to enforce regulations aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19. The issuance of tickets for violators of non-compliance to facemask wearing and social distancing, the monitoring and interdiction of illegal social events, the capture and prosecution of persons who engaged in illegal border crossing are among the efforts that will continue into the year 2022.

In supporting the rehabilitative process, the Ministry undertook discussion with the Kolbe Foundation to revisit the existing management fee. After successful dialogue both parties agreed to the adjustment of the fee and the GoB subsequently approved an increase that would feasibly support the Prison's operation given the rapidly declining inmate population.

As it relates to annual crime data, during the year under review, a total of (883) major crimes (i.e., murder, rape, robbery, burglary, theft, and unlawful sexual intercourse) were reported. Of these major crimes, murders increased by 22.5% in 2021 (125) when compared to 2020 (102). The increase in the murder incidents was attributed largely as gang related. Intelligence indicated that internal gang feuds, the high demand for drugs and retaliatory shootings are attributed to gang related crime and violence. Additionally, other crimes associated with gang activities included home invasions, aggravated assaults, and robberies.

The MHANGI will continue to support the successful implementation of #planBelize into 2022 utilizing evidence-based information for policy making and continue its efforts of creating innovative opportunities in new and emerging industries via the new growth industries.

Chapters

1. Introduction

This Report provides a synopsis for the period January to December 2021 of the Achievements, Challenges and Way Forward for the MHANGI and its departments which include:

- Belize Police Department
- National Forensic Science Services
- Belize Crime Observatory
- Belize Central Prison
- New Growth Industries

2. Mission Statement and Priorities

Vision Statement:

A safe, secure Belize, where the security environment allows for the development of a peaceful and democratic society that utilizes its human and natural resources to ensure social justice, ethnic harmony, security, stability and prosperity.

To change the economic landscape of Belize through diversification, standardization, and introduction of new and emerging industries, to capitalize on the demand for trending products on the local and international markets and to open new revenue streams for the government while creating jobs and opportunities for Belizeans.

Mission Statement:

The MHANGI, working together with the private sector and civil society, will create and implement innovative and technologically-advanced systems that transform the Ministry's mission and vision into actions that will enable the rule of law and order and a society that is safe, secure and at peace with itself.

A Ministry working together with the private sector, civil society and community to minimize threats to citizen security through the maintenance of law and order and community building.

To create, establish and promote the legislative and operational framework for the introduction, growth, and development of new, innovative, trending and productive non-traditional industries

and to provide the necessary support for a favorable social, economic and legal environment for those industries to thrive in Belize and external markets.

Priorities:

1. To maintain public order by responding to/and managing incidents of property crimes, domestic violence, and other crimes against persons, to reduce their impacts on the community.
2. To promote safer communities through a multi-sectorial approach to alleviate gang related activities.
3. To ensure evidence-based policies and actions, in support of citizen security, including law and order, delivery of justice, and satisfactory redress to victims of crimes.
4. To strengthen inter-agency, regional and international collaboration, and cooperation.
5. To enforce the gun strategy and review of the existing gun reform (Firearm Application Fee) and legislative reform.
6. To restructure the Gang Intelligence, Investigation, and Information Unit (GI³).
7. Support radio programme for more public engagement as part of their own security.
8. To provide evidence for identification of suspects involved in alleged crimes.
9. To provide reliable and objective scientific evidence based on established forensic principles.
10. To develop public policies that address citizen security through a comprehensive crime data and information system.
11. To set up the administrative framework for any new emerging and non-traditional industries.
12. To create private sector jobs for the Belizean people with the introduction of new and emerging industries.
13. To engage local, regional, and international investors in the development and introduction of successful new and emerging industries in Belize.
14. To establish a central nursery for scientific research, testing and management of seeds and tissue culture for new and emerging products.
15. To establish, implement and enforce the highest standards and regulations for the efficient management of new and emerging industries and to ensure quality, consistency, and compliance through efficient monitoring systems to be established by the Ministry.

3. Main Achievements

3.1 Belize Police Department

Philosophy

That we shall devote ourselves to uphold the safeguards of the Constitution having regard for the rights and dignity of all persons, through the instrument of Law, and the concern for order, working in partnership with the people, and in co-operation with Law Enforcement Agencies, we vow to protect the welfare of the state from threat and fear of crime.

Mission Statement

The Belize Police Department working in partnership with all communities: to help prevent and reduce crime, to detect and prosecute crime, and to enhance the quality of life, for a safer Belize.

Vision Statement

The Belize Police Department shall work collaboratively with all communities to foster the highest level of trust, confidence, and safety, through effective community policing and problem-solving strategies.

We seek to reduce and prevent crime by employing intelligence-led policing, technology driven strategies, effective investigation and prosecution of crimes and proactive and preventive patrols of our cities, towns and highways while adhering to the rule of law and respecting individual rights.

We aim to enhance the quality of life by creating safer neighbourhoods, while maintaining the highest stand of integrity and accountability.

Institutional Values

- Service-oriented
- Integrity
- Impartiality
- Equality
- Competence & diligence
- Accountability

Main Actions

The year 2021, has been an additional year of responsibility for the Belize Police Department (BPD) to police our communities in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The global

pandemic has placed economic strains on material and human resources due to government being forced to take cost-cutting measures. Despite such challenges, members of the Department continue to go beyond the call of duty by executing their respective duties and responsibilities to the best of their abilities. With the continual health restrictions on restaurants, cafes and entertainment venues and the continued use of a national curfew in place, the Department continued to enforce such regulations aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19. The issuance of tickets for violators of non-compliance to facemask wearing and social distancing, the monitoring and interdiction of illegal social events, the capture and prosecution of persons who engaged in illegal crossing of our international borders are among our efforts that will continue into the year 2022.

There were several trainings offered to the Department to increase technical capacities in key areas of law enforcement. As reported, one hundred and two (102) trainings took place using both in-person (adhering to the COVID-19 restrictions) and online modalities. Several trainings were made in partnership with key entities both regionally and internationally and who continue to be our allies in the fight against crime.

During 2021, significant efforts were made to strengthen collaborative networks with key vulnerable communities, stakeholders, and other agencies as a means to developing feasible and sound strategies to address the variables that contributed to criminality.

The Department developed targeted approaches to reduce the volume of crime through dedicated policing operations in high crime locations and engaged with culturally diverse communities to build trust and improve understanding of policing services. Furthermore, efforts continued to divert at-risk-youths away from the justice system through a range of diversionary programs.

With the high number of road traffic accidents in 2021, significant work was undertaken to strengthen enforcement of laws on our roads by targeting high risk driving offences to reduce serious injury and road crashes. For the year 2022, the BPD plans to increase its efforts once again in ensuring road safety.

In terms of revenue generation for 2021, the Department totalled BZ\$ 1,423,954. This revenue reflects collections from police records, police reports and gun licenses: there were 13,291 firearms licensed; 4,741 requests for vetting of various types and 32,534 requests for police records made in the year 2021.

Results achieved in 2021

Overview of Crimes

During the year under review, the table below shows the total number of (883) major crimes (i.e., murder, rape, robbery, burglary, theft, and unlawful sexual intercourse) reported which represented a decrease when compared to the year 2020. Many social and economic factors continued to contribute to the number of incidents despite the Department's best efforts. The increase in the murder incidents was largely gang related. In 2021, intelligence indicated that internal gang feuds, the high demand for drugs and retaliatory shootings attributed to gang related crime and violence. Additionally, other crimes associated with gang activities included home invasions, aggravated assaults, and robberies.

In addition, there was a 22.5% increase in the number of murders from (102) in 2020 to (125) in 2021, with Cayo District and Belize City both reflecting a significant increase. In respect to the number of arrests for major crimes in 2021, a total of (238) arrests were made compared to (310) in 2020 representing a decrease of 23.23%. Out of the (125) Murders there were a total of (46) arrests which is an arrest rate of 36.8%.

Table 1. Incidence and arrests for major crimes for 2020 and 2021

MAJOR CRIMES REPORT		
Major Crimes	2020	2021
Murder	102	125
Rape	25	12
Robbery	160	167
Burglary	479	456
Theft	67	77
Unlawful sexual intercourse	55	46
TOTAL	888	883

ARRESTS FOR MAJOR CRIMES		
Major Crimes	2020	2021
Murder	55	46
Rape	13	6
Robbery	69	47
Burglary	144	107
Theft	6	13
Unlawful sexual intercourse	23	19
TOTAL	310	238

Table 2. Sexual-based Crimes for Jan – Dec 2021

Sexual-based Crimes	2021
Sex Trafficking	8
Labour Trafficking	6
Sex & Labour Trafficking	5
Child Pornography	5
Withholding of Documents	1
Human Smuggling	3
TOTAL	28

NOTE *Thefts mentioned in the Major Crime charts are of reported incidents where the total value was \$5000Bcy or above. Arrests for Major Crimes are a part of CIB’s Achievements for the year 2021. Sexual Based Crimes Chart were reported by ATIPS*

Overview of Drugs

In 2021, there was an increase in seizures which resulted in (908) drug related arrests for 2021. The below table provides a synopsis of the type of drug associated with the arrests.

Table 3: Comparison of drug seizures by type for 2020 and 2021

Drugs	2020 (In Grams)	2021 (In Grams)
Proc. Cannabis	769,611.65	892,083.36
Cannabis Seeds	0	248
Cannabis Plants	18,384	15,066
Crack	1,179.67	2,794.7
Cocaine	2,307,677.82	2,409,493.7
Heroin	3,547	893
Crack pipes	55	35

Overview of Firearms

For the year under review, there was a decrease in the Seizure of Firearms and Ammunitions. In addition, the number of Firearms Stolen/Lost for the year in review increased when compared to 2020. Of the (50) Stolen/Lost, only (2) were recovered.

Table 4: Arrests made for Firearm and Ammunition for 2020 and 2021

FIREARMS/AMMUNITION SEIZED AND STOLEN		
Items	2020	2021
Firearms Seized	258	234
Ammo Seized	6,061	5,090
Firearms Stolen	36	41
Firearms Lost	5	9
Firearm Recovered/Found	4	2

ARRESTS MADE FOR FIREARM AND AMMUNITION		
Items	2020	2021
Firearms and Ammunition	57	9
Firearms Only	70	78
Ammunition Only	79	116

Other key results achieved in 2021

1. The National Police Training Academy (NPTA) was successful with the recruit training of (220) recruits of which (167) were males and (53) females.
2. The Head National Crimes Investigation Branch (HNCIB) completed (897) police reports which generated \$7,176 in revenue for the GoB. The Crimes Investigation Branch, as stated in the charts (Major Crimes) in Overview, made (238) arrests in Major Crimes.
3. The Criminal Records Office reported (17,370) Police Certificate of Conduct processed at \$25 each. Additionally, there were (15,164) processed at \$12, giving a total of 32,534 processed with a revenue of BZ\$616,218 for the Government of Belize.
4. INTERPOL facilitated (1,693) requests from Special Branch, FIU, Fugitives Repatriated, Custom Vehicle Checks, just to name a few.
5. The Gang Intelligence, Investigation, and Intervention (GI³) Unit arrested and charged 402 persons for various offences including gangs, firearm, drugs, quarantine regulations and traffic offences. Of those arrested and charged by the GI3, 218 or 54.2% were for gang members charged from 24 different gang groups across Belize. Operations conducted by the GI3 targeting gangs resulted in the recovery of (46) firearms.
6. The Anti-Narcotics Unit (ANU) saw an 85% increase in seizures for processed cannabis (22,749.8 grams) and a 90% increase in cocaine seizures (1,409,100 grams) compared to 2020. The Unit carried out 178 operations, executed 96 search warrants and arrested 26 persons. Also, the Unit managed to seize/find 9 firearms, 572 rounds of various ammunition and 23 magazines. There were also 2 planes seized and 11 vehicles impounded.
7. The Mobile Interdiction Team (MIT) seized/found 13 firearms, 487 rounds of various ammunition, and 12 magazines. Other efforts included 65 arrests, detention of 25 Illegal Immigrants, and a total of \$187,150 revenue for un-customed goods. For the same period of review, the Unit seized/found 524,460.9629 grams of cannabis and 3436.8 grams of cocaine.
8. Special Patrol Unit (SPU) operations resulted in Found Property of 40,784.91 grams of Cocaine, 63 grams of Crack Cocaine, (1) Firearm and (192) various rounds of ammunition. Drug/Firearms Arrest resulted in a total of 2,488.75 grams of cannabis and 17.62 g of crack cocaine leading to 23 arrests for possession and 8 for possession with intent to supply.
9. Special Branch (SB) intelligence led to the successful recovery of 129 firearms and 2,518) ammunition of different calibres. The highest firearms seizure was recorded in Belmopan (15) followed by Corozal (12). The most common type of both firearm and ammunition recovered was the 9mm.
10. The Tourism Police Unit (TPU) served 76 Cease and Desist Orders to hotels/accommodations, tour guides and tour operators who were found operating without license or in violation of their license.
11. The K9 Unit reported findings as follow:

K9 Findings	Total
Cannabis	106949757grams
Cocaine	13.0 grams
Crack Cocaine	18.7 grams
Firearm/ Ammunition	2 X 9 mm 1X16 gauge
Rounds	27X 9m4 4X16mm

The Belize Police K9 Unit could have contributed more in combating crime in the country of Belize. However, due to not having sufficient number of vehicles, dogs, training and personnel, the Unit’s successes were very low. The performance of the K9 Unit has seen a major downfall due to not having all the proper resources.

12. With respect to complaints against police, the Professional Standards Branch (PSB) reported (139) nationwide complaints. This is a decrease of (7) complaints or 5 % when compared to the 146 reports received in 2020. The table below reflects the status of complaints made:

Table 6: Status of Complaints against Police in 2021

Reports Concluded/Resolved (includes 3 unsubstantiated)	75
Reports where Officer has been arrested/charged Disciplinarily (cases still ongoing)	21
Reports that are still being investigated	43
Total	139

The complaints of “Police Brutality” continued to be one of concern. It constituted 44.5% or 65 of complaints received in 2021. In 2020 and 2021 the district with the largest number of this category of complaints is the Belize with Toledo and Corozal District having the lowest number of complaints.

13. The below table reflects a breakdown of cases concluded by the Prosecution Branch for the period Jan – Dec. 2021

Table 7: Cases concluded for period Jan – Dec 2021

Case Result	BZE	CZL	OW	SI	SCK	TOL	BVO	BMP	ISF	Total
Dismissed	488	52	151	27	8	164	153	39	77	1159
Struck-Out	752	119	70	57	95	47	25	27	182	1374
Withdrawn	211	115	225	124	6	54	36	78	6	855
Conviction	2851	626	590	420	311	578	301	150	273	6100
PI Held	63	5	21	7	10	4	0	4	0	114
Total	4365	917	1057	635	430	847	515	298	655	9602

3.2 National Forensic Science Services

Mission Statement

To assist in the administration of justice by providing reliable and objective scientific evidence based on established forensic principles.

Vision Statement

To become a fully functional, independent, and accredited forensic department providing comprehensive analysis of scientific evidence done by qualified staff to assist in the administration of justice to exonerate the innocent and convict the guilty.

Core Values

1. Impartiality

We do not favour one person or group over another, acknowledging that discrimination increases feelings of injustice and makes our jobs harder to do.

2. Scientific Objectivity

We do not allow personal feelings, beliefs or opinions to unfairly influence our actions in any situation, but rather we assess each situation based on its own merits and the observable facts.

3. Confidentiality

We respect every individual's right to privacy, whether living, deceased, accused or victim, and we handle all sensitive information securely.

4. Integrity

We conduct ourselves in a manner that demonstrates good judgment, trustworthiness and steadfastness.

5. Competence

We practice within our respective areas of expertise and continually develop and enhance our professional capacity.

6. Collaboration

We strive to evolve together, helping and supporting each other for the greater good.

7. Accountability

We are committed to diligence in the performance of our responsibilities by providing service to all with the right attitude and behavior.

8. Respect

We exhibit politeness, due regard, and empathy to all.

Objective

The Belize National Forensic Science Service (NFSS) serves all law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system by providing forensic science services ranging from crime scene inspection, processing and documentation, medicolegal post-mortem examinations, anthropological examination of human remains, and laboratory analysis of serology, toxicology, firearms and seized drugs cases (see Annex for detailed scope).

Main Actions

The NFSS is comprised of Scenes of Crime (SOC), the Medical Examiner's Office (MEO) and the Forensic Laboratory and operated on a reduced recurrent budget of approximately BZ\$3.6M for FY21/22. A summary of the total outputs and resources at the NFSS for the year 2021, broken down by Unit, is given in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Status of NFSS output and resources for Jan – Dec 2021

Unit	2021 Caseloads	Staff Strength	New Personnel On-boarded	Fiscal Space FY21/22	Facilities	Vehicles
Scenes of Crime	3,311 scenes processed/ requests for photographs to be taken of exhibits	29 staff <i>*28 of which are crime scene technicians</i>	0	\$1,595,076	1 rented main office building (4,000 ft ²) 1 owned prefabricated office building (500 ft ²) 8 single-room offices housed in Police Stations 1 owned 3-bedroom staff residential quarters (750 ft ²)	11
Medical Examiner's Office	554 post-mortem examinations conducted	4 staff <i>*3 of which are Medical Examiners</i>	1 full-time intern (unpaid)	\$345,777	1 single-room administrative office 1 cold storage unit for decomposed cadavers No morgue	2
Forensic Laboratory	994 cases analyzed 1,560 new case submissions received from law enforcement	22 staff <i>*13 of which are Forensic Analysts</i>	2 Forensic Analysts, 1 Exhibit Manager	\$1,662,566	1 owned laboratory building with office areas (6,300 ft ²) 1 20-foot containerized ballistic firing range	3 (1 un-serviceable)

Results achieved in 2021

Listed below are summaries of highlighted accomplishments at the NFSS for the year 2021:

1. Upgrades to Infrastructure and Scientific Equipment:

- a. Revised MOU signed with INL/CARSI Program of US Embassy Belmopan for construction of three modern SOC Office Spaces in Ladyville, Dangriga and Belmopan.
- b. Revised architectural drawings and site plans prepared for SOC Office Space Project with technical assistance from Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing.
- c. NFSS participated in tender review process for CABEI-financed equipment (portable Fourier Transform Infrared Spectrometer for seized drugs analysis and Exhibit Storage Refrigerator) for Forensic Laboratory.
- d. NFSS participated in revision of Terms of Reference for CABEI-financed consultancy to conduct needs assessment and architectural design for new NFSS facilities (new Forensic Morgue and Laboratory).
- e. Forensic Laboratory purchased upgraded equipment used by the Toxicology and Seized Drugs Sections for analysis of cases.

2. Upgrades to Infrastructure and Scientific Equipment/Strengthening Death Investigation:

- a. NFSS prepared technical specifications for procurement of advanced forensic toxicology and histopathology equipment to be provided by SICA ICRIME project to build capacity in antemortem and post-mortem toxicology and death investigations.
- b. NFSS purchased a new 10-body refrigerator for MEO use and submitted proposal for an MOU with KHHM Morgue to support cost-sharing agreement.

3. Strengthening Death Investigation:

- a. MEO commenced revision of draft Medical Examiner's legislation as part of undertaking to replace outdated Coroner's Act.
- b. NFSS submitted proposal for improved body transport, custody and storage to build capacity in medicolegal death investigations.
- c. MEO implemented Expert Peer Review for medicolegal post-mortem reports issued to Police Investigators.
- d. NFSS co-hosted a Multiagency Roundtable Discussion, in partnership with INL/US Embassy, focused on strengthening the medicolegal death investigation system in Belize with a focus on developing the MEO.

- e. NFSS signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Central American Health Sciences University for use of morgue facilities by MEO to conduct medicolegal post-mortem examinations.

4. Technical Training & Professional Development:

- a. NFSS collaborated with the Medicolegal Death Investigation International Community of Practice (MLDI COP) in continuous professional development for Medical Examiners and peer-to-peer mentorship.
- b. MEO, SOC and Forensic Laboratory provided forensic training for San Ignacio Police, CIB Investigators, Police Constables, First Responders and new Police recruits.
- c. SOC implemented a structured In-Service Training program for all Crime Scene Technicians countrywide on updated Standard Operating Procedures for crime scene inspection, processing and documentation.
- d. SOC procured virtual training for Advanced Crime Scene Technician in Alternate Light Source Photography from SIRCHIE.
- e. Forensic Laboratory and SOC Supervisors participated in the 2021 Conference of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), the 2021 Conference of the Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers and the 2021 Symposium of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors, with sponsorship by INL/ICITAP Programs through US Embassy Belmopan.

5. Strengthening Narcotics & Drug Investigations/Technical Training & Professional Development:

- a. Forensic Laboratory provided training for Magistrates and Prosecutors on revised Standard Operating Procedures for analysis of seized drugs and changes to reporting format.
- b. Forensic Laboratory received virtual training in sampling and analysis of seized drugs from the Special Testing Laboratory of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).
- c. Forensic Laboratory collaborated with US DEA, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) to provide training for Police Investigators, Prosecutors and other Law Enforcement Officers in Belize.

6. Strengthening Narcotics & Drug Investigations:

- a. Forensic Laboratory utilized option for outsourcing of further testing for seized drugs samples to DEA Special Testing Laboratory.

- b. Forensic Laboratory invested in a customized Drug Sampling Room to minimize harmful exposure of law enforcement personnel to potentially lethal substances seized during anti-drug operations.

7. Collaboration with Local & International Stakeholders:

- a. NFSS participated in an inaugural meeting held in El Salvador to establish a SICA Network of Directors of Forensic and Legal Medicine Departments in member countries.
- b. NFSS contributed to needs assessment studies on enhancing regional support for medicolegal death investigation and criminal justice systems in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- c. Forensic Laboratory collaborated with BAHA's Central Investigation Laboratory to begin to develop methods to quantify THC and other cannabinoids in order to build regulatory capacity for the analysis of hemp and cannabis samples.
- d. NFSS continued bimonthly Stakeholder Meetings between NFSS, Office of the DPP and the Belize Police Department to achieve more effective interagency efforts towards investigation and prosecution of criminal offences.
- e. Forensic Laboratory held discussions with Belize Police Department Senior Command surrounding establishment of a multiagency Crime Gun Intelligence Center to increase the use of forensic intelligence in firearms investigations.
- f. NFSS participated in a high-level Bilateral Meeting between GOB and USG stakeholders to review progress and set priorities for continued USG support toward Citizen Security, Border Management and Justice Sectors in Belize.
- g. Forensic Laboratory became an active member of the Board for the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network (RIBIN) of CARICOM Member States, provided technical guidance to regional partners, and contributed to a National Action Plan for implementing the Caribbean Firearms Road Map.
- h. NFSS prepared a Terms of Reference for a UNDP-sponsored consultancy to broaden the reach of the Third Belize Forensic Science Symposium to be held in early 2022.

8. Enhanced Accountability:

- a. NFSS collaborated with the Belize Crime Observatory on enhanced data entry, data sharing and data analysis for crime statistics.
- b. NFSS continued bulk purchasing of scientific supplies directly from authorized vendors abroad via foreign payment to achieve cost savings.
- c. Forensic Laboratory implemented an improved exhibit/report retrieval system for police case officers, police exhibit keepers and formation commanders to enhance case file management and efficient use of exhibit storage space.

9. Improving Quality of Work:

- a. NFSS submitted technical specifications to UNDP partners for procurement of network server for secure data storage at SOC Main Office.
- b. NFSS implemented Belize Expert Witness Training Course for Medical Examiners, Forensic Analysts and Crime Scene Technicians in partnership with Prosecution Branch, Office of the DPP, the Judiciary and the University of Ottawa.
- c. SOC successfully relocated its Main Office to a more spacious and conveniently located property that meets all requirements for security, access control, evidence processing and storage, staff accommodations and administrative needs.
- d. SOC published its updated Standard Operating Procedures Manual, which was reviewed by independent subject matter experts in the USA, and shared document with Stakeholders.
- e. Forensic Laboratory initiated instrument calibration, hypergeometric statistical sampling, and estimation of measurement uncertainty for Seized Drugs cases.
- f. Forensic Laboratory established a firearms reference collection to aid in the analysis of firearms cases.
- g. NFSS launched an Incident Report/Corrective Action Report mechanism as part of quality management system requirements.
- h. NFSS concluded a 2-year Forensic Advisor Program sponsored by INL/CARSI Program of the US Embassy.

10. Strategic & Operational Planning:

- a. NFSS developed 3-year Strategic Planning Goals and Objectives with feedback from All Staff Department Meeting.
- b. Forensic Laboratory and Scenes of Crime developed Unit Operational Plans aligned with Department Strategic Goals and Objectives.
- c. NFSS provided input during consultation meetings to contribute to Plan Belize: Medium Term Development Strategy 2021 to 2025.
- d. Forensic Laboratory hired three new staff members (Exhibit Manager, Firearms Analyst and Toxicology Analyst) and MEO promoted one Forensic Medical Examiner, based on minimum required qualifications established in updated Job Descriptions.

11. Investing in DNA:

- a. Forensic Laboratory continued on-demand outsourcing of DNA cases to accredited laboratories abroad via new secure courier system, with average turnaround time of between 6 to 8 weeks.

- b. NFSS submitted proposal for increased investment to expand the scope of the Forensic Laboratory to incorporate DNA analysis.

12. Maintaining Staff Safety & Morale:

- a. NFSS developed a Department Charter, inclusive of core values, code of ethics and guiding principles, for adoption in early 2022.
- b. Forensic Laboratory and Scenes of Crime acknowledged outstanding performance by staff members via annual Achievement Awards.
- c. NFSS maintained an updated Staff Exposure Plan for COVID-19, achieved 98% vaccination coverage among eligible staff, purchased advanced room air filtration units, and stockpiled necessary PPE for staff use.

3.3 Belize Central Prison

Overview

On August 1, 2002, Kolbe Foundation, a non-profit, non-governmental organization formed by Rotarian Businessmen was given an opportunity to manage the Belize Central Prison (BCP) on behalf of the Government and country of Belize. This was undertaken with the Mission Statement **“To Provide a Secure, Humane Facility Geared Towards Meaningful Rehabilitation and Successful Reintegration.”**

The 2020 mass-escape was a lesson learnt and as a result allowed for prison security procedures and policies to be strengthened. The year 2021 ended with zero escapes and no type of prison disturbance was experienced. As the pandemic raged on prison activities were minimized and adjusted to prevent and mitigate the spread of the virus within the prison walls. These included suspension of in-person visits and replacing them with virtual visits, reduction in the number of interns in the various rehabilitation programs within the prison, suspending sporting activities, and reducing the number of inmates involved in work-programs. In addition, newly admitted and re-admitted inmates were quarantined for a mandatory 10 days before they were transferred to their building. These precautionary measures, coupled with the strict adherence to other Covid-19 prevention protocols and procedures, full support and cooperation from staff and inmates were very significant in keeping the virus under control within the prison.

On a very positive note, the greatest achievement in 2021 was the **“Management Fee”** adjustment that the GoB approved to support the prison’s operation given the rapidly declining inmate population. Prison statistics show that because of effective rehabilitation efforts the inmate population has reduced by **32%** over the last seven years. The year 2021 ended with (1,050) inmates as compared to 2015 (1,623 inmates). The new formula proffered was a fixed quantum of \$575,000 BZD for the first 1,000 inmates and an additional \$19.50 BZD per prisoner

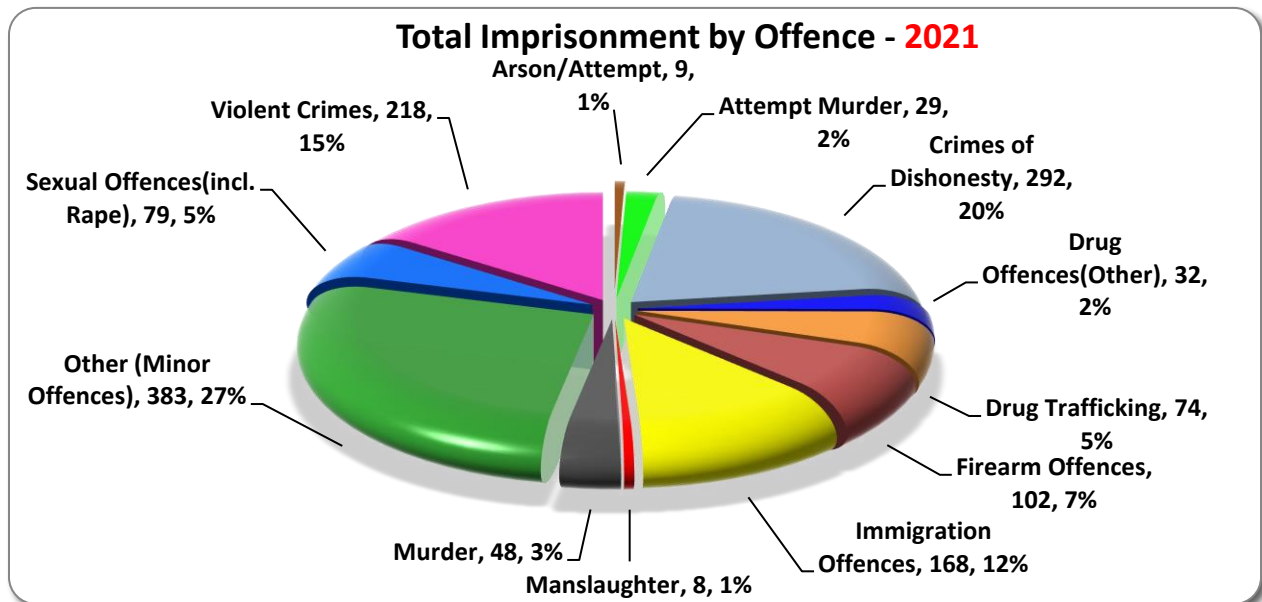
per day. With this new arrangement, the average cost to GoB per inmate per day with up to an average of 1,200 inmates will be approximately BZ\$19. It was also agreed that this arrangement will be reviewed in September 2022 to see if there will be any need for further adjustments due to inflation.

Prison Statistics: Total Imprisonment

The total number of persons admitted into the prison on conviction and remand in 2021 was 1,442, a reduction of 381 or **-21%** less when compared to 2020 which recorded 1,823. The breakdown of this total are as follows: 1,307 (**90.6%**) adult males, 77 (**5.3%**) adult females, 56 (**3.9%**) young males under the age of 18 years, and 2 (**0.14%**) young females (*similar age to that of young males*).

In 2021 – like in all the other years gone by, most females (31%) were incarcerated for Immigration Offences whilst 12% were imprisoned for Violent and Other Minor Offences. As it pertains to young offenders (under the age of 18 years), **38%**, were incarcerated for Crimes of Dishonesty, whilst the other large number of them (**17%**) were admitted for Firearm Offences. The prevalent age of young offenders sent to the prison in 2021 was 17 and 16 years respectively.

Overall, **Other Minor Offences** (27%) accounted for most of the incarceration last year, followed by **Crimes of Dishonesty** (20%). Incarceration for both Manslaughter and Attempt Murder shot through the roof and Drug Trafficking saw an 80% increase when compared to the previous year.

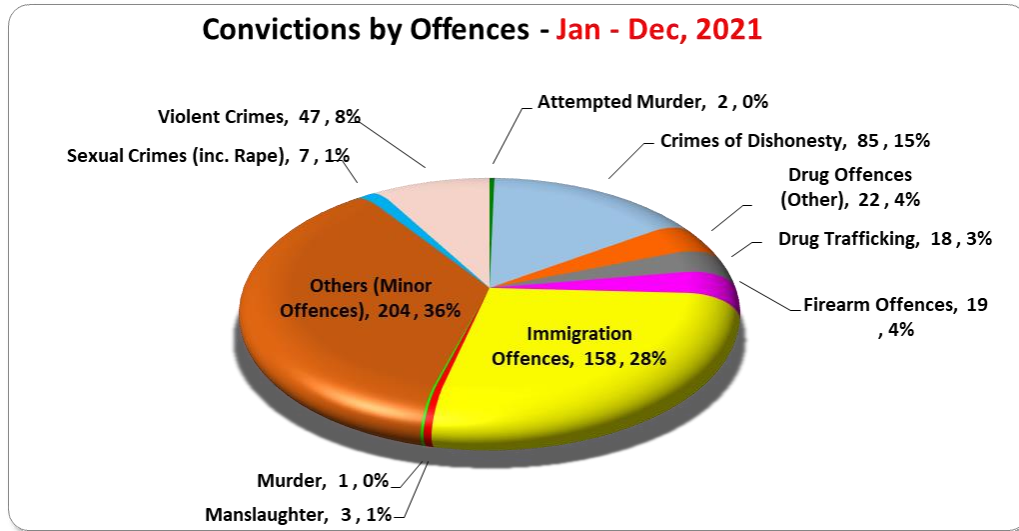


Prison Statistics: Convictions

As it pertains to incarceration, 566 persons were sent to prison on conviction status whilst 876 were admitted on remand in 2021. When comparing persons remanded with those admitted into

the prison on conviction for this period, there is 310 or 55% more persons remanded than were convicted.

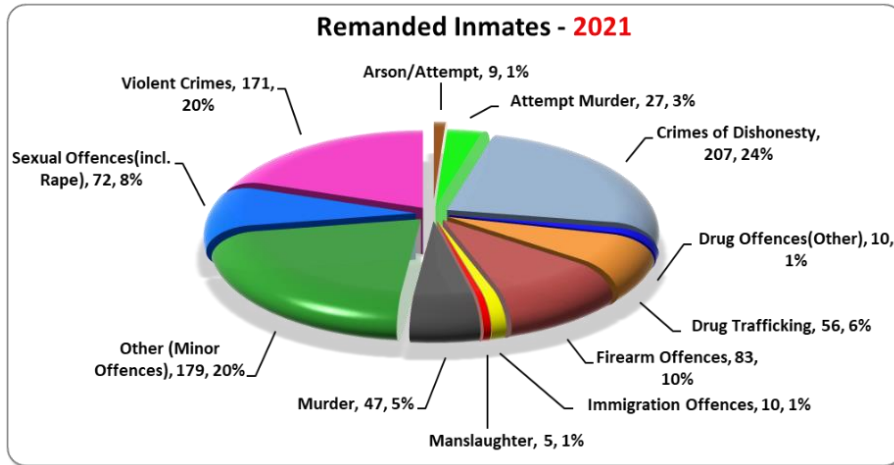
Of note is that Immigration Offences usually top the chart however, due to the pandemic, this was not the case in 2021 since border entry points were closed. Of the 204 minor offences, 75% of were gang related and Covid-19 regulation violations.



Prison Statistics: Remands

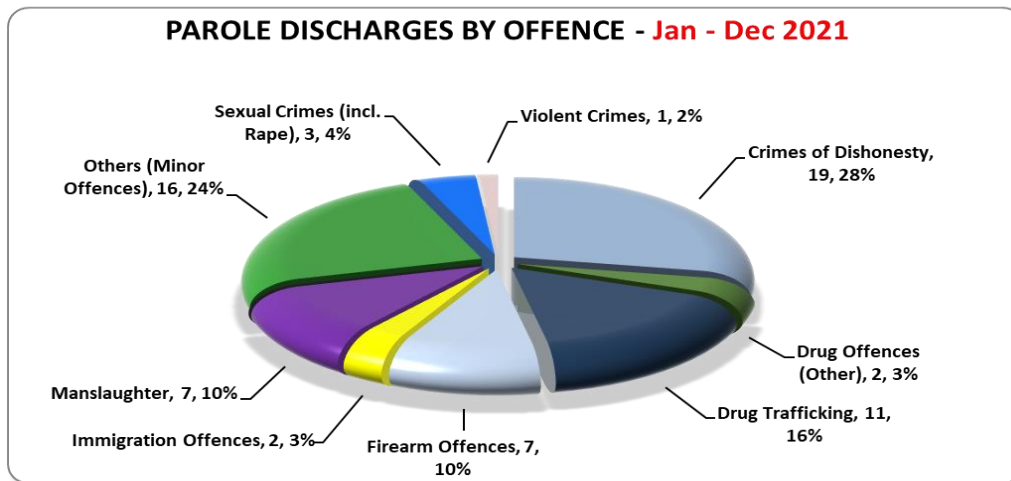
In 2021, a total of 876 persons were remanded to the Belize Central Prison. This reflects a decrease of **20%** (223 when compared to 2020). The government instituted only one State of Emergency for Southside, Belize City in August due to gang violence which yielded only 63 gang members. The government, not being excessive with these state of emergency for South-Side, Belize City accounted for most of the overall decrease in persons being remanded. As per usual, Crimes of Dishonesty (robbery, burglary, and theft) accounted for the highest number of persons remanded last year (207 or 24%).

There was a significantly high number of persons remanded for drug trafficking, arson, and manslaughter when compared to the year before. We also saw a slight increase in the number of persons remanded for firearms and violent offences (harm, grievous harm, and maim).



Prison Statistics: Parole

Of the 285 eligible inmates for Parole only sixty-eight (68) or 24% were approved Parole in 2021. Those approved were serving sentences for Crimes of Dishonesty, Other Minor Offences, and Drug Trafficking respectively. Ninety-eight persons successfully completed their parole last year and as of December 31, 2021 there remained 126 persons on such license.



Other 2021 Highlights

1. Inauguration of tower #4.
2. Recapture of last two escapees of 2020.
3. Long service awards. Names??
4. Prison Industries/Industrial Zone continued its production and business operation. An average of 59 inmates remained continuously employed in areas of woodwork, poultry, tailoring, block making, or farming.

3.4 Belize Crime Observatory

The Belize Crime Observatory (BCO) was established in October 2016 to “foster the development of public policies that address public safety and national security issues through the collection, analysis and dissemination of quality, timely and multidimensional data on crime and violence trends in the country.” The BCO is a national repository for the secure storage of comprehensive, multi-dimensional data relating to crime. Data stored by the Observatory is collected from relevant sources and processed to ensure it is fit for the creation of statistical analysis and outputs for a wide range of stakeholders.

Mission

The Belize Crime Observatory is established for the collection, processing, analysis, and storage of crime data, with a view of providing timely, reliable, and relevant information to its users.

Vision

The BCO will serve as Belize’s national repository for the secure storage of comprehensive, multi-dimensional data relating to crime. Data stored by the Observatory are collected from relevant sources and processed to ensure they are fit for the creation of statistical analysis and outputs for stakeholders.

Functions

The primary aim of the Belize Crime Observatory is to foster the development of public policies that address public safety and national security issues through the collection, analysis and dissemination of quality, timely and multidimensional data on crime and violence trends in the country. The BCO is an official point of reference at the national, regional, and international level for comprehensive, relevant, and accurate data on crime and violence in Belize, including statistical and analytical information, as well as primary and secondary research.

Scope of work

The BCO is responsible for:

- collecting data from relevant sources;
- processing crime data to ensure quality and propriety;
- securely storing crime data;
- ensuring adequate access to relevant stakeholders;
- protecting sensitive and proprietary data and ensuring access only by authorized persons;
- generating statistical outputs and analyses for various user types; and
- updating data to ensure accuracy and reliability

Goals

GOAL #1: Ensuring that crime data and information collected from authoritative sources are timely, multidimensional, comprehensive, reliable, and relevant.

GOAL #2: Ensuring that data and information in the BCO's Repository are suitable for the efficient performance of a diverse array of analysis functions, and to generate statistical outputs and indicators, unveiling meaningful insights into crime patterns and trends.

GOAL #3: Performing in-depth analysis of crime data, exploring key variables to provide greater insights into crime patterns and trends.

GOAL #4: Maintaining a Central Repository of authoritative and comprehensive crime data and information from a range of providers, as well as the BCO's analysis and statistical outputs and periodic publications.

GOAL #5: Fostering a deeper understanding of crime patterns and trends in Belize and supporting improvements in public safety through the dissemination of quality data and insightful information.

In Belize, the Evidence Based Information Management on Citizen Security in Central America and the Dominican Republic–InfoSegura Project is being co-implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs & New Growth Industries, through the Belize Crime Observatory, in partnership with the UNDP. External funding support for the implementation of the BCO's activities has been provided by the United States Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Ministry of Home Affairs & New Growth Industries places very high priority on innovation and technology, particularly in the context of leveraging Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources to achieve greater impact through its efforts to improve citizen security in Belize. The Government of Belize has been developing the *Plan Belize - Medium Term Development Strategy (2021-2025)*, and the two priority thematic areas most relevant to the BCO's future work are *Citizen Security* and *Good Governance*.

- Improve the penal system
- Implement the Youth Service Corp
- Develop stronger physical programs
- Support community policing efforts

Citizen
Security



- Strengthen and reform government institutions
- E-governance
- Digitalization for service transformation

Good
Governance



Results Achieved in 2021

1. Consolidation of data on homicides, road traffic fatalities, and suicides, as well as to strengthening capacity for data management and data visualization, which was achieved by convening of a 4-part *DataXChange* Series with key data source agencies.
2. Deployment of the Integrated Information Management Platform (IIMP) by the Belize Crime Observatory, with funding and technical support from the InfoSegura Project and in partnership with 4 other pilot agencies: the Belize Central Prison, the Belize Police Department, the National Forensic Science Service under the BCO's parent ministry – the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries; and the Epidemiology Unit in the Ministry of Health and Wellness.
3. Advancement of the integration of GIS into the Crime Information Management System (CIMS), by the deployment of ArcGIS Enterprise through the GeoSpatial Working Group, co-chaired by the Belize Crime Observatory's Interim Technical Coordinator and the IT/GIS Officer of the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security.
4. Completion of interagency Requirements Analysis for Crime Data and Information, to inform future work on the development of Belize's Crime Intelligence Architecture.
5. Design and completion of the BCO's first stakeholder survey to capture feedback from internal and external partners on the BCO's work, website, and information products.
6. Development of Action Plan for the Modernization and Full Operationalization of the Sex Offenders Registry under the joint administration of the BCO and the BPD.
7. Development of the Action Plan for upgrade of the Belize Sex Offenders Registry, as well as draft Policies and Procedures Manual and draft MOU, by convening 4 stakeholder sessions.
8. Commenced development of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure for the Belize Crime Observatory, as well as the Analysis of Options Available for Information Management Systems for the National Forensic Science Service and the Belize Central Prison, to advance preparatory work for the establishment of the Ministry's state-of-the-art, cross-cutting Crime Intelligence Architecture (CIA).
9. Development of a concept note on the establishment of the CIA, through interagency data sharing and collaboration.

10. Commencement of capacity-building initiative by the BCO (supported by InfoSegura) on Strategic Gang Intervention to strengthen collaboration with the Department of Youth Services.
11. Upgrade of the BCO's Online Repository, to enhance user experience and discoverability of documentation in the BCO's Repository; as well as the publication of a comprehensive digital Repository Catalogue for the BCO.
12. Development of new knowledge products and capacity building documentation on National Crime Victimization Surveys, to inform the design of Belize's First Crime Victimization Survey, scheduled for 2023.
13. Receipt of ICT equipment by MHANGI from USAID/InfoSegura to support data management at the BPD, NFSS and the Office of the DDP, data sharing with the BCO, and evidence-based decisions by decision-makers and policymakers.
14. Production of two original Belizean video dramas on sexual violence and domestic violence, and design and installation of 4 highway billboards in Northern, Central and Southern Belize to raise awareness on gender-based violence in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
15. Formulation of Advocacy Strategy and Advocacy Plan for the implementation of successive campaigns addressing three thematic areas (gender-based violence, urban violence, and youth involved crimes), utilizing multidimensional data to design and deliver strategic messaging to key target audiences aimed at improving citizen security across Belize.
16. Capacity-building sessions by the BCO for continued strengthening of crime data and information management across key partner agencies, with support provided by USAID through InfoSegura.
17. Publication of Periodic and Special Thematic Crime Analysis Reports and Infographics; digital maps, apps and dashboards using geospatial technology to provide information products to key stakeholders of the BCO.
18. Production of 5 animated data analysis and visualization videos on major crimes, homicides, traffic fatalities and domestic violence; and the production of a four-part training tutorial with guidance for the BCO on updating animated data videos with new information.

19. Development of a multimedia web gallery for the BBCO web portal for showcasing multi-media elements and interactive citizen security data products.
20. The 2021 Media Awards on Crime Data Reporting, and two-session Data Journalism training for media professionals.
21. Contribution to Spotlight Initiative baseline assessment;
22. Revision and update of BCO Data Policy, in accordance with the annual review cycle.

Table 9: Challenges and Gaps

KEY CHALLENGES	CRITICAL GAPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued delay in receiving core datasets for analysis and reporting; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A firm agreement on the frequency of data sharing by core agencies, including the specific types of datasets and variables to be made available to the BCO;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited ability to perform detailed analysis on a more regular basis, due to data formats and inadequate levels of sex, age and other disaggregation, including incident data needed for more robust analysis; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex and age disaggregated incident data on a more frequent basis; if possible once a weekly basis; • Human resource and technology gaps continue to persist in source agencies (particularly the Belize Central Prison, the National Forensic Science Service, the Belize Police Department, the Epidemiology in the Ministry of Health and Wellness), which adversely impact data sharing;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent data management practices, resulting in inefficiencies in data management, particularly due to manual processes that are prone to errors, as well as the lack of proper protocols and procedures for data collection, entry, validation, and reporting; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardization in core data management practices, including data categorization, date entries, georeferencing, recording of details on gender-based violence to support proactive surveillance;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining consistent multi-channel stakeholder communications, both internal and external 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital tools dedicated to ensuring more effective stakeholder communications, and to support implementation of the BCO’s new Advocacy Strategy and Advocacy Plan

3.5 New Growth Industries

Vision

To change the economic landscape of Belize through diversification, standardization and introduction of new and emerging industries, to capitalize on the demand for trending products on the local and international markets and to open new revenue streams for the government while creating jobs and opportunities for Belizeans.

Mission

To create, establish and promote the legislative and operational framework for the introduction, growth and development of new, innovative, trending and productive non-traditional industries and to provide the necessary support for a favourable social, economic and legal environment for those industries to thrive in Belize and external markets.

Results achieved in 2021

The New Growth Industries Unit of the Ministry is relatively new and as such undertook two key initiatives during the year 2021. These initiatives are the Introduction and passing legislation on the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control Bill and the formation of the Cohune Industry Committee. The Ministry anticipates development on these two initiatives in the upcoming year.

Challenges and Gaps

In order to fully execute its vision of changing the economic landscape of Belize through the diversification, standardization and introduction of new and emerging industries there is the need to employ staff for the New Growth Industries Unit. Also needed is adequate office space with the requisite office equipment and resources.

4. Future Priorities and Plans

Table 10: Future Priorities and Plans

No.	ACTIVITY	#PLANBELIZE GOAL	SDG
1.	Belize Police Department Recruit Intake for 2022 (Squad 96)	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
2.	Improve Procedures for addressing Domestic Violence by establish an all-inclusive drop-in resource center.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

3.	The GI3 Unit will develop its own educational anti-gang campaign for schools, the public at large and the business community. The strategy will include the targeting of gang recruitment and the effects of gangs on schools, crime reduction through proactive engagement with affected neighbourhoods in building their trust and also the extortion of the business community.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
4.	The ANU will increase multi agency operations, increase surveillance and intelligence gathering, utilize technology to aid intelligence in order to improve the quality and quantity of their investigations, and analysis capabilities.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
5.	Expand the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) database	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
6.	Establish the Police Cybercrime/Forensic Unit.	4: Citizen Security	9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, 17: Partnerships for the Goals
7.	Sensitization on Cyber Crime Act 2020	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
8.	Amendment of Cybercrime Act 2020 to meet accession of the Budapest Convention	4: Citizen Security 6: Stop Corruption (Good Governance)	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, 17: Partnerships for the Goals
9.	Develop a national capacity for incident response (CIRT)	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, 17: Partnerships for the Goals
10.	Creation of a New Growth Industries Unit	2: Economic Transformation and Growth	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, 17: Partnerships for the Goals
11.	Formulation of a New Growth Industries Strategy	2: Economic Transformation and Growth	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, 17: Partnerships for the Goals
12.	Acquire less than lethal weapons for the Belize Police Department	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
13.	Design an oversight mechanism for Belize Police Department Assets	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
14.	Implement a Gun library for the Belize Police Department	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
15.	Establish a counselling and social support mechanism for the Belize Police Department	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

16.	The BCO will develop a national capacity development plan to strengthen partners across the continuum of justice;	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17
17.	Advance initiative to develop a cross-cutting Crime Intelligence Architecture (CIA), and to establish inter-agency agreements (including MoUs) and data sharing protocols and procedures to support CIA	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17
18.	Advocacy campaigns to address urban violence and youth-involved crimes, as well as gender-based violence, in line with newly developed Advocacy Strategy and Advocacy Plan (2022-2023)	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17
19.	Develop proposals for legislative amendments to the Crime Control and Criminal Justice Act (Chapter 102 of the Laws of Belize), to support the institutionalization of the Belize Crime Observatory and the development of a more robust legal framework for the modernization and full operationalization of the Belize Sex Offenders Registry	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17
20.	Expansion and upgrade of the Integrated Information Management Platform.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17
21.	Training in virtualization and digitalization in crime data and information services.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong, with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17 Institutions, , with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17
22.	Design of Belize's First National Crime Victimization Survey.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17
23.	Implement competency testing, proficiency testing, interlaboratory comparisons, and international certification for forensic experts employed by GOB.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
24.	Implement regular expert witness training and courtroom testimony evaluation for forensic experts employed by GOB.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
25.	Implement annual internal audits at the National Forensic Science Service.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
26.	Design and install an integrated Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) for the Forensic Laboratory.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
27.	Expand the reach and impact of the annual Belize Forensic Science Symposium.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

28.	Conduct annual countrywide stakeholder trainings on topics such as collection of exhibits, exhibit packaging/handling and scope of forensic services.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
29.	Establish interagency taskforces to address specific issues such as Drug Precursor Taskforce, Crime Gun Intelligence Centre, Medicolegal Death Investigation Legislation Working Group, and DNA Legislation Working Group.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
30.	Establish MOUs between National Forensic Science Service and partner entities including KHMH, UB and Galen University.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
31.	Propose legislative amendments to strengthen Misuse of Drugs Act, Coroner's Act, Firearms Act, Evidence Act, and Motor Vehicle and Road Traffic Act in the context of increased reliance on forensic evidence.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
32.	Outsource additional types of forensic analysis as necessary based on demand from clients such as toxicology, arson investigation and questioned documents analysis.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
33.	Create and fill posts to address critical staffing gaps in forensic expert services.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
34.	Install new Scenes of Crime offices in regions of urgent need.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
35.	Maintain and expand forensic vehicle fleet as necessary to respond to countrywide needs including cadaver transport.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
36.	Maintain and upgrade forensic equipment/workspaces that influence the results of technical activities.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
37.	Install histopathology laboratory for National Forensic Science Service to strengthen death investigations.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
38.	Incorporate shooting scene reconstruction into scope of forensic services to assist in homicide investigations.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
39.	Expand scope of Seized Drugs Section at Forensic Laboratory to include weight determination, and identification of hemp, synthetic opioids and precursor chemicals.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
40.	Expand scope of Toxicology Section at Forensic Laboratory to include quantitative analysis of common illicit drugs and prescription drugs in antemortem and postmortem samples.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

41.	Expand scope of Serology Section at Forensic Laboratory to include in-country DNA analysis.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
42.	Conduct needs assessment and architectural design for new Forensic Laboratory and Forensic Morgue to be funded by CABI Belize Integral Security Programme.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
43.	Belize Central Prison will support the documentation and maintain an effective emergency management system and resources respond to Prison emergencies.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
44.	Ensure a comprehensive healthcare monitoring via statistical reports at the Belize Central Prison.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
45.	Ensure that an Inmate Risk and Needs Assessment Management system is implemented at the Belize Central Prison.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
46.	Support the strengthening and improvement of the effectiveness of parole meetings to discuss issues related to the Transition from Prison to Community.	4: Citizen Security	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

5. Staffing and Financial Considerations

Staffing: Ministry Proper

The Departments of the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries were supported in executing their objectives during the year 2021 with the assistance of twenty (20) administrative, financial, and technical staff housed at the Ministry's headquarters.

Staffing: Belize Police Department:

During the year in review the actual strength of the Department remained (2539) Police personnel, and (67) Special Constables. There were also (225) Civilian Staff who assisted in the smooth administration of the Department.

Staffing: National Forensic Science Service:

The National Forensic Science Service is headed by one Executive Director. The Department is comprised of three (3) Units namely the Scenes of Crime (SOC) which consists of (29) SOC technicians, the Medical Examiner's Office (MEO) which consists of (4) personnel and the Forensic Laboratory which is comprised of (22) personnel.

Staffing: Belize Central Prison

The Government of Belize continues to be represented at the Belize Central Prison via the Controller of Prison. He is supported by one Assistant Controller and one Clerk.

Financial Considerations: Weaknesses

1. Pre-approved ceilings set by the Ministry of Finance
2. Deviation away from the budget
3. Underutilization of capital budget
4. Non utilization of the procurement officer
5. No active/tender committee
6. Lack of financial planning/communication at the department level with the Ministry
7. Deviation away from financial Orders/Audit reform Act/Cope Handbook etc. by the Belize Police Department
8. The time lapse in which correspondences are actioned by the Ministry from the Departments
9. Response from the Ministry of Finance for the release of funds/approval of other requests

The desirable changes that would be needed in terms of recurrent financial resources would be a ten percent (10%) increase in the budget as follows:

- 230: PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS
- 231: TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE
- 340: MATERIALS & SUPPLIES
- 341: OPERATING COSTS
- 342: MAINTENANCE COSTS

The desirable changes that would be needed in terms of capital financial resources would be a ten percent (10%) increase. Major project had to be reduced or foregone in the budget due to pre-approved ceiling.

Other important considerations from the Finance Officer of the Ministry are as follows:

1. The Ministry's budget has proven to be sufficient.
2. The Eastern Division budget has proven to be sufficient.
3. The Police Headquarters, Prison Services and the National Forensic Science Services Department budget has proven to be insufficient as follows:
 - 230: PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS
 - 231: TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE
 - 340: MATERIALS & SUPPLIES
 - 341: OPERATING COSTS
 - 342: MAINTENANCE COSTS
 - 349: CONTRACTS & CONSULTANCY

Belize Police Department's Finances

During the year in review the actual strength of the Department remained (2539) Police personnel, and (67) Special Constables. There were also (225) Civilian Staff who assisted in the smooth administration of the Department.

The Belize Police Department's approved Budget for period January 1st, 2021, to December 31st 2021 was \$72,377,698.18. However, a total of \$88,285,035.39 was spent or 121.98% which shows over- expenditure of \$15,907,337.21 or 21.98% in the budget covering the following categories of expenditure:

Personal Emolument	\$59,762,734.11
Travelling & Sub	\$ 747,287.50
Materials and Supplies	\$ 4,387,143.65
Other Operating Cost	\$ 4,116,678.32
Maintenance Cost	\$ 2,461,892.50
Training	\$ 196,468.13
Utility	\$ 689,677.97
Rents and Leases	\$ 15,816.00
TOTAL Budget	<u>\$72,377,698.18</u>
TOTAL SPENT	\$88,285,035.39

The above information shows that 82.57% of the estimated budget was spent on Personal Emoluments, which is a decrease of 1.27% compared to 2020. While rent and leases continue spend the least at .03%, it must be noted that the Operating Cost increased incurring 5.69% of the Budget as well as Maintenance Cost utilizing 3.41% of the Budget compared to 2020. Training expenditure is 0.28% compared to 2020 when it spent 0.26% of the budget. The emphasis must continue towards training of officers in order to assist them in contributing more positively to the Department and to provide even better service to the general public. Utility expense also decreased using 0.96% as compared to 2020 when it used .99% of the Budget.

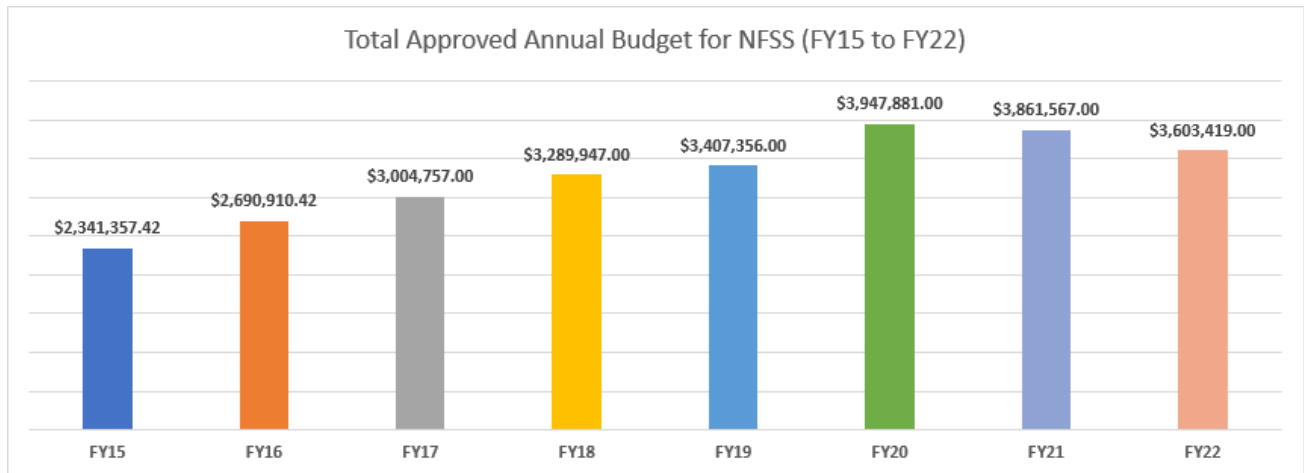
It is obvious that the budget is highly used in the areas of Operating Cost, Maintenance Cost and Materials & Supplies. However, majority of the budget is spent on Personal Emoluments. It must be noted however, that the budget was reduced during the 2021-2022 fiscal year as well as the increment freeze and salary cut.

National Forensic Science Service Finances

Below is the approved budget for the NFSS for 2021 which achieved near to 100% liquidation:

Scenes of Crime	\$1,595,076
Medical Examiner's Office	\$345,777
Forensic Laboratory	\$1,662,566
TOTAL BUDGET	\$3,603,419

Of note, the total combined amount allocated for: **a) forensic materials & supplies, b) maintenance of forensic equipment and c) forensic training**, across the 3 cost centers in 2021 was only \$1,041,582. The below graph of budget trend indicates successive decreases in the annual NFSS budget over the past two fiscal periods. Lastly, attached are recently submitted requests from the NFSS pertaining to staffing and salaries.



6. Conclusions and Recommendations

While the MHANGI records 2021 as a successful year in achievement given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry did not do so without facing its many challenges. As such the Ministry will continue to better its efforts. It is recommended that the compound for the NPTA be further developed to meet international standards which would encourage international trainings and possible sponsorships. Such development would also require that additional living quarters be built for the instructors. There is also a need for a medical facility on the compound to cater for recruits and Officers attending training to avoid the need of going to the hospital. An obstacle course for training is also being recommended so that it can also be utilize by the recruits during training as well Officers from the various tactical teams.

The Ministry will continue to look after the welfare of its personnel and in doing so will make efforts of rehabilitating buildings such as the HNCIB, which suffers from poor lighting condition, the stench from rodents and rat bats, and the overall unhealthy working condition. The health and well-being of every officer is vital and therefore it is the intent of the Ministry to work diligently to ensure a safe and healthy work environment is created. Recommendation is also being made for office space for (3) three fully equipped interview rooms in each region (North, South and West), that will allow for the proper video recording of interviews.

The BPD have been constantly refining its modern policing platform through the building of trust and legitimacy, policy and oversight, effective use of technology and social media, community

policing and crime reduction, officer training and education, and officer safety and wellness. The Department will fortify efforts to incorporate constitutional policing and procedural justice in our training, with the goal of strengthening trust and building greater support among our residents in communities we serve. We have already launched our policies and procedures manual, further reforming our use-of-force policy, narrowing the parameters under which lethal force can be used. The Department will also continue to strengthen its diverse workforce as it seeks to recruit police officer candidates that mirror the ethnic, cultural, and gender demographics of the communities it serves. While there is tremendous progress, the tumultuous events of 2021, called upon the BPD to press forward with greater focus and speed to develop and implement reforms that will build trust in the daily purpose “To Protect and To Serve,” particularly in communities impacted by public safety incidents and influenced by a historical distrust of policing in their neighbourhoods.

For the NFSS, it is recommended that adequate resources be allocated to the Department for the continued establishment of a quality management system which will be the hallmark of reliable forensic services provided to Law Enforcement and the Justice System. Much progress has been made in this regard over recent years, corroborated by independent external assessments by international forensic experts including from the United States Government and from the AC1/ICRIME Project funded by the European Union and Government of Spain and coordinated via SICA with support from FIIAPP. Continued emphasis towards greater reliance on objective forensic evidence from the initial stages of an investigation through to the admission of forensic expert testimony in the courts of law, will have direct and tangible benefits on boosting public confidence in the rule of law and promoting a safer society for all Belizeans.

In keeping in touch with our local, regional, and international partners, the Ministry will continue to strengthen its relations by continuing to act as the gateway for the public and private sector engagement in strategy and program development and implementation.

In conclusion, the Ministry will continue to support the successful implementation of #planBelize into 2022 with a focus on utilizing evidence-based information for policymaking in areas such as police reform, anti-violence interventions, supporting the modernization of services such as the creation of the new growth industries strategy, and improve accountability and transparency within and among all of its departments.

Annex 1. List of publications, proposals, reports, etc. prepared by the Ministry during the year.

1.1 Belize Crime Observatory Informe FY2021

1.2 PADF Belize Forensic Final Report June 2021

Annex 2. Organizational structure of the Ministry

Annex 3. Ministry Programme Expenditure Summary