



International Centre for Criminal Law Reform

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Gap Analysis on Crime Prevention and Response Interventions in CARICOM

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Abbreviations

ACCBP	Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program
AIRCOP	Airport Communication Project
CARICOM	The Caribbean Community and Common Market
CBSA	Canadian Border Services Agency
CBSI	Caribbean Basin Security Initiative
CCGIU	CARICOM Crime Gun Intelligence Unit
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CCSCAP	CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CFATF	Caribbean Financial Action Task Force
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CRDP	Caribbean Regional Development Program
CSJP	Citizen Security and Justice Program
EL PAcCTO	Europe-Latin America Assistance Programme against Transnational Organised Crime
EU	European Union
EU COPOLAD	Cooperation Program between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drug Policy
FPDS	Foreign Policy and Diplomacy Service
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GOCI	Global Organized Crime Index
IDB	Inter American Development Bank
IMPACS	Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
IMPACT Justice	Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean Project
INTERPOL	The International Criminal Police Organization
JRCC	Joint Regional Communications Centre
JURIST	Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening Project
JUST	Justice Undertakings for Social Transformation
MOCA	Major Organized Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency
OAS	Organization of American States
OAS-DTOC	Organization of American States, Department Against Transnational Organized Crime
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PACE Justice	Partnership of the Caribbean and the European Union on Justice

PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PRASC	Project for the Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean
PSOP	Peace and Stabilization Operations Program
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RCSS-CCU	Regional Crime and Security Strategy Central Coordinating Unit
RIFC	Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre
RSS	Regional Security System
SEACOP	Seaport Cooperation Project
So-JUST	Social Justice Project
TRIP	Resilience and Inclusive Peace Project
UK	United Kingdom
UK FCDO	United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNLIREC	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
US / United States	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCO	World Customs Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Report Summary

This report presents the results of a review of the crime situation and a gap analysis on crime prevention and response interventions in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) countries. The main objective of the review is to inform discussions and decisions on the role that Canada can play to help address, at the national and regional levels, the increasing crime levels in the Caribbean. The report offers recommendations in relation to crime prevention interventions to address the risk factors associated with criminal behaviour as well as interventions to respond to criminal activities and reduce future crime through deterrence and offender rehabilitation and reintegration. The review was conducted between October 15, 2023, and March 30, 2024. It covers all CARICOM countries except Haiti.

The review relied on:

1. Existing crime data to identify crime rates and crime trends in the CARICOM countries, including violent crime, youth crime, gender-based crimes, and various threats related to organized transnational crime.
2. Existing national victimization data and public perceptions of crime and public safety data.
3. Available information and data on the effectiveness of law enforcement and criminal justice responses to crime and key crime prevention initiatives in CARICOM countries.
4. Public domain information on existing mechanisms to address security governance and collaboration within the region.
5. Public domain information on the assistance provided by Canada and other donors and international agencies in the areas of public safety, criminal justice reform and capacity building, and crime prevention, and on their development plans.
6. Key informant interviews with 93 stakeholders of the region about ongoing criminal justice and crime prevention initiatives, at the national and regional levels, and perceived priorities and opportunities for further initiatives.

7. Consultations and document review concerning existing programming mechanisms in Canada and Canada's policy engagement at the various missions.

Within the scope of the project, the review team considered several specific questions related to perceived gaps in crime prevention and response interventions in CARICOM. It also considered key crime prevention and response interventions being planned or implemented in CARICOM countries.

Increased violence in CARICOM countries has been attributed to several factors, including structurally weak social protection, the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic, gang competition and fragmentation, changes in the illicit drug market, the availability of firearms, and a relatively high level of impunity for violent crimes. The dramatic increase in recent years in homicidal violence in many Caribbean countries is largely due to the intense competition between gangs over drug markets. However, there is great intraregional variance in the prevalence of violent crime.

Several factors contribute to the proliferation of gangs and gang violence. The lack of economic opportunities, low social cohesion, and weak community resilience are often cited as key drivers of local gang growth. So is transnational organized crime and access to profitable illicit markets.

The analysis identified several gaps in three main areas: (i) measures to strengthen the criminal justice system's responses to crime and deter or reduce it; (ii) measures to control gang violence, transnational organized crime, and emerging crimes; and (iii) measures to prevent violence and crime, including at the school and community levels and measures to prevent recidivism and reintegrate offenders.

Strengthening criminal justice systems

With respect to measures to strengthen the criminal justice system, several areas were identified where Canada may be able to support existing and planned justice reform activities. The main ones were:

- Support a system's approach to justice sector reforms.
- Support the adoption of system-wide performance indicators for the justice systems and the collection and analysis of performance data.

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- Support the development and strengthening of crime observatories, including the regional observatory for OECS countries, as well as the training of crime analysts.
 - Support comprehensive reviews of the charging and charge approval processes and support the implementation of early plea negotiations and agreements schemes.
 - Support juvenile justice reforms, especially in countries that have already initiated the process.
 - Support the implementation of alternatives to pre-trial detention, including more effective bail and bail supervision programs. This is especially important in the case of young offenders.
 - Support the implementation of alternatives to the criminal justice process, such as mediation and restorative justice.
 - Support the implementation of alternatives to detention for default of fine payment (e.g., fine option programs).
 - Support the implementation of community-based sentences and support the development or strengthening of the mechanisms responsible for their management and supervision, such as a probation service.
 - Support the provision of assistance and protection to victims and witnesses of crime.
 - Support law enforcement and prosecution capacity building.
 - Assist initiatives to improve support and protection for victims and witnesses.

Supporting the fight against transnational organized crime, cybercrime and corruption

The review also identified various priorities for international cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime, corruption and emerging serious crimes. These priorities included support for regional cooperation and capacity building initiatives, continued assistance in controlling various illicit markets, most notably firearms and illicit drugs, and human trafficking. Recognizing the particular border protection challenges CARICOM countries are facing, the review identified continued support for improved maritime safety and security as an ongoing need. The review also identified gaps in the capacity of law enforcement to respond effectively to money laundering, financial crime, and cybercrime. Finally, there is a growing concern about crime against the environment and crime related to various resources extraction activities.

International cooperation is key to the success of any attempts to control these transnational crimes and to mitigating their impact. However, regional integration and regional cooperation are very much uneven among CARICOM countries. The review identified a need for Canada to continue to support the work of the RSS and IMPACS, the two main regional mechanisms that can support greater international cooperation.

The continued proliferation of illicit drugs and the related public corruption, as well as the never-ending cycle of gang violence are proof of the relative failure of existing law enforcement strategies to disrupt and counter illicit drug markets. Regional drug control responses may require a greater focus on targeting the national and regional structural vulnerabilities that enable criminal networks and gangs to proliferate. CARICOM countries are already receiving various forms of assistance in that area. It is recommended that Canada should continue to support cargo control programs and continue or expand the support it offers through the Canadian Coastguard and the CBSA.

The training needs identified by review participants are numerous, including training on modern methods of investigation and the use of scientific evidence, major case management, the use of electronic evidence, money laundering and financial crime investigations, assets tracing and criminal and civil forfeiture of assets and proceeds of crime, the investigation and prosecution of criminal conspiracies, cybercrime and corruption, the protection of witnesses and collaborators of justice, and integrity enhancement (anti-corruption). In that respect, the idea that Canada, together with other international partners, should support the development of a regional law enforcement training centre for Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries was mentioned several times during the review.

Coming out of the April Summit of the CARICOM Heads of Government, IMPACS was tasked to establish an entity to address the issue of corruption (Caribbean Task Force), bringing together the more than 18 regional organizations active in that area, including the RSS. Since CARICOM members seem to prefer a regional approach to corruption, supporting the development of such a regional agency is something that should be seriously considered.

Preventing crime and reducing recidivism

The CARICOM Secretariat is presently developing a plan for the implementation of the Declaration of Heads of Government on Crime Prevention. A few countries of the region are leading the way by developing their own crime prevention strategy and/or developing an institutional capacity to provide national leadership in that area. The development of national crime prevention strategies should be encouraged, and Canada could usefully provide assistance to support that process. Youth crime prevention is the main crime prevention priority of countries of the region, but the whole area of education-based crime prevention programs still represents a huge gap in crime prevention programming in the region.

One specific area that requires further attention is how future crime prevention social interventions could integrate the police more explicitly in terms of planning, communication, and coordination of some activities. There is also an obvious programming gap with respect to youth gang recruitment prevention and gang exiting programs.

One of the main goals of Canada's Caribbean Development Program is to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Over the years Canada has offered specific assistance to Caribbean countries to enhance the prevention of gender-based violence and a number of significant lessons can be drawn from that experience. The implementation of a sexual assault court in Guyana, a potential model for other jurisdictions, and the development of the Revised Model Guidelines for Sexual Offence Cases in the Caribbean Region, by the Caribbean Court of Justice (as part of the JURIST Project), are seen as important achievements in the region. UN Women is rolling out several measures to address domestic violence and intimate partner violence. These initiatives deserve continued support from Canada.

The complementary roles of the justice system on the one hand, and the child protection, social welfare, health and education sectors on the other, in creating a protective environment and in preventing and responding to violence against children are not consistently acknowledged in national policies and practices. This is a key crime prevention area which is still not receiving the attention it deserves in most CARICOM countries.

The absence of social reintegration programs is the most glaring gap in the crime prevention efforts of CARICOM countries. This is also an area where Canada has cumulated an

impressive amount of expertise, both at the federal and provincial levels. There is a near total absence in the region of effective rehabilitation and social reintegration programs for offenders. In other words, there are essentially no significant crime prevention programs at the tertiary level. Unsurprisingly, the recidivism rates for offenders who went through the penal system are very high. Prison management and prison population management are mostly deficient, due to a lack of resources, limited training, and poor information management systems (many of them are still manual). Most CARICOM countries have failed to develop adequate community corrections systems, such as probation, community services programs, or parole.

The region's few existing community-based crime prevention programs are typically small and their outcomes are not evaluated. Few of them, if any, are potentially scalable or replicable. Yet, such programs are key to building community resilience to crime and violence. In CARICOM countries as elsewhere, there remains a gap in the stakeholders' understanding of the elements of community resilience to crime and violence and the best means to promote it. This is an area where Canada could support innovative community-based crime prevention programs if it can identify strong community-based partners.

2. Introduction

In the last few years, the Americas have experienced a significant increase in levels of criminality, affecting all regions of the continent. While the crime situation varies among countries, surveys and available statistical data show that crime is a pervasive and pressing issue throughout the Caribbean region, with increasingly higher rates of violent crime, drug trafficking and gang activity. Countries such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago are facing some of the highest murder rates in the world, as well as a high rates of youth and gender-based violence. Crime remains a significant challenge threatening the safety and security of citizens, undermining social and economic development, and eroding public trust in law enforcement and judicial institutions.

In addition to local crimes, CARICOM governments and agencies are challenged to address transnational criminal elements – including for example the trafficking of illicit drugs, firearms, and humans – and coordinate their activities across borders. Caribbean leaders are keenly aware of these challenges and, in April 2023, heads of governments joined a broad range of stakeholders including police commissioners, academics, religious and non-governmental organizations and crime experts to examine the crime problem in the region and approach it as a public health issue that requires a comprehensive crime prevention and reduction approach that is not solely focused on the traditional criminal justice approach of retribution, imprisonment, rehabilitation and restoration.¹

At the recent CANADA-CARICOM Summit, leaders reaffirmed their unwavering friendship, historical and cultural ties, shared economic interests, and a commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law.² They also discussed key security challenges in the region, including illicit trafficking of weapons and drugs, and surging violent crime. With increasing calls from Caribbean leaders for the international community to further engage with them in addressing the crime situation in the region, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), through the Field Services Support Project – Caribbean, hired the services of the International Centre for

¹ The Caribbean Community and Common Market. (2023, April 18). *Declaration by heads of government on crime and violence as a public health issue*. <https://caricom.org/declaration-by-heads-of-government-on-crime-and-violence-as-a-public-health-issue/>

² Office of the Prime Minister of Canada. (2023, October 19). *CANADA-CARICOM Summit Joint Communiqué*. <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2023/10/19/canada-caricom-summit-joint-communique>

Criminal Law Reform (ICCLR) to examine the current state of crime in CARICOM member states and conduct a gap analysis on crime prevention and criminal justice response interventions.

The assessment reviewed crime rates and trends as well as the nature of the key public safety threats faced by CARICOM countries. It also reviewed existing and planned interventions by governments, partner organizations, and civil society groups to respond to serious and violent crimes and identifies key gaps in that response. The main objective of the review was to inform discussions and decisions on Canada's role in helping CARICOM countries, either at the national and regional levels, tackle the issue of increasing crime levels in the Caribbean.

This report presents the results of that review and offers suggestions concerning crime prevention interventions to address the risk factors associated with criminal behaviour as well as interventions to respond to criminal activities and reduce future crime through deterrence and offender rehabilitation and reintegration.

3. Background

While the crime situation varies among countries, available data show that crime is a pervasive and pressing issue throughout the Caribbean region, with increasingly higher rates of violent crime, drug and firearms trafficking, and gang activity. Several countries of the region are facing some of the highest murder rates in the world³, as well as a high prevalence of youth violence and domestic or gender-based violence⁴. The rate of violent deaths in CARICOM member states is almost three times the global average. Firearms are used in more than half of all homicides in the whole Caribbean region, and in some countries this

³ Appleby, P., Dalby, C., Doherty, S., Mistler-Ferguson, S. & Shuldiner, H. (2023, February 8). *InSight crime's 2022 homicide round-up*. InSight Crime. <https://insightcrime.org/news/insight-crime-2022-homicide-round-up/> ;

⁴ Perdrix, C. (2023, March 8). Tackling armed domestic violence in the Caribbean and Central America. [Tackling Armed Domestic Violence in the Caribbean and Central America/La lutte contre la violence domestique armée dans les Caraïbes et en Amérique centrale | by small arms survey | Medium](#); United Nations Population Fund - Caribbean Sub-Regional Office. *Gender Based Violence*. <https://caribbean.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-based-violence-16>; UN Women, *GBV In the Caribbean*. https://caribbean.unwomen.org/en/caribbean-gender-portal/caribbean-gbv-law-portal/gbv-in-the-caribbean#_ftn4

proportion reaches 90 percent.⁵ In addition to crimes at the national level, CARICOM governments and agencies are facing complex challenges in addressing transnational criminal threats – including for example trafficking in illicit drugs, firearms, and humans – and coordinating their activities across borders.

Despite various efforts by Caribbean countries, with support from regional and international partners to address the problem, crime remains a significant challenge threatening the safety and security of citizens, undermining social and economic development, and eroding public trust in law enforcement and judicial institutions. Crime creates uncertainty and fear within societies and inhibits citizens' capacities in the production of goods and services that optimally build and benefit their society. One estimate of the cost of crime in the Caribbean places it at 20% of the GDP.⁶ The heavy cost of crime among Caribbean countries is driven primarily by the subregion's high levels of violent crime.⁷ These costs impact all levels of society: "individuals change their behavior to avoid (or engage in) criminal activity, households and businesses spend to protect themselves from crime, firms reduce their levels of investment and incur productivity losses, and governments shift the allocation of resources to tackle the associated problems."⁸ Another study of the economic costs of violence against women and girls in Jamaica highlighted the range of direct and indirect costs of such violence, including costs on the healthcare, police, justice and social welfare systems.⁹ Additionally, crime leads highly trained people to emigrate. According to one assessment, being a victim of a crime increases a respondent's desire to emigrate by over 5 percentage

⁵ Fabre, A.-S., Florquin, V., Karp, A., & Schroeder, M. (2023). *Weapons compass: The Caribbean firearms study*. Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/CARICOM-IMPACS-SAS-Caribbean-Firearms-Study.pdf>

⁶ Jaitman, L. & Torre, I. (2017). Estimation of the Direct Costs of Crime and Violence. In Jaitman, L. (Ed.) (2017). *The Costs of Crime and Violence: New Evidence and Insights in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Inter-American Development Bank. pp. 19-29.

⁷ Sutton, H. (2017). Unpacking the High Cost of Crime in the Caribbean: Violent Crime, the Private Sector, and the Government Response. In Jaitman, L. (Ed.) (2017). *The Costs of Crime and Violence: New Evidence and Insights in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Inter-American Development Bank. pp. 79-88, p. 87.

⁸ Jaitman, L. Keefer, P. (2017). Why is the estimation of the costs of crime important? A research agenda to support crime prevention policies in the region. In Jaitman, L. (Ed.) (2017). *The Costs of Crime and Violence: New Evidence and Insights in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Inter-American Development Bank. pp. 19-29.

⁹ UN Women (2022). National Study on The Economic Costs of Violence Against Women and Girls in Jamaica. Spotlight initiative. https://caribbean.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/20230302%20National%20Study%20on%20the%20Economic%20Costs_interactive_F.pdf

points.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, the three CARICOM countries that lost the highest percentages of their GDP to crime in 2017 were those with the highest levels of violent crime: The Bahamas, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.¹¹

Canada has been providing multifaceted support to countries of the region to address the pressing issue of crime and foster safer communities. Recognizing the far-reaching implications of crime on both social and economic stability, Canada has delivered critical support to the region along a range of diplomatic, capacity building, relationship management, and legislative efforts. This included but was not limited to assistance to enhance the capacity of security institutions (including law enforcement, military, and intelligence) across the region to counter crime in all its forms; efforts to strengthen judicial, legislative, and criminal justice systems; and efforts to promote effective community crime prevention strategies.

Through its Caribbean Regional Development Program, Canada has emphasized the importance of strengthening the justice systems in the Caribbean by improving access to justice, reducing court case backlogs, and promoting greater transparency and accountability in the judicial process. In this regard, Canada has funded multiple security and justice sector reforms over the last three decades. These included specific development projects such as the Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening project (JURIST), Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean project (IMPACT Justice), Justice Undertakings for Social Transformation (JUST), Citizen Security and Justice Program (CSJP) and the new Social Justice project (So-JUST). Canada's support to justice reform has focussed on strengthening and improving access to justice by supporting the legal framework, legal services delivery, restorative justice, alternative dispute resolution systems formation and court modernization through judicial training, public engagement, knowledge management and technology. Some of these initiatives have been evaluated and have yielded lessons for future assistance programming.

¹⁰ Wong, J. & Ramakrishnan, U. (2017). *Crime and Youth Unemployment in the Caribbean*. International Monetary Fund. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/11/13/na111417-crime-and-youth-unemployment-in-the-caribbean>.

¹¹ Sutton, H. (2017). Unpacking the High Cost of Crime in the Caribbean: Violent Crime, the Private Sector, and the Government Response. In Jaitman, L. (Ed.)(2017). *The Costs of Crime and Violence: New Evidence and Insights in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Inter-American Development Bank. pp. 79-88, p. 87.)

Several other countries, security agencies and international development partners have also been supporting CARICOM countries either through bilateral, multilateral or regional programs, including the UK, the EU, the US as well as various UN agencies, the OAS, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and many others.

4. Method

4.1 Scope of the Review

In keeping with a desire to look at this issue in a comprehensive way, the review aims to identify the gaps and provide recommendations in relation to: (1) crime prevention through interventions designed to address the main risk factors associated with criminal behavior and prevent crime, including domestic and gender-based violence; and, (2) crime deterrence and response, through interventions within the judicial and law enforcement systems, designed to stop and reduce existing criminal activities and reduce future crimes.

4.2 Countries Covered by the Review

The following Member States of CARICOM comprise the scope of the study. The study excludes Associate Members of CARICOM, and Haiti per the terms of reference. Note that non-ODA eligible states are included as interventions through Canadian non-ODA modalities are included in the analysis.

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Bahamas (Non-ODA)
- Barbados (Non-ODA)
- Belize
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Jamaica

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- Montserrat
 - Saint Kitts and Nevis (Non-ODA)
 - Saint Lucia
 - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
 - Suriname
 - Trinidad and Tobago (Non-ODA)

The main focus of the review is on violent crime (with specific attention to homicide, gender-based violence, and violence against children), youth crime, organized transnational crime (including firearms trafficking, human trafficking, drug trafficking and money laundering), cybercrime, and corruption.

4.3 Data Collection

The review was conducted between October 15, 2023, and January 30, 2024.

The review relied on:

1. Existing crime data to identify crime rates and crime trends in the CARICOM countries, including violent crime, youth crime, gender-based crimes, and various threats related to organized transnational crime.
2. Existing national victimization data and data on public perceptions of crime and public safety.
3. Available information and data on the effectiveness of law enforcement and criminal justice responses to crime and key crime prevention initiatives in CARICOM countries, including the priorities identified in the CARICOM Declaration by Heads of Government on Crime and Violence as a Public Health Issue.
4. Public domain information on existing mechanisms to address security governance and collaboration within the region.
5. Public domain information on the development plans and assistance provided by Canada, other donors, and international agencies in the areas of public safety,

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- criminal justice reform, institutional capacity building, and crime prevention, with a particular attention to program evaluation findings.
6. Key informant interviews with main stakeholders of the region about ongoing criminal justice and crime prevention initiatives, at the national and regional levels, and perceived priorities and opportunities for further assistance programming.
 7. Consultations and review of documents concerning existing programming mechanisms in Canada and Canada's policy engagement at the various missions.

Out of the 221 people contacted for an interview, a total of 93 participated in the interviews (see Appendix 1). The confidential semi-structured interviews conducted online with key stakeholders covered the following main themes:

- The role of their respective organizations
- The violence and crime challenges faced by countries
- Availability of crime data and criminal justice data
- Whether the country's national development plan recognizes the importance of crime and violence prevention and criminal justice reform, and how so.
- The nature and status of national crime prevention and criminal justice initiatives in the country (and assistance received from development partners)
- Future plans for further crime prevention and criminal justice and anticipated implementation challenges
- Lessons learned about effective programming in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice
- Perceived priorities for action within the country or within the respondent's organization
- Current initiatives to promote international law enforcement and criminal justice cooperation with other countries of the region and beyond, and perceived challenges
- Perceived gaps in the assistance presently received in support of crime and violence prevention initiatives and opportunities for more effective interventions

4.4 Analysis of Crime Data

The review included an examination of available data on the prevalence of serious and violent crimes as well as crime trends in CARICOM countries. Crimes recorded by national law enforcement agencies are one source of data used below in Section 5 to identify trends. Homicide data are particularly reliable and are therefore relied upon as a key indicator of violence. While worldwide homicide rates slowly drop, Central America and the Caribbean stand out as remaining high, with significant increases in 2021 and 2022 in the Caribbean.¹² However, while homicide data in the Caribbean are relatively reliable, data on other serious crimes are much less so. Crime statistics in CARICOM states have been characterized as “(...) fragmented, inconsistent, and aggregated only to the most macro-levels. The lack of information and weak national statistics systems on crime thwarts accurate diagnosis, monitoring, and evaluation of crime and interventions to counter it.”¹³ Improving statistical systems has been a focus of Canadian, USAID and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) interventions and remains a priority for countries of the region.

Victimization survey data can complement official crime data. Victimization surveys, although relatively scarce in Caribbean countries, fill gaps in police data by surveying a sample of the population and attempting to capture all incidences of crime, including those that go unreported. For example, an IDB study reviewed victimization data from two primary data-generation initiatives undertaken in 2014/2015 by the IDB: (1) A Caribbean Crime Victimization Survey module attached to the Latin American Public Opinion Project Survey; and (2) a business victimization module attached to the 2014 Productivity, Technology and Innovation Survey. The central analysis of the victimization of citizens was focused on the capital city metropolitan areas—where crime is generally higher—in five Caribbean countries: New Providence, The Bahamas; Bridgetown, Barbados; Kingston, Jamaica; Paramaribo, Suriname; and Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

¹² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2019). *Global Study on Homicide: Homicide Trends, Patterns, and Criminal Justice Response*, 2019. <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet2.pdf>, p. 42; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *Global Study on Homicide 2023*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/2023/Global_study_on_homicide_2023_web.pdf, p. 29.

¹³ Jaitman, L. (2019). Frontiers in the economics of crime: lessons for Latin America and the Caribbean. *Lat Am Econ Rev* 28(19). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40503-019-0081-5>

According to that IDB review, only 53% of non-homicide crimes were reported to police.¹⁴ While this is aligned with the international average, it demonstrates the shortcomings of relying on national police statistics alone. Violent crimes such as assaults were the least likely crimes to be reported to the police in comparison to property crimes, a concern since the rate of victimization by assault was higher than in any other world region, including Latin America. The victimization survey data also drew attention to the key risk and protective factors associated with violence and their prevalence in the Caribbean and how the cycle of violence begins in the home when children witness and experience violence. The survey also examined attitudes on violence in the home in the Caribbean and found tolerance of violence to be significantly higher than elsewhere in Latin America.

Victimization surveys also provide important insights on how to target crime reduction interventions. For example, respondents in those two IDB surveys were more often attacked or threatened by someone they knew than by a stranger, and most violent crimes were committed in the victim's own neighbourhood. Further, a relatively high number of repeat victimizations suggested a small percentage of the population was disproportionately experiencing crime. For these reasons, victimization surveys and public opinion research were assessed in addition to national crime data to present a more fulsome picture of crime trends in the Caribbean.

Victimization and public opinion surveys are also a helpful source of information for identifying constituent priorities and the most pressing issues to be addressed by policy makers. The IDB data examined victim satisfaction with the treatment of their case, public confidence in the police, and public perceptions of the performance and effectiveness of the police and the judicial system.¹⁵ The level of public confidence in these institutions, particularly the police, seems to be relatively low in the five countries in which the survey was conducted.

Other research confirms that law enforcement agencies in Caribbean countries have been struggling with low levels of public confidence. It appears that public confidence in the police

¹⁴ Sutton, H. & Ruprah, I. (Eds.). (2017). *Restoring paradise in the Caribbean: Combatting violence with numbers*. Inter-American Development Bank. <https://publications.iadb.org/en/restoring-paradise-caribbean-combatting-violence-numbers>

The crimes measured were car theft, burglary, robbery, personal theft, and assault and threat of assault.

¹⁵ Sutton, H. & Ruprah, I. (Eds.). (2017). *Restoring paradise in the Caribbean: Combatting violence with numbers*. Inter-American Development Bank. <https://publications.iadb.org/en/restoring-paradise-caribbean-combatting-violence-numbers>

is driven not only by actual crime and fear of crime but also by other variables such as community cohesion, social problems, and informal social control.¹⁶ It is also influenced by public perception of police treatment and use of force.¹⁷ Other data reveals that police density in the Caribbean is relatively high, but police capacity to investigate and identify perpetrators of the most severe violent crimes is low.¹⁸ For example, prison data suggest that offenders who are caught and convicted were involved in non-violent crimes, specifically drug offences and theft.¹⁹

5. Crime Trends and Public Safety Threats

The Caribbean population typically identifies crime and insecurity as key problems facing their countries. In several Caribbean countries, crime continues to rise sharply, including recent homicide rates. Lack of security persists as a pressing public concern. Based on survey data from 114 countries between 2016 and 2021, an average of 69 percent of respondents reported feeling safe or very safe walking alone around the area they live after dark, however respondents in Latin America and the Caribbean felt least safe, at only 36 percent.²⁰

This section offers a snapshot of criminal threats and crime trends in CARICOM countries. It successively examines violent crime (including homicide, gang violence, youth crime, violence against children, and gender-based violence), transnational organized crime (including arms trafficking, drug trafficking, human trafficking and smuggling, and financial crime and money laundering), cybercrime, and corruption.

¹⁶ Baek, H., Han, S., & Seepersad, R. (2020). Why do People's complaints still fall on the police? Confidence in the police in Trinidad and Tobago. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 60, 100360.

¹⁷ Kuhns, J.B., Johnson, D.J., & King, W.R. (2011). Resident perceptions of police mistreatment and use of force in a troubled Trinidadian neighborhood. *Journal of Crime Justice*, 34(3),234–249.

¹⁸ Sutton, H. & Alvarez, L. (2017). The Police and Criminal Justice System. In Sutton, H. & Ruprah, I. (Eds.). (2017). *Restoring paradise in the Caribbean: Combatting violence with numbers*. Inter-American Development Bank. <https://publications.iadb.org/en/restoring-paradise-caribbean-combatting-violence-numbers>, pp. 141-162.

¹⁹ Idem, p. 158.

²⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, & United Nations Development Program. (2023). *Global progress report on Sustainable Development Goal 16 indicators: A wake-up call for action on peace, justice and inclusion*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/sdgs/SDG16_2023.pdf, p. 27.

5.1 Violent Crime

The recent surge in violence in the Caribbean has alarmed national leaders and prompted a discussion on the causal factors. For example, at a special meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) in November 2023, the attorney-general and minister of legal affairs for Trinidad and Tobago attributed increasing murder rates to the fragmentation of competing gangs and high firearm availability.²¹ He further highlighted that 70% of violence in Jamaica is attributable to criminal organizations, but crucially, the situation is no longer unique to only the most populous Caribbean states.

There is great intraregional variance in the prevalence of violent crime. For example, Jamaica recorded the highest homicide rate in the world in 2021, 52 of 100,000 people, while Grenada recorded a rate below the world average at 4 of 100,000 people.²²

Increased violence in CARICOM countries has been attributed to several factors, including structurally weak social protection, the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic, gang competition and fragmentation, changes in the illicit drug market, the availability of firearms, and a relatively high level of impunity for violent crimes.²³ Gang related violence is itself often attributed to a subculture of violence in the Caribbean.²⁴ Some research attributes high rates of violence to a combination of social structure and a culture of violence, which has permeated the region as a consequence of its legacy of colonialism.²⁵ Normalization of violence is explored further below, particularly in relation to gang violence and gender-based violence.

²¹ Sandars, R. (2023, November 2). A call to arms against the surge of gang violence. *Caribbean News Global*. <https://caribbeannewsglobal.com/a-call-to-arms-against-the-surge-of-gang-violence>

²² World Bank. (n.d.). *Intentional Homicides (per 100,000 people)*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRC.P5> Note that the global average was 6 intentional homicides of 100,000 people in 2021.

²³ United Nations Development Program. (2023, August 31). *An Epidemic on the Move: The Shifting Landscape of Citizen Security in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.undp.org/latin-america/blog/epidemic-move-shifting-landscape-citizen-security-latin-america-and-caribbean>

²⁴ Hill, S. & Morris, P. (2017). Drug Trafficking and Gang Violence in the Caribbean. In Raymond Izarali, M. (Ed.), *Crime, Violence and Security in the Caribbean* (1st ed.), Routledge, pp. 52 – 75, p. 65.

²⁵ Katz, C. M., Cheon, H., Freemon, K., and Nuno, L. E. (2023). Delinquency, drug use, and gang membership in the English-speaking Caribbean. *Children and Youth Services Review* 144, Article 106758. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740922003942>

Homicide

Global homicide rates have gradually decreased over the last decade yet remained steadily high or increased in CARICOM countries.²⁶ Many of the countries with the highest homicide rates in the world are in the Caribbean, though the intensity and scale of homicidal violence are unevenly distributed. In 2022, while the global homicide rate was 6.1 per 100,00 population, Jamaica had the highest rate worldwide at 53.3, and six other CARICOM states had a rate above 25 per 100,000 population: the Bahamas (31.2); Belize (27.9); Saint Kitts and Nevis (29.4²⁷); Saint Lucia (36.7); Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (40.4), Trinidad and Tobago (39.5). Regionally, Central America previously held the highest level of homicides in Latin America and the Caribbean. This has shifted in the past few years with South America and the Caribbean experiencing a spike.²⁸

**Table 1: Homicide Level in CARICOM Countries
(Total number and rate per 100,000 population)**

Source: UNODC (2023). *Global Study on Homicide*. New York: United Nations.

	2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Homicides	Rate	Homicides	Rate	Homicides	Rate	Homicides	Rate
Antigua & Barbuda	3	3.3	9	9.7	16	17.2	-	-
Bahamas	95	23.5	73	18.0	119	29.2	128	31.2
Barbados	48	17.1	41	14.6	32	11.4	43	15.3
Belize	134	34.4	102	25.8	125	31.3	113	27.9
Dominica	13	18.2	15	20.8	10	13.8	-	-

²⁶ World Bank. (n.d.). *Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals 2023, 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*. <https://datatopics.worldbank.org/sdgateas/goal-16-peace-justice-and-strong-institutions?lang=en>

²⁷ Latest data available is from 2021.

²⁸ United Nations Development Program. (2023, August 31). *An Epidemic on the Move: The Shifting Landscape of Citizen Security in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.undp.org/latin-america/blog/epidemic-move-shifting-landscape-citizen-security-latin-america-and-caribbean>

Grenada	16	13.0	14	11.3	5	4.0	-	-
Guyana	136	17.0	157	19.7	131	16.3	-	-
Jamaica	1,340	47.6	1,333	47.3	1,474	52.1	1,508	53.3
Montserrat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saint-Kitts & Nevis	12	25.2	10	21.0	14	29.4	-	-
Saint Lucia	46	25.8	52	29.0	70	39.0	66	36.7
Saint Vincent & Grenadines	19	18.1	33	31.5	32	30.7	42	40.4
Suriname	30	5.0	55	9.1	35	5.7	45	7.3
Trinidad and Tobago	539	35.5	399	26.3	448	29.4	605	39.5

The drivers of elevated homicide rates in the Caribbean are multifaceted. According to the UNODC Global Study on Homicide, “persistently high levels of lethal violence in the region are attributed to complex dynamics relating to criminal groups competing for control over illegal markets, structural issues like weak rule of law, social inequality and youth unemployment, and factors such as record-breaking drug production and firearms.”²⁹ The association between high homicide rates and firearm access cannot be understated: Some CARICOM countries record the highest proportion of gun-related homicides globally.

Regarding gang competition over illicit markets, recent observations underscore this factor’s significant impact on rising homicide rates. In Jamaica, for instance, the homicide rate reached 53.3 per 100,000 in 2022, with some attributing about 70% of homicides to organized criminal groups or gangs in 2021, as mentioned above. The homicide rate in Trinidad and Tobago rose to 39.5 per 100,000 in 2022, an increase of more than 30 per cent from the previous year, largely due to the splintering of large gangs into smaller violent

²⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *Global Study on Homicide 2023*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/2023/Global_study_on_homicide_2023_web.pdf, p. 9.

factions. The homicide rate reached 31.2 per 100,000 in the Bahamas in 2022, due in large part to deepening tensions associated with gang-violence.³⁰ Gang violence is expanded on below.

Gang Violence

While there is no Caribbean-wide definition of street gangs, common features include a group identity, often reinforced through the use of a gang name, symbols, signs, and ways of talking; a pattern of criminal activity; street-orientation, meaning members spend significant time in public places away from home; and continuing existence after membership turnover.³¹ However, street gangs vary from country to country in the Caribbean, including by level of organization. For example, data from Trinidad and Tobago indicates that fewer than half of street gangs had an identifiable leader, while in Jamaica gangs tended to be more hierarchically organized with a leader and upper echelon of members.³² Therefore, while commonalities are useful for discussing this type of criminal group, localized differences must be acknowledged and studied to design effective interventions.

Street gangs are distinguished from transnational organized crime groups by several features. Katz notes that while hierarchical organization does occur in street gangs, they are limited in their centralized leadership compared to organized crime groups.³³ Organized crime groups manage wider trafficking of drugs while street gang members more frequently operate ‘on the ground’ conducting neighbourhood-level drug sales. Further, organized crime groups tend to exploit relationships with the powerful, utilizing corruption to facilitate their criminal enterprises. Additionally, Katz finds that organized crime groups are largely economically motivated, while street gang members are likely also motivated by status within

³⁰ Idem, p. 104. See also: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *Homicide and Organized Crime in Latin America and the Caribbean*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/2023/GSH_2023_LAC_web.pdf

³¹ Hill, S. (2013). The Rise of Gang Violence in the Caribbean. In Seepersad, R. & Bissessar, A. M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean* (pp. 36 - 79). Cambridge Scholars Publishing, p. 7 - 11; Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society* (pp. 1 - 27). The University of West Indies Press, p. 3.

³² Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society* (pp. 1 - 27). The University of West Indies Press, p. 8.

³³ Idem, p. 3-4.

the community. While distinct, the two types of groups do interact, such as when transnational criminal organizations utilize street gangs to carry out local operations.

Geographically, murders due to gang violence tend to be concentrated in a few areas rather than distributed evenly throughout a city or a country.³⁴ In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, specific areas are increasingly insecure due to a critical level of violent crime and some business report increased security expenses. While 45 percent of murders are gang-related, these murders were concentrated in the Port of Spain, Western, North (Central) and Northern police divisions.³⁵

Gangs' contribution to violence has been an issue of great concern in the Caribbean for decades (in the case of Jamaica since the 1950s, and in Trinidad and Tobago and Belize since the early 1990s).³⁶ Several studies have since demonstrated a significant link between gang activity and high levels of homicide in the Caribbean.³⁷ For example, Katz and Fox found a strong relationship between the presence of gangs and community levels of homicide when comparing police data on the number of gangs per police station district with homicide data.³⁸ Specifically, they found that homicides increased by 0.4% for every additional gang member in a community, and by 10% for every additional gang. In Trinidad and Tobago, a nationwide study funded by the Ministry of National Security examined both police and self-reported data and found that gang members were seven times more likely than non-gang members to be involved in violence.³⁹ These are just a few examples in a growing body of research over the last two decades that reveals gang violence as a core contributor to the rising homicides rate in the Caribbean.

³⁴ Hill, S. & Morris, P. (2017). Drug Trafficking and Gang Violence in the Caribbean. In Raymond Izarali, M. (Ed.), *Crime, Violence and Security in the Caribbean* (1st ed., pp. 52 - 75). Routledge, p. 68.

³⁵ Seepersad, R. (2024). Gangs in Trinidad and Tobago, *unpublished*.

³⁶ Hill, S. & Morris, P. (2017). Drug Trafficking and Gang Violence in the Caribbean. In Raymond Izarali, M. (Ed.), *Crime, Violence and Security in the Caribbean* (1st ed., pp. 52 - 75). Routledge, p. 64 - 65.

³⁷ Baird, Adam (2020). From Vulnerability to Violence: Gangs and homicide booms in Trinidad and Belize. *Urban Crime - An International Journal*, 1(2), 76-97.

³⁸ Katz, C. M., and A. M. Fox. (2010). Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Gang Involved Youth in a Caribbean Nation: Analysis of the Trinidad and Tobago Youth Survey. *Pan-American Journal of Public Health*, 27(3), 187-202. <https://www.scielo.org/pdf/rpsp/2010.v27n3/187-202/en>

³⁹ Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society* (pp. 1 - 27). The University of West Indies Press, p. 10.

Several factors contribute to the proliferation of gangs and gang violence.⁴⁰ Four of these are discussed in the following paragraphs: transnational illicit market flows, gang fragmentation or leadership struggles, community vulnerability (including low economic opportunities and social cohesion), and cultural norms reifying gang life and violence. Firstly, Baird and colleagues observed that “It is unsurprising that many gang-afflicted communities in the Caribbean are located along international trafficking routes”.⁴¹ There is consensus in the region that transnational flows of drugs and firearms played a significant role in rising local gang violence. As weapons and a larger drug trade entered communities, gang members had to increasingly adopt firearms to keep pace with competitors. Even where local gangs previously existed, members were expected to demonstrate aggression far beyond past standards.⁴²

However, transnational illicit flows provide only a partial explanation for local gang violence, as the intensity of violence varies dramatically along the supply chain.⁴³ The UNODC recently found that the relationship between homicide and organized crime is not always linear, as spikes in violence can frequently be attributed to changes in the power of gangs rather than their presence alone.⁴⁴ As inter-factional violence intensifies and state security forces seek to disrupt gang leadership, the composition of the gangs changes. In Trinidad and Tobago, for instance, the Strategic Services Agency of the Ministry of National Security noted the effect of the elimination of gang leaders by gang rivals or their incarceration for prolonged periods on the leadership of criminal gangs.⁴⁵ The emergence of younger and more violent leaders and the fragmentation of existing gangs have been accompanied by animosity between them. Trinidadian gangs have also diversified into new types of illegal business, from fraud and money laundering to robbery, human smuggling and illegal gambling.⁴⁶ In Jamaica, it appears that the law enforcement crackdown strategy in the early 2010s led to the

⁴⁰ In addition to factors at the individual and family that increase risk of engaging in crime generally.

⁴¹ Baird, A., Bishop, M. L., & Kerrigan, D. (2022). “Breaking bad”? Gangs, masculinities, and murder in Trinidad. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22(4), 632–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1931395>, p. 633.

⁴² Idem, p. 645.

⁴³ Idem, p. 633.

⁴⁴ Pan American Health Organization. (2020). *Preventing and responding to violence against children in the Americas: Regional status report 2020*. https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/53038/9789275122945_eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y, p. 13.

⁴⁵ Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of National Security, Strategic Services Agency, *Annual Report 2021* (2021).

⁴⁶ Idem.

splintering of gangs, which expanded their activities to rural areas. The number of gangs is reported to have doubled in the country from 191 in 2010 to at least 389 in 2019.⁴⁷

Further, crucial variables at the community level are economic opportunity and social cohesion. Beginning with economic opportunity, unemployment (including as a result of poor education and illiteracy), poverty, and inequality have been found as core forces behind gang formation across Caribbean communities.⁴⁸ Youth unemployment in particular is identified as a key cause of elevated gang-involvement in the Caribbean. A joint USAID and UNICEF publication found that poverty and unemployment is one of the most frequently perceived causes of youth crime,⁴⁹ and an IMF funded review confirmed that low economic opportunities for young people increase their vulnerability to gang membership.⁵⁰ The 2008 global financial crisis especially impacted the unemployment rate for persons between 15 and 24 years old in the Caribbean.⁵¹ In 11 Caribbean countries prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, all but two had youth (15 - 24 years) unemployment rates that doubled the overall rate.⁵² COVID-19 then exacerbated unemployment, especially for Caribbean economies that are less diverse and depend on the rebound of the tourism industry.⁵³

Social cohesion in communities, even those with low economic opportunity, also contributes to gang vulnerability. When community support and formal and informal social controls are lacking, a void is created that can be filled by street gangs who fulfill some social purposes. For example, Katz found that gangs became ingrained in the social fabric of certain Jamaican

⁴⁷ Caribbean Policy Research Institute. (2020) *Guns Out: The Splintering of Jamaica's Gangs*. <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1677204/february-2020-i-r2002/2408853/>

⁴⁸ Hill, S. & Morris, P. (2017). Drug Trafficking and Gang Violence in the Caribbean. In Raymond Izarali, M. (Ed.), *Crime, Violence and Security in the Caribbean* (1st ed., pp. 52 - 75). Routledge, p. 65-66; Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society* (pp. 1 - 27). The University of West Indies Press, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Wood, J., Nartea, A., & Bishop, S. (2020). *The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and young people in the Eastern Caribbean Area*. United States Agency for International Development and United Nations Children's Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/media/2311/file/The%20socio-economic%20impact.pdf>

⁵⁰ Wong, J. & Ramakrishnan, U. (2017). *Crime and Youth Unemployment in the Caribbean*. International Monetary Fund. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/11/13/na111417-crime-and-youth-unemployment-in-the-caribbean>

⁵¹ Idem.

⁵² Wood, J., Nartea, A., & Bishop, S. (2020). *The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and young people in the Eastern Caribbean Area*. United States Agency for International Development and United Nations Children's Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/media/2311/file/The%20socio-economic%20impact.pdf>, p. 9.

⁵³ Idem, p. 3.

communities in which traditional community cohesion and social controls had deteriorated, to the extent that some street gangs were relied upon to maintain a degree of local order and services.⁵⁴ Conditions of vulnerability stem from historic patterns of exclusion, legacies of colonialism (including of slavery and modern race dynamics) and contemporary failures for equitable development.⁵⁵

Finally, cultural norms play a role in involvement in gangs that cannot be underestimated: A culture of hyper-masculinity and gang glorification drives up membership. Baird and his colleagues contend that “the gang version of masculinity” is perceived as aspirational as it outperforms other male identities in terms of economic opportunity, status and belonging, and attraction of women.⁵⁶ Others have observed that gender norms emphasizing militarism and aggressive masculinity for men and boys actively maintain criminal enterprises in the Caribbean.⁵⁷ These norms not only subjugate women, but also men who do not participate in violence. Crucially, norms found in the region delegitimize alternative options to gang life.⁵⁸ This demonstrates the need for deconstructing collective ideas of masculinity and encouraging alternative masculinities, alongside initiatives that address transnational illicit markets, economic equity, community vulnerabilities, and familial and individual risk factors.

Youth Crime

The discussion of street gangs is incomplete without observing that youth are a core demographic of their members. In fact, youth are so characteristic of gang membership that they are embedded in some definitions of ‘gang’ in the Caribbean. For example, Katz frequently relies on a definition that explicitly states gangs are a “durable street-oriented

⁵⁴ Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society* (pp. 1 - 27). The University of West Indies Press, p. 11.

⁵⁵ Baird, A., Bishop, M. L., & Kerrigan, D. (2022). “Breaking bad”? Gangs, masculinities, and murder in Trinidad. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22(4), 632–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1931395>, p. 633.

⁵⁶ Idem, p. 647.

⁵⁷ Papworth, E. & Hunegs, K. (2023, November 2). *Gang Violence and the WPS Agenda: Analyzing Gendered Realities in Central America and the Caribbean*. International Peace Institute Global Observatory. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2023/11/gang-violence-and-the-wps-agenda-analyzing-gendered-realities-in-central-america-and-the-caribbean/>

⁵⁸ Baird, A., Bishop, M. L., & Kerrigan, D. (2022). “Breaking bad”? Gangs, masculinities, and murder in Trinidad. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22(4), 632–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1931395>, p. 646.

youth group” involved in illegal activity [emphasis added].⁵⁹ The following section will expand on youth crime in the context of both gang and non-gang crime. Gender dynamics of youth involved in crime are also discussed.

The population in the Caribbean is slightly younger than that of Canada, with youth aged 0 - 24 years comprising a third of the Eastern Caribbean population.⁶⁰ In addition, it appears that youth are disproportionately represented in crime involvement. Delinquent behavior represents a serious concern in the Caribbean.⁶¹ Victimization data and police data show that youth and young adults are overrepresented both among victims and those arrested and imprisoned for crime, in comparison to their proportion of the population⁶². Data on perpetrators’ profiles (e.g., age, gender) is more limited than on the victims of crime, but the IDB finds that a disproportionate number of those arrested for homicides are youth (aged 18 - 25) and young adults (aged 26 - 35), and perpetrators of assault are also most likely to be young, low-income males.⁶³

In Jamaica, for example, youth are most often the perpetrators and victims of crime and violence. The National Youth Policy reveals that about 15 percent of students between ages 10 and 18 carry a weapon to school; 14 percent of boys and five percent of girls have been stabbed or shot in a fight; eight percent of all adolescents have been knocked unconscious; and one in six adolescents have belonged to a gang at some point in their lives.⁶⁴ Moreover,

⁵⁹ Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society* (pp. 1 - 27). The University of West Indies Press, p. 3

⁶⁰ Wood, J., Nartea, A., & Bishop, S. (2020). *The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and young people in the Eastern Caribbean Area*. United States Agency for International Development and United Nations Children’s Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/media/2311/file/The%20socio-economic%20impact.pdf>

⁶¹ Hyunin Baek, H., Han, S., & Seepersad, R. (2023). Low Self-Control and Delinquent Behavior Among Caribbean Youths: The Moderating Role of Parental Supervision. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, Advanced publication.

⁶² Camarinhas, C. & Eversley, D. (2020). Caribbean synthesis report on the implementation of the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes. *Studies and Perspectives series-ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean*, (91). https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/series_91_lcart2020_1.pdf; Baird, A., Bishop, M. L., & Kerrigan, D. (2022). “Breaking bad”? Gangs, masculinities, and murder in Trinidad. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22(4), 632–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1931395>

⁶³ Sutton, H. & Ruprah, I. (Eds.). (2017). *Restoring Paradise in the Caribbean: Combatting Violence with Numbers*. Inter-American Development Bank. <https://publications.iadb.org/en/restoring-paradise-caribbean-combatting-violence-numbers>, p. 44-45.

⁶⁴ Jamaica Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. (2019). *National Youth Policy 2017-2030 – Jamaica*. <https://moey.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2017-2030-NYP-Popular-Version.pdf>

youth are arrested, jailed, and murdered at twice the rate of the population. Many youth and young adults have a criminal record that makes it difficult for them to access employment, social services and to successfully reintegrate into society.

A study published in 2023 on self-reported delinquency, drug use, and gang membership of more than 18,000 school-attending youth in nine Caribbean countries⁶⁵ provides one of the most complete tools to date for making comparisons across the Caribbean.⁶⁶ The study found that the youth engaged in violence substantially more than other offence types: depending on the country, youth were 3 to 40% more likely to commit a violent offence than property crime. These findings build on past victimization surveys of Caribbean adults, including the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS), that revealed the Caribbean has an extremely high rate of violent victimization and lower property crime than other global regions.⁶⁷ The 2023 study also found that, in comparison to other regions⁶⁸, a larger proportion of Caribbean youth are involved in gangs. The authors link gang membership with high youth violence and other offending and suggest that interventions related to youth crime should consider gang membership.

The 2023 study further supports past research on the gender of youth involved in crime. Males offended more than females for every offence type. Prior evidence from school-aged youth in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago also indicated that the majority of street gang members are males, though female members are present.⁶⁹ Gendered patterns in youth violence are confirmed in much other research. For example, a 2017 study of five countries funded by CARICOM and Spain found that male students were more likely than females to

⁶⁵ Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁶⁶ Katz, C. M., Cheon, H., Freemon, K., and Nuno, L. E. (2023). Delinquency, drug use, and gang membership in the English-speaking Caribbean. *Children and Youth Services Review* 144, Article 106758.

⁶⁷ Sutton, H. & Ruprah, I. (Eds.). (2017). *Restoring Paradise in the Caribbean: Combatting Violence with Numbers*. Inter-American Development Bank. <https://publications.iadb.org/en/restoring-paradise-caribbean-combatting-violence-numbers>; Katz, C. M., Cheon, H., Freemon, K., and Nuno, L. E. (2023). Delinquency, drug use, and gang membership in the English-speaking Caribbean. *Children and Youth Services Review* 144, Article 106758, p. 2.

⁶⁸ The comparison includes Europe and the United States using large school-based samples.

⁶⁹ Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society* (pp. 1 - 27). The University of West Indies Press, p. 7.

engage in violence, and less likely to report violence to adults.⁷⁰ The same study found that male students had higher access to drugs and weapons.

Despite offending less than males, a perhaps surprising proportion of females self-reported offending in the 2023 study. For example, more than 60% of females in every nation had engaged in violence, 40% or more in property crime, and 3 to 7% in drug dealing.⁷¹ These rates were markedly higher than in both Europe and the United States (US). Females in some Caribbean states offended more than males in others, showing the need for intra-regional comparison. The authors observe that female self-reported rates of delinquency are not reflected in formal charges, leading past prevention efforts to focus on males.

Other studies confirmed that young Caribbean females are involved in street gangs but very infrequently come to the attention of police.⁷² Girls may relate to gangs in ways unperceived by police, including by being complicit in or sanctioning violent gang practices, even if they do not become a recognizable gang member.⁷³ The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) finds that young women are recruited for specific tasks such as drug packaging, smuggling, and warning of police movements.⁷⁴ Yet, they also find that girls may also act as informal peacemakers in gang contexts, for example, by encouraging an end to certain conflicts. Involving young females in crime and violence prevention therefore must not be overlooked.

⁷⁰ Gentle-Genitty, C., Kim, J., Yi, E., Slater, D., Reynolds, B., & Bragg, N. (2017). Comprehensive assessment of youth violence in five Caribbean countries: Gender and age differences. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 27(7), 745-759. [10.1080/10911359.2016.1273811](https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2016.1273811)

⁷¹ Katz, C. M., Cheon, H., Freemon, K., and Nuno, L. E. (2023). Delinquency, drug use, and gang membership in the English-speaking Caribbean. *Children and Youth Services Review* 144, Article 106758.

⁷² Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society* (pp. 1 - 27). The University of West Indies Press, p. 7.

⁷³ Baird, A., Bishop, M. L., & Kerrigan, D. (2022). "Breaking bad"? Gangs, masculinities, and murder in Trinidad. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22(4), 632–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1931395>, p. 635.

⁷⁴ Pan American Health Organization. (2020). *Preventing and responding to violence against children in the Americas: Regional status report 2020*. https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/53038/9789275122945_eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y, p. 14.

Violence Against Children

The endemic violence reported in many CARICOM countries has placed a heavy toll on children, affecting not only their health and overall well-being but also their learning processes and their development. Violence against children encompasses “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse” as defined in Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁷⁵ More than a third of children in Latin America and the Caribbean currently experience at least one form of violence, whether physical, emotional, or sexual.⁷⁶ The region also holds the highest homicide rate of children in the world.⁷⁷ This section discusses forms of violence against children in the Caribbean (community-level violence, school violence and bullying, corporal punishment, and sexual violence) as well as the impacts of violence.

Violence against children at the community level, particularly through gang violence and crime, is a key theme in the literature on violence against children in the Caribbean. As mentioned above, children and youth represent a disproportionate amount of both perpetrators and victims of violent crime. A 2010 citizen security survey in seven CARICOM states found that about 49% of youth feared being the victim of crime.⁷⁸ A recent UNICEF regional comparison on physical attacks, including armed attacks, found a higher prevalence in the Caribbean than other Latin American countries and the global median prevalence.⁷⁹ Further, homicide is the leading cause of death among 10 to 19 year-olds in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the child mortality rate from homicide is four times higher in the

⁷⁵ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, November 20, 1989, 1577 UNTS 3, <https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002800007fe&clang=en>

⁷⁶ Fry, D., Padilla, K., Germanio, A., Lu, M., Ivatury, S., & Vindrola. (2021). *Violence Against children in Latin America and the Caribbean - 2015-2021: A systematic review*. United Nations Children’s Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/34481/file/Violence-against-children-full-report.pdf>, p. 19.

⁷⁷ Pan American Health Organization. (2020). *Preventing and responding to violence against children in the Americas: Regional status report 2020*. https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/53038/9789275122945_eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Idem, p. 13.

⁷⁹ Fry, D., Padilla, K., Germanio, A., Lu, M., Ivatury, S., & Vindrola. (2021). *Violence Against children in Latin America and the Caribbean 2015 - 2021*. United Nations Children’s Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>, p. 54.

region than the global average.⁸⁰ UNICEF links the high rate of youth deaths by homicide, especially among boys, with armed violence in the course of gang activities and organized crime.⁸¹ Multiple studies contend that recruitment into gangs begins as early as age 10 to 12, exposing children to violent situations as both perpetrators and victims.⁸²

Another form of violence against children of concern occurs in schools. School violence encompasses physical, psychological and sexual violence that occurs in schools, including bullying.⁸³ PAHO noted that bullying “is a major form of psychological or physical violence in the school setting, which describes repeated, aggressive behavior involving unwanted, negative actions, such as verbal and psychological harassment, unwanted physical contact and social exclusion”.⁸⁴ The same publication reveals that approximately one in four students report being bullied in the Americas. Abundant evidence also indicates that bullying has a negative impact on educational outcomes and child development.⁸⁵

Regarding physical violence in schools, multiple studies demonstrate that males generally are at a higher risk of physical bullying in the Caribbean.⁸⁶ A Global School-Based Student Health Survey found that boys in 16 Caribbean countries were also more likely than girls to

⁸⁰ United Nations Children’s Fund. (2022). *A Statistical Profile of Violence against Children in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/media/38241/file/A-statistical-profile-of-violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean.pdf>, p. 16 & 18.

⁸¹ Idem, p. 22.

⁸² Pan American Health Organization. (2020). *Preventing and responding to violence against children in the Americas: Regional status report 2020*. https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/53038/9789275122945_eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y, p. 13.

⁸³ United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. (2023, October 18). *Safe learning environments: Preventing and addressing violence in and around school*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/health-education/safe-learning-environments>; Fry, D., Padilla, K., Germanio, A., Lu, M., Ivatury, S., & Vindrola. (2021). *Violence Against children in Latin America and the Caribbean 2015 - 2021*. United Nations Children’s Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>, p. 34.

⁸⁴ Pan American Health Organization. (2020). *Preventing and responding to violence against children in the Americas: Regional status report 2020*. https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/53038/9789275122945_eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y, p. 12.

⁸⁵ Chávez, C., Cebotari, V., Benítez, M. J., Richardson, D., Fen Hiu, C., & Zapata, J. (2020). *School-Related Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Building an Evidence Base for Stronger Schools*. UNICEF – Innocenti. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/School-Related_Violence_in_Latin_America_and_the_Caribbean_Building_an_Evidence_Base_for_Stronger_Schools.pdf

⁸⁶ Fry, D., Padilla, K., Germanio, A., Lu, M., Ivatury, S., & Vindrola. (2021). *Violence Against children in Latin America and the Caribbean 2015 - 2021*. United Nations Children’s Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>, p. 37.

engage in physical fighting (a physical altercation between peers of similar strength who both choose to fight).⁸⁷ Specifically, the prevalence of physical fighting among boys ranges from 30.4% in Suriname to 55.5% in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, while the prevalence for girls ranges from 12.3% in Suriname to 38.4% in Antigua and Barbuda. A survey eliciting responses from teachers in four CARICOM countries⁸⁸ found that weapons used in school violence are knives, bottles, belts, fists, and feet, but firearms were rarely witnessed by respondents.⁸⁹ Regarding age, the same survey indicated that perpetrators of school violence tend to be between the ages of 11 and 15, though children as young as five were found to be involved.

Downward trends are recorded for both physical fighting and bullying, however. Of the Latin American countries with at least two time points of data from the Global School-Based Student Health Surveys⁹⁰, all but Guyana and Argentina showed a decline in physical fighting. Similarly, bullying declined slightly among both Caribbean boys and girls, though remained fairly constant in Guyana. Jamaica demonstrated the greatest drop with 39.7% of students reporting they were a victim of bullying in 2010, followed by a 14% drop in 2017.⁹¹

Corporal punishment in discipline is another widely prevalent form of violence against children in the Caribbean. In fact, acceptance of corporal punishment as a discipline method is nearly three times greater in Caribbean countries than in Latin America.⁹² The region⁹³ reports higher rates than other Latin American countries, with 60% or more of children

⁸⁷ Idem.

⁸⁸ Barbados, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁸⁹ Wallace, W. C. & Figuera, R. M. R. (2017) An Analysis of the Characteristics of School Violence in Small Island Developing States Using Educator Experiences from Four Caribbean Countries. *International Journal on Criminology*, 5(2), 101 - 124. <https://www.criminologyjournal.org/an-analysis-of-the-characteristics-of-school-violence.html>

⁹⁰ CARICOM countries with two data points, from the 2010 and 2017 surveys, were Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁹¹ Fry, D., Padilla, K., Germanio, A., Lu, M., Ivatury, S., & Vindrola. (2021). *Violence Against children in Latin America and the Caribbean 2015 - 2021*. United Nations Children's Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>, p. 39.

⁹² United Nations Children's Fund. (2018, April 25). *Comprehensive laws and social changes are key to eradicate the physical punishment suffered by 1 out of every 2 children in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/press-releases/comprehensive-laws-and-social-changes-are-key-eradicate-physical-punishment-suffered>

⁹³ Based on data from Belize, St. Lucia, Guyana, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, Jamaica, Haiti, Suriname.

experiencing violent discipline.⁹⁴ The percentage is over 80% in Jamaica, Haiti and Suriname. For comparison, prevalence is estimated at 23% for North American children.⁹⁵ Corporal punishment may occur both at home and at school. 82% of teachers in four Caribbean states⁹⁶ reported in 2014 that corporal punishment was a method they used in school discipline.⁹⁷ Very few countries of the region have legislation prohibiting corporal punishment in school or at home.⁹⁸

Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys from 16 Latin American countries⁹⁹ measuring violent disciplinary actions used by adults on children aged 1 to 14 between 2011 and 2019 revealed that boys and girls experience similar levels (usually with less than 10 percentage points difference between boys and girls).¹⁰⁰ From these surveys, Jamaica had the highest prevalence of physical punishment of 1 - 14 year olds in all of the countries surveyed (71.4% for males and 65.2% for females). Jamaica was followed by Suriname (65.3% of males and 59.8% of females), Barbados (59.2% of males, 52.2% of females), Trinidad and Tobago (53.2% of males and 50.5% of females), Guyana (55.8% of males and 45.5% of females), Belize (51.2% of males and 45.1% of females), Argentina (48.6% of males and 44.2% of females), and Saint Lucia and Mexico with the same average rate (in Saint Lucia, 49.5% of males and 38% of females, in Mexico, 45.3% of males and 42.2% of females). The remaining seven countries surveyed are from Latin America. A clear clustering of CARICOM countries is seen in the highest ranges of corporal punishment. However, use of physical punishment

⁹⁴ United Nations Children's Fund. (2022). *A Statistical Profile of Violence against Children in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/media/38241/file/A-statistical-profile-of-violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean.pdf>, p. 6.

⁹⁵ Pan American Health Organization. (2020). *Preventing and responding to violence against children in the Americas: Regional status report 2020*. https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/53038/9789275122945_eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y, p. 11.

⁹⁶ Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁹⁷ Fry, D., Padilla, K., Germanio, A., Lu, M., Ivatury, S., & Vindrola. (2021). *Violence Against children in Latin America and the Caribbean 2015 - 2021*. United Nations Children's Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>, p. 44.

⁹⁸ United Nations Children's Fund. (2022). *A Statistical Profile of Violence against Children in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/media/38241/file/A-statistical-profile-of-violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean.pdf>, p. 11.

⁹⁹ CARICOM countries included are Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

¹⁰⁰ Fry, D., Padilla, K., Germanio, A., Lu, M., Ivatury, S., & Vindrola. (2021). *Violence Against children in Latin America and the Caribbean 2015 - 2021*. United Nations Children's Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>, p. 26.

has declined over time, with the exception in the Caribbean of Suriname where a slight increase was recorded in 2018.¹⁰¹

Regarding sexual violence, an estimated 20 to 40% of girls in the Eastern Caribbean have experienced sexual abuse.¹⁰² Generally, females are more likely to experience sexual abuse as children, though “levels of sexual violence against boys are still substantial and require comprehensive action”.¹⁰³ Violence Against Children Surveys in Latin America¹⁰⁴ find that other young people account for more than half of perpetrators of the first incident of sexual violence a child experiences (often ‘friends’, classmates, or neighbours).¹⁰⁵ The same surveys indicate that the home is the most common location of the first incident of sexual violence (whether the victim’s, perpetrators, or another person’s home). Sexual violence against girls and young women is also amplified in the gang context. Papworth and Hunegs contend that gender-based violence is so core to gangs’ exertion of control that many center it as a part of their collective identity.¹⁰⁶

Despite the lack of region-wide longitudinal data, some conclusions can be drawn on the impacts of violence against children from national studies. The consequences of violence against children are witnessed in both the short and long term and are suffered by both the individual child and communities. Violence against children is a matter of public health because it is a major cause of mortality and morbidity in the region that taxes public medical systems.¹⁰⁷ Beyond physical injury, violence against children is also linked to poor mental

¹⁰¹ Idem, p. 29.

¹⁰² United Nations Children’s Fund. (2017). *Safety and justice: Ensuring that every child is safe and protected*. <https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/safety-and-justice>

¹⁰³ Pan American Health Organization. (2020). *Preventing and responding to violence against children in the Americas: Regional status report 2020*. https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/53038/9789275122945_eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y, p. 14.

¹⁰⁴ Colombia, El Salvador, and Haiti.

¹⁰⁵ Fry, D., Padilla, K., Germanio, A., Lu, M., Ivatury, S., & Vindrola. (2021). *Violence Against children in Latin America and the Caribbean 2015 - 2021*. United Nations Children’s Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>, p. 22.

¹⁰⁶ Papworth, E. & Hunegs, K. (2023, November 2). *Gang Violence and the WPS Agenda: Analyzing Gendered Realities in Central America and the Caribbean*. International Peace Institute Global Observatory. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2023/11/gang-violence-and-the-wps-agenda-analyzing-gendered-realities-in-central-america-and-the-caribbean/>

¹⁰⁷ Pan American Health Organization. (2020). *Preventing and responding to violence against children in the Americas: Regional status report 2020*. https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/53038/9789275122945_eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y, p. 15 & 17.

health, damaged cognitive development and lowered school performance, and adoption of unhealthy coping mechanisms such as drug and alcohol use.¹⁰⁸ Early exposure to violence was also found to be one factor associated with youth joining gangs in Trinidad and Tobago.¹⁰⁹ Generationally, multiple studies have shown that exposure to violence in childhood replicates violent patterns later. For example, childhood exposure to violence can reduce empathetic capacity and normalize domestic violence.¹¹⁰ Such long-term impacts evince the necessity of early intervention of violence against children.

Gender-based Violence

The average worldwide rate of intentional homicide of females was 2 per 100,000 in 2020.¹¹¹ 20 countries experienced double this rate or higher in the five-year period from 2017 to 2021, of which eight are CARICOM states. The following Caribbean countries sat in the top ten in 2021 with notably high rates: Antigua and Barbuda (10.3), Jamaica (9.3), Saint Lucia (8.8), and Trinidad and Tobago (7.0). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Kitts and Nevis also reported similarly high rates in multiple of the years prior.¹¹² While these statistics record deaths by gender and do not capture the motivation of the perpetrator, the UNODC contends that “the majority of intentional homicides of women and girls are gender-related – and estimates may understate the problem because in roughly four out of ten cases there is insufficient information recorded to identify gender-related motivations.”¹¹³

Data deficiencies and inconsistencies between countries are a major concern when discussing gender-based violence, however. Firstly, the full effects of COVID-19 may not be

¹⁰⁸ Idem.

¹⁰⁹ Hill, S. (2013). The Rise of Gang Violence in the Caribbean. In Seepersad, R. & Bissessar, A. M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean* (pp. 36 - 79). Cambridge Scholars Publishing, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ Joseph, D. & Jones, A. (2023). Understanding Violence Against Women in the Caribbean Through an Exploration of Men's Perspectives. *Violence Against Women*, 29(5), 1005 - 1023. [10.1177/10778012221104845](https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012221104845)

¹¹¹ World Bank. (n.d.). *Intentional Homicides, Female (per 100,000 female)*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRC.FE.P5>

¹¹² Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reported a rate of 0.0 in 2021 and 2019, and yet had the second highest rates in the world in both 2018 and 2020. The rates of 0.0 are likely to be related to data deficiencies rather than drastic reductions in intentional homicides of females.

¹¹³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in 2022*. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/gender-related-killings-of-women-and-girls-femicide-feminicide-global-estimates-2022-en.pdf>, p. 7.

reflected in the data. The CDB observed that quarantine measures “...left many women more isolated, financially dependent and vulnerable and have been forced to shelter-in-places with their abusers, often with tragic consequences.”¹¹⁴ However, many states in Central America and the Caribbean reported an unusual, pronounced *decline* in intimate-partner-violence-related homicides in 2020. UNODC attributes this to delays in recording homicide cases during the first year of the pandemic, rather than actual declines in homicides, which is supported by submissions from women’s civil society organizations.¹¹⁵

Secondly, specifically regarding sexual violence, reported rates are unlikely to reflect actual occurrences. According to the UNODC, “(r)ape is greatly under-reported everywhere in the world, and relatively high recorded rape rates can actually be due to high levels of trust that reporting will result in positive outcomes for the victim”.¹¹⁶ For example, sexual violence¹¹⁷ rates between 2018 and 2021 ranged from 85 to 100 per 100,000 in Canada, yet were consistently reported between 60 and 80 in two CARICOM countries with some of the highest female homicide rates in the world (Antigua and Barbuda and Jamaica).¹¹⁸ Grenada reported sexual assault rates higher than any other country in the Americas, ranging between 270.09 to 392.32 from 2018 to 2021.¹¹⁹ The government of Grenada has made concerted efforts to improve data collection on gender-based violence, including through the recent implementation of a central, digital incidence reporting system.¹²⁰ This example serves as a

¹¹⁴ Caribbean Development Bank. (2021). *Strategic Plan Update 2022-2024: “Repositioning for Resilience”*. [https://www.caribank.org/sites/default/files/publication-resources/CDBStrategicPlan_2022-2024_Update\(redacted\).pdf](https://www.caribank.org/sites/default/files/publication-resources/CDBStrategicPlan_2022-2024_Update(redacted).pdf), p. 7.

¹¹⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime & United Nations Women. (2022). *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates of gender-related killings of women and girls in the private sphere in 2021*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/briefs/Femicide_brief_Nov2022.pdf, p. 26.

¹¹⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime & World Bank. (2007). *Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean*. https://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/Cr_and_Vio_Car_E.pdf, p. 12.

¹¹⁷ Defined as “Unwanted sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or contact or communication with unwanted sexual attention without valid consent or with consent as a result of intimidation, force, fraud, coercion, threat, deception, use of drugs or alcohol, or abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability.” See United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. (2023). *Data UNODC - Metadata Information: Violent and Sexual Crime*. https://dataunodc.un.org/sites/dataunodc.un.org/files/metadata_violent_and_sexual_crime.pdf

¹¹⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.). *Violent and Sexual Offences*. <https://dataunodc.un.org/dp-crime-violent-offences>

¹¹⁹ Idem.

¹²⁰ United Nations Development Bank. (2023, July 28). *Using Data to End Gender-based Violence in Grenada*. <https://www.undp.org/barbados/stories/using-data-end-gender-based-violence-grenada>

caution on using national sexual assault rates alone to determine the extent of gender-based violence and to target interventions.

Thirdly, there is a lack of consistency among countries in how gender-based and sexual violence are defined and no standardized victimization survey has historically been used across all CARICOM states. Regarding sexual violence against girls, UNICEF estimates that 20 to 40% of girls in the Eastern Caribbean have experienced sexual abuse.¹²¹ However, sexual violence data disaggregated by age is limited and common definitions across the region are not being used. Surveys that employ a broad definition of sexual violence, inclusive of a wide range of acts, find much higher rates. UNICEF calls for “Systematic government-led data collection efforts using standard measures”.¹²²

On the positive side, the reliability of records on gender-based violence is slowly improving, particularly through the help of international organizations and regional initiatives.¹²³ Five CARICOM states recently undertook a national survey project utilizing methodology that the World Health Organization (WHO) developed to collect prevalence data on gender-based violence directly from those who experienced it.¹²⁴ The surveys were collected between 2016 and 2019 by Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The project was a pilot model for CARICOM and was supported by UN Women, UNDP, USAID, the CDB, and the IDB. Lifetime prevalence rates of women who have experienced intimate partner violence¹²⁵ ranged from 39% in Jamaica and Grenada to 55% in Guyana. In 2023, the CARICOM secretariat developed a survey with pre-determined, standardized questions that

¹²¹ United Nations Children’s Fund. (2017). *Safety and justice: Ensuring that every child is safe and protected*. <https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/safety-and-justice>

¹²² United Nations Children’s Fund. (2022). *A Statistical Profile of Violence against Children in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/media/38241/file/A-statistical-profile-of-violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean.pdf>, p. 13.

¹²³ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2023). Bringing an end to violence against women and girls and femicide or feminicide: a key challenge for building a care society. *Femicidal Violence in Figures: Latin America and the Caribbean*, (1), 1 - 12. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/db4952b8-c45f-4c9e-8a6a-3fb92004c32d/content>, p. 6.

¹²⁴ United Nations Women. (n.d.). *Caribbean women count, ending violence against women and girls data hub*. <https://caribbeanwomenscount.unwomen.org/about.html>

¹²⁵ ‘Any’ form of Intimate Partner Violence was defined as any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm to those in the relationship.

provides quantitative and qualitative information on gender norms and violence.¹²⁶ The aim of the initiative is to use this data to identify trends and inform recommendations for reducing violence.

Recent data shows that the home continues to be the most common site of homicidal violence against women and girls, and that “the largest share of gender-related killings of women and girls are homicides perpetrated by intimate partners and other family members”.¹²⁷ A 2023 UNODC publication found that gender-related killings declined between 2017 and 2022 in Central and South America, but rose by 8% in the Caribbean.¹²⁸ UN Women estimates that the prevalence of violence against women and girls in the Caribbean is among the highest globally.¹²⁹ It contends that

VAWG [violence against women and girls] has proven to be so entrenched and normalized that both men and women have a high tolerance for its manifestations, particularly when perpetrated in the context of intimate partner relationships. Data from a variety of sources confirm that even young people hold these views, raising concerns about the intergenerational transmission of VAWG.¹³⁰

In other words, there seems to be a normalization of violence against women in the Caribbean that contributes to physical violence at an alarmingly high and apparently rising rate.

Such attitudes contributing to violence are confirmed in multiple other studies. Surveys that gathered opinions about gender norms and roles in five CARICOM states found that women in relationships with men who had attitudes reinforcing men’s dominant position were more

¹²⁶ Austin, T. (2023, July 3). Region-wide movement to end violence against women and girls boosted by CARICOM Model KAP Tool. *CARICOM Today*. <https://today.caricom.org/2023/06/29/region-wide-movement-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-boosted-by-caricom-model-kap-tool/>

¹²⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in 2022*. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/gender-related-killings-of-women-and-girls-femicide-feminicide-global-estimates-2022-en.pdf>, p. 7.

¹²⁸ *Idem*, p. 10.

¹²⁹ Caribbean Development Bank & United Nations Women. (2020). *Intimate partner violence in five CARICOM countries: Findings from national prevalence surveys on violence against women*. <https://caribbean.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/20201009%20CARICOM%20Research%20Brief%205.pdf>

¹³⁰ *Idem*, p. 8.

likely to have experienced intimate partner violence.¹³¹ Women's attitudes also correlated with differences in intimate partner violence rate; for example, women who believed it is natural for men to be the head of the family had an 8% higher intimate partner violence rate than women who did not. Other UN bodies and the ECLAC also link physical violence against women in the Caribbean with "...the persistence of patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns based on gender roles and stereotypes that undervalue the role of women in society".¹³²

The issue extends beyond perpetrators, as sexist attitudes also hinder official responses to gender-based violence. For example, in 2019, the OAS and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights published a report on violence and discrimination against women, girls and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹³³ The report identified profound challenges that persist in eliminating the structural factors of discrimination against women and girls, such as sexism, machismo, and the prevalence of gender stereotypes that are deeply rooted in the social fabric of the region, resulting in high levels of tolerance for violence against women. Summarized in Papworth and Hunegs' words, governments and law enforcement agencies "operate through the same patriarchal lens, a hypothesis that is confirmed by high levels of impunity for perpetrators of gender-based violence" in the Caribbean.¹³⁴

5.2 Transnational Organized Crime

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime has been ratified by all CARICOM member states, although its implementation even after 20 years is still very much a work in progress. The Vienna Declaration adopted during the Centennial meeting of The

¹³¹ Idem, p. 8.

¹³² Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2023). Bringing an end to violence against women and girls and femicide or feminicide: a key challenge for building a care society. *Femicidal Violence in Figures: Latin America and the Caribbean*, (1), 1 - 12. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/db4952b8-c45f-4c9e-8a6a-3fb92004c32d/content>, p. 3.

¹³³ OEA & Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. *Violencia y discriminación contra mujeres, niñas y adolescentes: Buenas prácticas y desafíos en América Latina y en el Caribe*. (2019). <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/ViolenciaMujeresNNA.pdf>

¹³⁴ Papworth, E. & Hunegs, K. (2023, November 2). *Gang Violence and the WPS Agenda: Analyzing Gendered Realities in Central America and the Caribbean*. International Peace Institute Global Observatory. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2023/11/gang-violence-and-the-wps-agenda-analyzing-gendered-realities-in-central-america-and-the-caribbean/>

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) calls for leaders to consider transnational organized crime as a national security priority, redouble international police cooperation efforts and increase investment in the tools available to law enforcement: "The transnational crime epidemic must be treated at the highest governmental level as a global priority".¹³⁵

This prioritization is crucial, considering evidence linking transnational organized crime with increased homicide rates. Transnational crimes such as drug trafficking, trafficking in firearms, and human trafficking are usually accompanied domestically by increases in gang activities and violence, robberies, retaliatory murders, rapes, and domestic violence. These expressions of violence inter-related and mutually reinforcing.¹³⁶ The most violent CARICOM states of 2022 (Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the Bahamas, and Belize) shared organized crime-related commonalities: gang activity was identified as a major cause of violence, there was a heightened demand in the cocaine trade, and there was a high availability of firearms especially from the United States.¹³⁷

For a sense of how critical the organized crime situation is in CARICOM countries, one may turn to the Global Organized Crime Index (GOCI) which evaluates 193 UN member states according to two main metrics: criminality (based on both a criminal markets score and a criminal actors score) and state resilience to organized crime, defined as the ability of a state to withstand and disrupt organized criminal activities as a whole, rather than individual markets, through political, economic, legal and social measures.¹³⁸ Resilience, measured through 12 distinct indicators, refers to measures taken by both state and non-state actors.

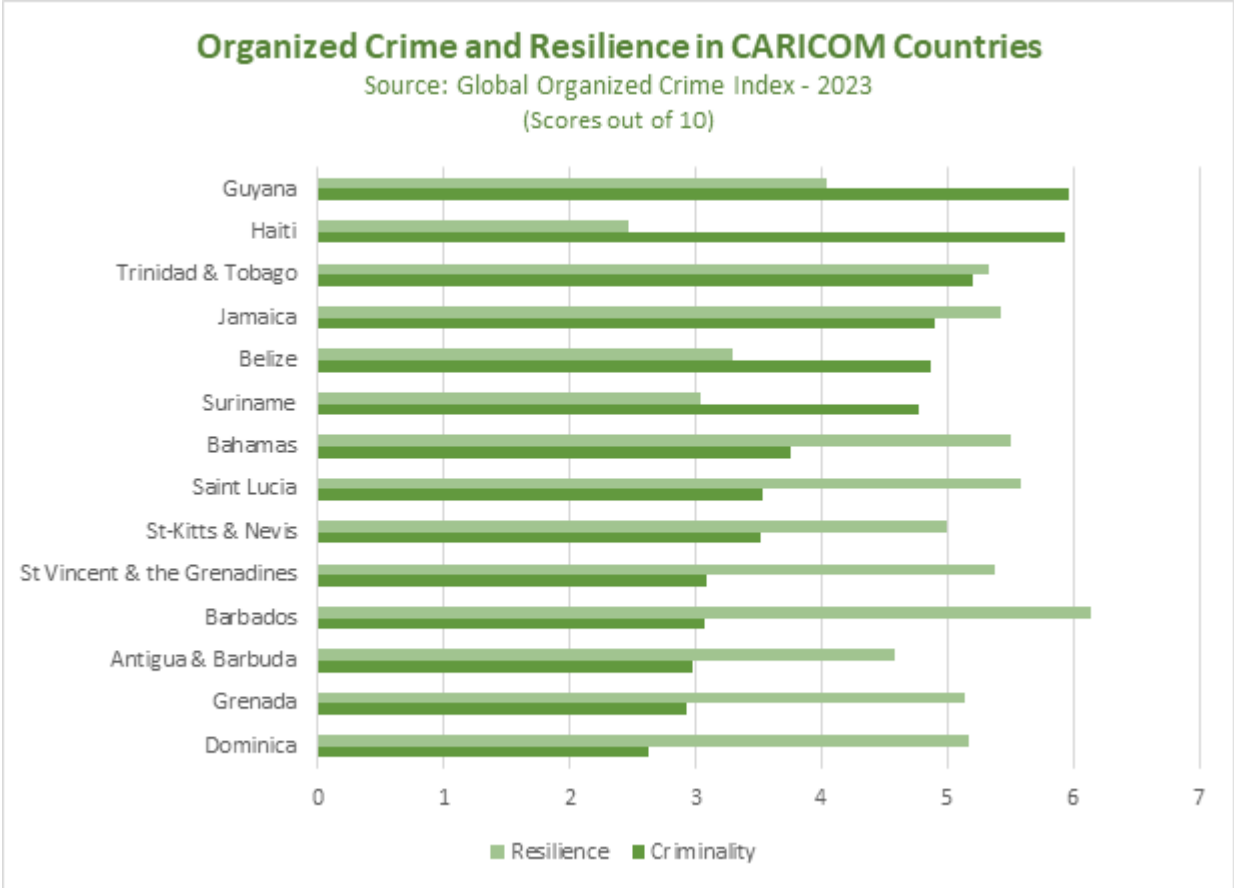
¹³⁵ International Criminal Police Organization. (2023). *The Vienna Declaration: Challenging the rise of transnational organized crime*. <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2023/Historic-INTERPOL-meeting-closes-with-call-to-action-on-tackling-organized-crime>. See also: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. (2024). *Intersections: Towards a Global Strategy Against Transnational Organized Crime*. Geneva.

¹³⁶ King, W. A. (2019). The nexus between vulnerabilities and violence in the Caribbean. *Third World Quarterly*, 40(2), pp. 405-424, p. 414.

¹³⁷ Appleby, P., Dalby, C., Doherty, S., Mistler-Ferguson, S. & Schuldiner, H. (2023, February 8). *InSight Crime's 2022 Homicide Round-Up*. InSight Crime. <https://insightcrime.org/news/insight-crime-2022-homicide-round-up/>; Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society* (pp. 1 - 27). The University of West Indies Press.

¹³⁸ Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index 2023: A fractured world*. <https://ocindex.net/report/2023/0-3-contents.html>

The GOCI aims to facilitate the work of different stakeholders in implementing strategies to counter organized crime and measuring the efficacy of their responses. It is a tool to help stakeholders understand the criminality–resilience nexus.¹³⁹



The above chart shows, for CARICOM countries, how they scored on the GOCI for those two key dimensions, each one of them measured on a scale of 1 to 10. The average organized crime score for these countries is 4.08, below the average for the Americas (5.20), and the average resilience score is 4.89 which is slightly above the average score of 4.80 for the continent.¹⁴⁰ For regional comparison, North America has a criminality score of 4.78 and

¹³⁹ Dandurand, Y. (2022, May 13). *Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: The criminality-resilience nexus*. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/resilience-ocindex/>

¹⁴⁰ For the sake of comparison, one may note that Canada’s criminality score is 3.88 and its resilience score is 7.21.

resilience of 7.17,¹⁴¹ South America has a criminality score of 5.94 and resilience of 4.72,¹⁴² and Central America has a criminality score of 6.28 and resilience of 3.91.¹⁴³ The gap between the Caribbean's criminality and resilience scores is therefore smaller than both South and Central America. However, some CARICOM countries have a worrisome level of organized crime and a relatively low level of resilience. Three countries appear especially vulnerable: Guyana, Belize, and Suriname. Except for Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, countries with a higher level of resilience tend to have a lower level of organized crime.

Drug Trafficking

The global supply of cocaine reached record levels in 2023. The Americas continue to be the lead source market of cocaine, with cultivation largely in South America and other regions, including the Caribbean, serving as transit routes.¹⁴⁴ The Caribbean does not produce cocaine at any substantial level, yet is the primary drug of concern due to the levels trafficked.¹⁴⁵ Historically, the United States was the main market for cocaine coming from South America. But as US consumption declined in the past decade, criminal groups in South America pivoted to Europe, which has become a substantial importer.¹⁴⁶ Drug trafficking routes have shifted away and towards the Caribbean throughout the decades, with recent evidence that the Caribbean route has been re-emerging since the 2010s.¹⁴⁷ While the

¹⁴¹ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, region profile: North America*. https://ocindex.net/region/north_america

¹⁴² Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, region profile: South America*. https://ocindex.net/region/south_america

¹⁴³ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, region profile: Central America*. https://ocindex.net/region/central_america

¹⁴⁴ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index 2023: A fractured world*. <https://ocindex.net/report/2023/0-3-contents.html>

¹⁴⁵ Hill, S. & Morris, P. (2017). Drug Trafficking and Gang Violence in the Caribbean. In M. Raymond, Izarali (Ed.), *Crime, Violence and Security in the Caribbean* (1st ed.), pp. 52 - 75). Routledge, p. 56.

¹⁴⁶ Hernandez-Roy, C. & Bledsoe, R. (2023). *Building barriers and bridges: The need for international cooperation to counter the Caribbean–Europe drug trade*. Centre for Strategic and International Studies. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/230714_Hernandez-Roy_CaribbeanEurope_DrugTrade.pdf?VersionId=2LvlowK7CtuhQqVRZGYInW8ejXtWHIA; Hill, S. & Morris, P. (2017).

¹⁴⁷ InSight Crime. (2023, November 2). *Caribbean Profile*. <https://insightcrime.org/caribbean-organized-crime-news/caribbean/>

Caribbean is a transit point to North America and Europe, most Caribbean countries have relatively minor consumption levels themselves.¹⁴⁸

The Caribbean is vulnerable to trafficking for multiple reasons, including its geographical position between South and North America which makes it a major transshipment route to both the United States and Europe. The geography is characterized by numerous small, sometimes uninhabited islands and long coastlines that present difficulties to effective patrol coverage. An active commercial maritime environment and air traffic also aid in concealing illicit cargo, with container shipping becoming the most common way to transit drugs to Europe in the past decade, and drugs commonly being hidden on ferries, cruise ships, and aircrafts also.¹⁴⁹ The UNODC reports that it is common in the Caribbean for ship-to-ship transfers using small and medium vessels to occur at rendezvous points before reaching land to avoid law enforcement at port.¹⁵⁰ This makes interdiction very difficult without advanced intelligence and cooperation of law enforcement, port operators, and foreign customs.¹⁵¹ Further, Caribbean borders are described as ‘porous’ due to the relative weakness of border security initiatives. Another commonality among many CARICOM states is their proximity to Venezuela, in which political instability “... continues to generate new opportunities for the unfettered movement of illegal drugs.”¹⁵² Finally, under-resourced or corrupt port officials are cited throughout the literature as a critical enabling factor in drug trafficking.¹⁵³

It is worth highlighting that these vulnerabilities to drug trafficking are frequently related to many other forms of trafficking, including arms trafficking and human trafficking and

¹⁴⁸ United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. (2020, October 16). *From international drug trafficking to community violence: Lessons from the Caribbean*. <https://unidir.org/from-international-drug-trafficking-to-community-violence-lessons-from-the-caribbean/>

¹⁴⁹ Hernandez-Roy, C. & Bledsoe, R. (2023). *Building barriers and bridges: The need for international cooperation to counter the Caribbean–Europe drug trade*. Centre for Strategic and International Studies. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/230714_Hernandez-Roy_CaribbeanEurope_DrugTrade.pdf?VersionId=2LvlowK7CtuhQqVRZGYInW8eljXtWHiA

¹⁵⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *Global Report on Cocaine 2023: Local dynamics, global challenges*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/cocaine/Global_cocaine_report_2023.pdf, p. 28.

¹⁵¹ Office of National Drug Control Policy. (2022). *National drug control strategy Caribbean border counternarcotics strategy*. The White House, Executive Office of the President. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Caribbean-Border-Counter-Narcotics-2022Strategy.pdf>

¹⁵² Idem.

¹⁵³ Idem.

smuggling. Indeed, the drug market often attracts and reinforces these other illicit markets. Criminal groups competing to control drug markets must arm and resource their operations, which directly connects drug trafficking to “...expanded illegal firearms trafficking, and exacerbated human trafficking both within the region and beyond”.¹⁵⁴ Drug trafficking is in turn thought to be the leading source of funding for weapons used by local criminal groups.¹⁵⁵ This is worth acknowledging because anti-trafficking interventions must both use specific strategies for different illicit goods and recognize the interconnectedness of these illicit markets.

The cannabis market in the Caribbean differs from cocaine in that local cultivation and consumption is more common, in addition to the countries being used as transit points. In fact, there have been recent public calls for decriminalization or legalization of small-scale cannabis consumption.¹⁵⁶ Marijuana is grown in several Caribbean countries, though only Jamaica was considered to have globally significant levels in 2017.¹⁵⁷ Today Jamaica remains the largest producer of cannabis in the Caribbean, and its trade has been linked with violence.¹⁵⁸ In recent years, Canada has also become an important source of cannabis in several CARICOM countries. Moreover, the criminal organizations that traffic cannabis appear to be connected with those that traffic cocaine in at least Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.¹⁵⁹

Finally, it must be observed that identifying and disrupting drug trafficking routes in one nation is not a complete solution. Firstly, trafficking re-routes to other areas if disrupted. In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, transnational drug trafficking flows boomed after “...previous paths through the central Caribbean, particularly Jamaica, were squeezed by US enforcement

¹⁵⁴ Hernandez-Roy, C. & Bledsoe, R. (2023). *Building barriers and bridges: The need for international cooperation to counter the Caribbean–Europe drug trade*. Centre for Strategic and International Studies. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/230714_Hernandez-Roy_CaribbeanEurope_DrugTrade.pdf?VersionId=2LvlowK7CtuhQqVRZGYInW8eljXtWHiA, p. 1.

¹⁵⁵ Hill, S. & Morris, P. (2017). Drug Trafficking and Gang Violence in the Caribbean. In Raymond Izarali, M. (Ed.), *Crime, Violence and Security in the Caribbean* (1st ed., pp. 52 - 75). Routledge, p. 68.

¹⁵⁶ Idem, p. 59.

¹⁵⁷ Idem, p. 56.

¹⁵⁸ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Jamaica*. <https://ocindex.net/country/jamaica>

¹⁵⁹ Idem.

agencies”.¹⁶⁰ This coincided with raised rates of lethal violence in Trinidad and Tobago, which were not as prevalent prior to the 1990s. Secondly, violence tends to stay in communities even if drug trafficking routes move on. This is explained in part by the fact that competition between criminal groups over reduced markets is often intensified.¹⁶¹ The following section on trafficking in firearms explains some of the reasons why local violence is sustained even when transnational drug flows move, including the fact that weapons introduced during the drug trade tend to stay within communities.

Trafficking in Firearms

Trafficking in firearms challenges most countries of the region. Criminal factions often procure and misuse handguns as well as semi- and automatic rifles, amplifying disputes. Studies from Belize, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago reveal varied motives for obtaining illicit firearms, including personal protection, peer pressure, criminal activities, and financial considerations. Organized criminal groups acquire firearms through diverse means, including domestic sources, private dealers, black markets or diversion from law enforcement and military stocks. Corrupt police, port officials, and other security forces have been reported to facilitate the trade domestically. In Jamaica, for example, there are reports of arms sales from official stockpiles by police, and a firearms license corruption ring was exposed in 2022 which demonstrated the difficulty in identifying criminal and legal gun holders.¹⁶²

Firearms in Central American and the Caribbean countries are also frequently sourced from foreign countries, particularly North America and Western Europe, through both legal and illegal channels.¹⁶³ The majority of firearms are trafficked from the United States, most

¹⁶⁰ Baird, A., Bishop, M. L., & Kerrigan, D. (2022). “Breaking bad”? Gangs, masculinities, and murder in Trinidad. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22(4), 632–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1931395>, p. 640.

¹⁶¹ Hernandez-Roy, C. & Bledsoe, R. (2023). *Building barriers and bridges: The need for international cooperation to counter the Caribbean–Europe drug trade*. Centre for Strategic and International Studies. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/230714_Hernandez-Roy_CaribbeanEurope_DrugTrade.pdf?VersionId=2LvlowK7CtuhQqVRZGYInW8eljXtWHiA; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2019). *Global Study on Homicide: Homicide Trends, Patterns, and Criminal Justice Response*, p. 27.

¹⁶² Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Jamaica*. <https://ocindex.net/country/jamaica>

¹⁶³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *Global Study on Homicide 2023*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/2023/Global_study_on_homicide_2023_web.pdf, p. 11.

typically via shipping companies and commercial airlines.¹⁶⁴ In both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, it appears that most illegal weapons enter from the United States (though fully automatic, high-powered arms from Canada have also been identified).¹⁶⁵ The “iron” pipeline involving networks from the United States to the Caribbean, Central America and South American countries is a focus of growing attention, as highlighted in a 2023 “War on Guns” declaration from heads of government of the CARICOM.¹⁶⁶ The US to Caribbean flows have become such a concern that, in 2023, multiple CARICOM countries joined an amicus curiae brief in an anti-gun lawsuit filed by Mexico in the United States.¹⁶⁷ In particular, Guyana faces a severe trafficking in firearms problem, with a large proportion of the weapons coming from Venezuela and Brazil.¹⁶⁸

Firearms trafficking and the easy availability of guns are linked repeatedly to community violence in the case of both organized and non-organized crime. Firearms were used in 54% of violent deaths in the Caribbean in 2018, and in some countries this proportion reaches 90%.¹⁶⁹ Unlike drugs, weapons are a durable good, surviving multiple uses. Trends since the 1990s observed by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research indicate that guns enter communities and tend to stay, being circulated within and between gangs or used by

¹⁶⁴ Fabre, A.-S., Florquin, N., Karp, A., & Schroeder, M. (2023). *Weapons compass: The Caribbean firearms study*. Caribbean Community and Common Market Implementation Agency for Crime and Security. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/CARICOM-IMPACS-SAS-Caribbean-Firearms-Study.pdf>; Sandars, R. (2023, November 2). A call to arms against the surge of gang violence. *Caribbean News Global*. <https://caribbeannewsglobal.com/a-call-to-arms-against-the-surge-of-gang-violence/>.

¹⁶⁵ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Jamaica*. <https://ocindex.net/country/jamaica>; Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Trinidad and Tobago*. https://ocindex.net/country/trinidad_and_tobago

¹⁶⁶ Austin, T. (2023, April 18). *Declaration by Heads of Government – War on Guns – Trinidad and Tobago – 18 April 2023*. <https://safecaribbean.caricom.org/declaration-by-heads-of-government-war-on-guns-trinidad-and-tobago-18-april-2023/>

¹⁶⁷ The Caribbean Council. (2023, March 31). *CARICOM states join Mexico’s anti-gun lawsuit in the US*. <https://www.caribbean-council.org/caricom-states-join-mexicos-anti-gun-lawsuit-in-the-us/#:~:text=Antigua%20and%20Barbuda%2C%20Belize%2C%20The%20Bahamas%2C%20Jamaica%2C%20St.the%20trafficking%20of%20deadly%20weapons%20across%20the%20border>

¹⁶⁸ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Guyana*. <https://ocindex.net/country/guyana>

¹⁶⁹ Alvazzi del Frate, A. & Hideg, G. (2021). *Still Not There: Global Violent Deaths Scenarios, 2019–30* (Briefing Paper). Small Arms Survey. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-SANA-BP-GVD-scenarios.pdf>; Fabre, A.-S., Florquin, N., Karp, A., & Schroeder, M. (2023). *Weapons compass: The Caribbean firearms study*. Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/CARICOM-IMPACS-SAS-Caribbean-Firearms-Study.pdf>

locals looking for protection.¹⁷⁰ Because of this, some cities have turned into ‘weapon sinks’, escalating violence in local crime and enduring even if the international flow of arms trafficking eventually alters. In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, firearms remained in the supply chain once drug transactions were complete, which filtered to street gangs and raised local levels of lethal violence.¹⁷¹ As Baird and his colleagues put it succinctly, “...the inflowing firearms have led to a localized arms-race and sky-rocketing homicide rates as gangs compete for superiority. We now see disorder in street violence, and it is commonplace for boys and young men in gangs to lose sight of what it is they are actually ‘at war’ over”.¹⁷²

Human Trafficking and Smuggling

The IDB President said in late 2021 that the Latin America and Caribbean region is suffering a “forced displacement crisis” with more migrants per capita than any other region in the world.¹⁷³ To some extent, the Caribbean serves as an alternative route to the land route from Panama through Mexico, for those seeking to gain residence in North America. Increasing danger, taxes levied by drug trafficking and other criminal groups, controls along the land route have served as a deterrent to migrants from Central America and the Northern Triangle to use the land routes. The Caribbean is located within proximity of countries with an outflux of vulnerable migrants, especially from Central America and Venezuela.¹⁷⁴

Exacerbating this geography, the Covid-19 pandemic enabled traffickers to leverage economic hardship and rising youth unemployment, presenting false opportunities to

¹⁷⁰ United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. (2020, October 16). *From international drug trafficking to community violence: Lessons from the Caribbean*. <https://unidir.org/from-international-drug-trafficking-to-community-violence-lessons-from-the-caribbean/>

¹⁷¹ Baird, A., Bishop, M. L., & Kerrigan, D. (2022). “Breaking bad”? Gangs, masculinities, and murder in Trinidad. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22(4), 632–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.1931395>, p. 633.

¹⁷² United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. (2020, October 16). *From international drug trafficking to community violence: Lessons from the Caribbean*. <https://unidir.org/from-international-drug-trafficking-to-community-violence-lessons-from-the-caribbean/>

¹⁷³ United Nations Refugee Agency. (2021, December 3). *IDB and UNHCR join efforts to address forced displacement crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean* [Press Release]. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2021/12/61aa4ccd4/idb-unhcr-join-efforts-address-forced-displacement-crisis-latin-america.html>.

¹⁷⁴ John, M. (2020). A critical approach to understanding human trafficking in the Caribbean. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 24(10), 1666-1680. 10.1080/13642987.2020.1762577

vulnerable populations.¹⁷⁵ Traffickers also adapted to the sudden interruption of travel and gathering restrictions by moving recruitment to online platforms (for example, online job postings and dating apps).¹⁷⁶ Observers in Jamaica believe that these platforms have allowed sex trafficking to become more covert since the pandemic.¹⁷⁷ Simultaneously, the pandemic both pushed human trafficking further underground and constrained law enforcement agencies' availability to address it. The pandemic resulted in reduced victim detection and fewer prosecutions in the Caribbean for the first time in 20 years (while actual rates are not believed to have fallen).¹⁷⁸

Regarding CARICOM states with the largest human trafficking markets, Trinidad and Tobago is a source, transit, and destination country with trafficked persons exploited in private businesses (forced labour and sexual exploitation), largely controlled by foreign actors from China and Venezuela.¹⁷⁹ Large, transnational gangs are increasingly involved in human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago.¹⁸⁰ In Belize, trafficking does not have strong ties to complex international operations but trafficking and smuggling, especially from Central America, are high.¹⁸¹ Guyana and Suriname's mining, oil, and forestry industries particularly sustain trafficking, alongside domestic services and brothels. The Guyanese market is organized by crime networks mainly in Guyana and Venezuela, while the Surinamese market

¹⁷⁵ Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2023). *Trafficking in persons report*. United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Trafficking-in-Persons-Report-2023-Introduction-V3e.pdf>, p. 64.

¹⁷⁶ *Idem*, p. 57.

¹⁷⁷ *Idem*.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2022). *Global report on trafficking in persons 2022: Chapter II, Regional Overviews*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP_2022_chapter_2_Regional_Overview_230123.pdf, p. 25; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2022). *Global report on trafficking in persons 2022: Special points of interest*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP_22_Special_points_of_interest.pdf, p. 3 - 7.

¹⁷⁹ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Trinidad and Tobago*. https://ocindex.net/country/trinidad_and_tobago

¹⁸⁰ Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2023). *2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Trinidad and Tobago*. United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/trinidad-and-tobago/>

¹⁸¹ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Belize*. <https://ocindex.net/country/belize>

is organized by China and Hong-Kong based groups through local mafia.¹⁸² Domestic servitude and sex trafficking are also prevalent in the Bahamas, and long established smuggling routes to the US via Florida continue to make the Bahamas a major transit country.¹⁸³ In contrast, smuggling is limited in Jamaica but trafficking is highly organized and connected to the drug trade, with both domestic and foreign crime groups controlling the market.¹⁸⁴ Further, human trafficking is highly violent in Jamaica and gang members are reported to force boys into criminal activity, including as couriers, lookouts, and armed gunmen.¹⁸⁵

Simply increasing the capacity for interdiction, enforcement, prosecution or returning victims in one CARICOM country would simply displace the flow to a neighbouring one, while traffickers, smugglers and irregular migrants would quickly adapt their practices. The need for coordination and harmonization across the whole region is therefore key and must underpin any country level initiative. In 2023, the OAS adopted its Third Workplan for a Comprehensive Response to Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere – 2023-2028¹⁸⁶. The plan Included guidelines for international cooperation, combatting and punishing trafficking in persons, and assisting and protecting victims and survivors.

Financial Crimes and Money Laundering

According to the GOCI, when compared to the global average score of 5.98, Caribbean states tend to rank lowly in financial crime (with 10 countries below both this global average and below Canada's score of 5.00). Three countries seemingly stand out with a particularly

¹⁸² Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Guyana*. <https://ocindex.net/country/guyana>; Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Suriname*. <https://ocindex.net/country/suriname>

¹⁸³ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Bahamas*. <https://ocindex.net/country/bahamas>

¹⁸⁴ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Jamaica*. <https://ocindex.net/country/jamaica>

¹⁸⁵ Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2023). *2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Jamaica*. United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/jamaica/>

¹⁸⁶ Organization of American States. (2023). *Third Workplan for a Comprehensive Response to Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere – 2023-2028*. Adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States at its fifty-third regular session, in accordance with operative paragraph 24 of resolution AG/RES. 3009 (LIII-O/23)) July 23, 2023.

acute financial crime problem: Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Guyana, alongside Mexico, experiences the most financial crimes in the Americas, and is among the top 10 highest ranked countries in the world.¹⁸⁷

There is little publicly available data on financial crimes in CARICOM countries although this is an area of growing concern in the region. However, law enforcement agencies are reporting an increase in recent years in financial crimes and illicit financial flows, including fraud schemes, credit card frauds, cyber-facilitated financial crimes, abusive tax evasion, and money laundering. Financial fraud has a widespread footprint across the region, involving hundreds of millions if not billions of dollars in illicit proceeds each year, impacting the economic security of countries and the region as a whole, and generating a certain level of associated violence.¹⁸⁸

One area of particular concern is trade-based money laundering¹⁸⁹, which the Financial Action Task Force defines as “the process of disguising the proceeds of crime and moving value through the use of trade transactions in an attempt to legitimize their illegal origin or finance illicit activities”.¹⁹⁰ In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the UN ECLAC estimated that, from 2004 to 2013, illicit financial outflows represented 1.8% of regional gross domestic product (GDP) and 3.1% of regional trade, with losses totalling US\$765 billion for the 10-year period.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index 2023: A fractured world*. <https://ocindex.net/report/2023/0-3-contents.html>

¹⁸⁸ Mavrellis, C. (2022). *Financial Fraud in the Caribbean*. Global Financial Integrity. <https://34n8bd.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/GFI-Financial-Fraud-in-the-Caribbean.pdf?time=1705159164>

¹⁸⁹ Global Financial Integrity (2021), *Trade-Related Illicit Financial Flows in 134 Developing Countries 2009-2018*. <https://34n8bd.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/IFFs-Report-2021.pdf?time=1705159164>

¹⁹⁰ Financial Action Task Force – Egmont Group. (2020). *Trade-based Money Laundering: Trends and Developments*. www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/methodandtrends/documents/trade-based-money-laundering-trends-and-developments.html

¹⁹¹ Podestá, A., Hanni, M., & Martner, R. (2017). *Flujos financieros ilícitos en América Latina y el Caribe*. United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean. https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/40921/S1601230_es.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

5.3 Cybercrime

CARICOM countries have gone through a digital transformation, with one of the fastest growing internet populations worldwide. They have also become an attractive target for cybercrime due to increased economic success, a growth in online presence, low levels of cyber resilience, and stay-at-home measures during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁹² Organised crime groups have been able to exploit these vulnerabilities by taking advantage of the internet and exploring new ways of making money online, as well as using the internet for other illicit activities such as money laundering and funding terrorism.

The countries with the most serious cyber-security issues according to the GOCl are Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and Jamaica.¹⁹³ In Trinidad and Tobago, cyber-crime is a relatively new and quickly developing market.¹⁹⁴ Cyber attacks have particularly targeted government, finance, and manufacturing, and are organized mainly by networks of foreign nationals (particularly from Venezuela). Suriname is also vulnerable to cyber attacks due to weak cyber-security systems, though attacks are not conducted by an organized criminal market; ransomware / malware attacks on public institutions and newspapers are the highest concern.¹⁹⁵ In Jamaica, existing criminal groups are utilizing cyber attacks, resulting in significant public sector security breaches, but “the market appears not to have experienced major growth yet.”¹⁹⁶ In Belize, cyber-related crimes have risen steadily in the last years, but are unlikely related to organized crime.¹⁹⁷ At present the incidence of cybercrime in countries of the region is not adequately monitored, but should be as countries improve economically and increase access to fast internet speed.

¹⁹² Brain, S. & Oyadei, O. (2023). Funding Crime Online: Cybercrime and its Links to Organised Crime in the Caribbean. *Commonwealth Cybercrime Journal*, 1(1): 84-110. <https://thecommonwealth.org/publications/cybercrime-journal-1-1>

¹⁹³ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index 2023: A fractured world*. <https://ocindex.net/report/2023/0-3-contents.html>.

¹⁹⁴ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Trinidad and Tobago*. https://ocindex.net/country/trinidad_and_tobago

¹⁹⁵ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Suriname*. <https://ocindex.net/country/suriname>

¹⁹⁶ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Jamaica*. <https://ocindex.net/country/jamaica>

¹⁹⁷ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). *Global organized crime index, country profile: Belize*. <https://ocindex.net/country/belize>

5.4 Corruption

Broadly speaking, acts of corruption entail the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Corruption is highly present in the minds of the Caribbean population and recent surveys show low and decreasing levels of trust in government officials and elected representatives.¹⁹⁸ Corruption demonstrably enables organized crime and hinders interventions to address it. Organized crime may be aided at multiple levels of authority, from law enforcement, courts, prisons, and elected officials, which contributes to impunity for criminal actors. This exacerbates the loss of public confidence in state institutions and in the criminal justice system.¹⁹⁹ As corrupt and state-embedded criminal actors gain leverage, the impact of anti-organized crime strategies may be limited or completely obstructed.

Corruption is a cross-cutting, aggravating factor of various criminal markets. In fact, the CARICOM countries with the highest organized crime scores in the GOCI were the countries that had the poorest score on Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perception Index (CPI. Scores are calculated from 0, highly corrupt, to 100, very clean)²⁰⁰: Guyana (GOCI 5.97, CPI 40), Jamaica (GOCI 5.80, CPI 44), Trinidad and Tobago (GOCI 5.20, CPI 42), Suriname (GOCI 4.77, CPI 40).

The Transparency International CPI is the leading global corruption ranking. It measures how corrupt the public sector is perceived to be in 180 countries.²⁰¹ For each country, scores are based on at least three data sources, such as corruption surveys of experts and businesspeople and assessments collected by institutions including the World Bank and the World Economic Forum. Data are unavailable in the CPI for Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. The second column in the chart above therefore records the GOCI indicator for state-embedded criminal actors as a supplementary indication of corruption.

¹⁹⁸ World Justice Project. (2023). *Corruption in the Caribbean: Insights from the General Public 2022*. <https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/Corruption-in-the-Caribbean-report-v4.pdf>; World Justice Project. (2023). *Rule of Law Surveys in 26 Latin American and Caribbean Countries Capture Authoritarian Trends and Widespread Mistrust*. <https://worldjusticeproject.org/news/rule-of-law-surveys-latin-america-caribbean-authoritarian-trends>.

¹⁹⁹ Transparency International. (2022, January 31). *CPI 2022: Highlights and Insights*. <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2022-highlights-insights-corruption-conflict>

²⁰⁰ Transparency International. (2022). *Corruption Perceptions Index*. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022>

²⁰¹ Idem.

Table 2: Corruption Measures for CARICOM countries (and Canada)

Transparency International, 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (Scores are calculated from 0, highly corrupt, to 100, very clean)		GOCI, State-embedded Criminal Actors (Scale of 1 to 10 where 1 represents lowest level of criminality and 10 the highest level of organized crime activity)	
Guyana	40	Guyana	8.00
Suriname	40	Jamaica	8.00
Trinidad and Tobago	42	Suriname	7.50
Jamaica	44	Saint Kitts and Nevis	6.50
Grenada	52	Belize	5.50
Dominica	55	Saint Lucia	5.00
Saint Lucia	55	Trinidad and Tobago	5.00
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	60	Barbados	4.00
Bahamas	64	Grenada	3.50
Barbados	65	Antigua and Barbuda	3.00
Canada	74	Bahamas	3.00
Antigua and Barbuda	-	Canada	2.00
Belize	-	Dominica	2.00
Saint Kitts and Nevis	-	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	2.00

Four CARICOM countries have a CPI score below 50, meaning the public sector is perceived to be more corrupt than clean: Guyana (40), Suriname (40), Trinidad and Tobago (42), and Jamaica (44).²⁰² Corruption is perceived to be pervasive in these states.²⁰³

Notably however, three of the four CARICOM countries with CPI scores in the 40s have made improvements since the 2021 CPI (Jamaica's score did not improve). Guyana, for example, has significantly raised its score over the past decade through concerted efforts and a regime change in 2015.²⁰⁴

6. Criminal Justice Responses and Crime Prevention Interventions

6.1 Overview of situation

As was discussed in the previous section, crime and violence present themselves differently in the various CARICOM countries. The same is true of the countries' responses to these problems: the responses vary, and the crime reduction and prevention priorities are understood differently from one country to another. However, to date, most national responses to crime and violence have emphasized suppression techniques, deterrence and attempts to interdict some illicit markets, with much less attention being paid to addressing the root causes of crime and violence and ensuring the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. This orientation is apparently changing as people are becoming aware of the limitation of past approaches and the consequences of over-reliance on suppression techniques as the main approach to dealing with violence and violent gangs. One can observe how several countries of the region are attempting to promote a more balanced and

²⁰² Idem.

²⁰³ Transparency International. (2023, January 31). *CPI 2022 for the Americas: Fertile ground for criminal networks and human rights abuses*. <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2022-americas-corruption-criminal-networks-human-rights-abuses>

²⁰⁴ Thomas, T. (2019, September 23). *Optimism about fighting corruption in Guyana*. Transparency International. <https://www.transparency.org/en/blog/optimism-about-fighting-corruption-in-guyana>

more effective response to crime. That change can be observed in recent formal political declarations at both the regional and national levels.

This section of the report highlights some of the recent trends in crime prevention and criminal justice initiatives within the region. However, it does not attempt to map all relevant initiatives.

National Development Plans and Security Strategies

At the national level, multiple CARICOM countries have produced a development and/or security strategy that – to varying extents – identify specific crime reduction objectives. These plans guide the priorities of governments in crime reduction initiatives, particularly when long-term visions have been supplemented with recent medium-term plans. They also frequently represent multi-agency planning efforts, indicate major projects, and some were developed with support from organizations such as the IDB. They are therefore worth consulting when developing new initiatives. Countries with active plans are Barbados²⁰⁵, Belize²⁰⁶, Dominica²⁰⁷, Grenada²⁰⁸, Jamaica²⁰⁹, Saint Kitts and Nevis²¹⁰, Saint Vincent and the

²⁰⁵ Barbados Ministry of Financial and Economic Affairs. (2005). *National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2005–2025: Global Excellence, Barbadian Traditions*. <https://extranet.who.int/mindbank/item/2272>.

Note that the plan may no longer be in use, however, as there is no recent evidence of efforts to monitor and assess the plan.

²⁰⁶ Belize Ministry of Economic Development. (2010). *Horizon 2030, National Development Framework for Belize 2010 - 2030*. <https://med.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Horizon2030PreparationandImplementationProcess.pdf>

²⁰⁷ Dominica Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, Climate Resilience and Social Security. (2020). *National Resilience Development Strategy 2030*. <https://finance.gov.dm/national-development-strategies/strategies/file/31-national-resilience-development-strategy-2030>

²⁰⁸ Grenada Ministry of Finance, Planning, Economic, and Physical Development. (2019). *National Sustainable Development Plan 2020 - 2035*. <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/GRANADA-NSDP20202035.pdf>

²⁰⁹ Planning Institute of Jamaica. (2009). *Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan (NDP)*. <https://www.vision2030.gov.jm/>; Planning Institute of Jamaica. (2022). *Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF) 2021-2024*. <https://www.pioj.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Medium-Term-Socio-Economic-Policy-Framework-MTF-2021-2024.pdf>

²¹⁰ Saint Kitts and Nevis Ministry of National Security (2021). *National Security Strategy*. https://www.sknis.gov.kn/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NATIONAL-SECURITY-STRATEGY_JANUARY-2021-1.pdf.

Grenadines²¹¹, Suriname²¹², and Trinidad and Tobago²¹³. The Bahamas currently has a national development plan undergoing public consultation²¹⁴, and Saint Lucia is working to update its 2020-2023 medium-term development strategy.²¹⁵ In Belize, consultations are underway for a new national security and defence strategy 2022-2027 that supplements the country's long-term development plan.²¹⁶ Three states have plans that have not been recently updated: Antigua and Barbuda²¹⁷, Guyana²¹⁸, and Montserrat²¹⁹.

The development plans of Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago are particularly detailed, with potentially measurable goals (See Appendix 2 for brief notes on national plans). Jamaica has one of the most robust planning frameworks, with action items presented in a medium-term plan to 2024 that supplements Vision 2030. Additionally, two other detailed plans are of note: the

²¹¹ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. (2013). *National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) 2013 - 2025*.

<https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/SanVicenteylasgranadinascompleto.pdf>.

²¹² Suriname Ministry of Finance and Planning. (2021). *Multi-Annual Development Plan 2022-2026 of the Republic Suriname*. <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/MOP-2022-2026-Volledig-FINAL-DNA-approved-Engels.pdf>

²¹³ Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Planning and Development. (2016). *Vision 2030: The National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago 2016-2030*. <https://www.planning.gov.tt/content/vision-2030>

²¹⁴ Bahamas National Development Plan Secretariat. (2016). *Working Draft of the National Development Plan of the Bahamas for Public Consultation*. Office of the Prime Minister. https://www.vision2040bahamas.org/media/uploads/Draft_National_Development_Plan_01.12.2016_for_public_release.pdf.

²¹⁵ Saint Lucia Department of Economic Development, Transport and Civil Aviation. (2020). *Medium Term Development Strategy 2020-2023, Nou Tout Ansanm A.R.I.S.E.* <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/Saint%20Lucia%20MTDS%202020-2023.pdf>; Regional Observatory on planning for Development. (n.d.). *Medium Term Development Strategy 2020 - 2023 of St. Lucia*. <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en/plans/medium-term-development-strategy-2020-2023-st-lucia>

²¹⁶ Government of Belize Press Office. (2022, January 11). *Stakeholder Consultations on the Development of the National Security and Defence Strategy 2022-2027*. <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/stakeholder-consultations-on-the-development-of-the-national-security-and-defence-strategy-2022-2027/>

²¹⁷ Antigua and Barbuda Ministry of Finance and Corporate Governance. (2015). *Medium-Term Development Strategy 2016 to 2020*. https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/antigua_barbuda_medium_term_development_strategy.pdf

²¹⁸ Guyana Ministry of Finance. (n.d.). *National Development Strategy*. <https://finance.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/nds.pdf>

²¹⁹ Montserrat Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (2010). *Sustainable Development Plan 2008 - 2020*. <https://www.gov.ms/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Montserrat-SDP-2008-to-2020.pdf>

National Consensus on Crime²²⁰ and the Strategic Plan for the Jamaican Judiciary 2019-2023²²¹. At the basis of the National Consensus on Crime is an agreement that prevention is the way to ensure a sustained and permanent reduction in the level of crime and that decisive action is urgently required towards:

- dismantling and eliminating the violent criminal gangs;
- normalizing and re-integrating troubled communities, replacing a culture of lawlessness with a culture of civic pride and respect for law and order;
- waging a relentless war on corruption, collusion and money-laundering; and
- reforming and modernizing the country's police and justice systems.

With respect specifically to violence prevention, the Jamaican government has created the National Commission for Violence Prevention to develop a 10-year evidence-based National Action Plan, with recommendations for legislative changes and institutional building. Since its establishment in 2019, the National Commission for Violence Prevention has reviewed the violence-prevention initiatives of twenty-two ministries, departments and agencies, and more than 45 violence-prevention programmes implemented between 2015 and 2021. According to Jamaica's Prime Minister, the objective is to create a comprehensive all-of-society enterprise to engineer a social and cultural transformation of the Jamaican society and culture away from crime and violence.²²² The Commission's report is expected to be released in the coming weeks. Notably, the Prime Minister has announced that one of the recommendations of the Commission is a total ban on corporal punishment.²²³ The

²²⁰ Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica. (2019). *National Consensus on Crime*. <https://www.psoj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Jamaicas-National-Consensus-on-Crime-The-Agreement-Final-1.pdf>. Also: Transforming Jamaica To A Safe, Secure, Investment-Friendly, and Just Society by Addressing Crime, Violence & Corruption. <https://www.psoj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Jamaicas-National-Consensus-on-Crime-The-Principles-Final.pdf>

²²¹ Supreme Court of Jamaica. (2019). *Strategic Plan for the Jamaican Judiciary 2019 - 2023*. <https://supremecourt.gov.jm/content/strategic-plan>

²²² Patterson, C. (2023, March 20). Commission for Violence Prevention Developing 10-Year National Action Plan. *Jamaica Information Services*. <https://jis.gov.jm/commission-for-violence-prevention-developing-10-year-national-action-plan/>

²²³ Patterson, C. (2024, January 15). Violence Prevention Commission Recommends Total Ban on Corporal Punishment. *Jamaica Information Services*. <https://jis.gov.jm/violence-prevention-commission-recommends-total-ban-on-corporal-punishment/>

Government has promised amendments to the Education Act to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in schools.

Criminal Justice

The poor performance of the criminal justice system, and as a result its lack of credibility in the eyes of the population, remain key issues in countries of the region. The Needham's Point Declaration offers several recommendations for addressing these problems. It is meant to address the what were perceived by its authors as the main symptoms of the poor performance of the criminal justice system in CACRCOM countries, including: unnecessary delays within the process; unnecessary steps in the process (e.g. unnecessary adjournments; unproductive procedures mandated by law; counterproductive policies or traditions; unproductive or duplicative activities; failed or aborted prosecutions; and, unnecessary and prolonged pre-trial detention which compounds an already critical prison overcrowding problem. Timeliness of case resolution, in particular, is related to performance and is a fundamental aspect of a fair and effective criminal justice process that deserves public confidence.

The Declaration also acknowledged that years of inefficiency had resulted in sizable case backlogs in most if not all courts of the region. Case backlogs are an obvious symptom of the system's lack of capacity or its inefficiency, or both. Justice systems are lumbering under the weight of huge backlogs that further contribute to delays in processing new cases. During the consultations, judicial officers, prosecutors, defence counsel and court administrators complained about the lack of resources, although they also acknowledged that additional human and financial resources may not be sufficient to address systemic issues and resolve the situation. More radical measures designed specifically to free the justice system from that historic burden have rarely been attempted.

In other CARICOM states, the recently launched Partnership of the Caribbean and the European Union (EU) on Justice (PACE Justice) represents a significant initiative in backlog reduction. This project is funded by a €10 million grant from the EU and will be implemented by the UNDP from 2023 to 2027.²²⁴ Beneficiary countries are Antigua and Barbuda,

²²⁴ United Nations Development Program. (2023). *The Partnership of the Caribbean and the European Union on Justice (PACE Justice) Regional Programme*. <https://www.undp.org/barbados/projects/pace-justice-1>

Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago. The program builds on a 2020 UNDP Judicial Needs Assessment that identified human and technological resource and capacity constraints leading to severe backlogs and high levels of prisoners on remand in these countries.

The stakeholders consulted for the present review acknowledged various inefficiencies and delays in the criminal investigation process, including weak case management by the police, ineffective investigation techniques, insufficient use of modern methods of investigations and associated technologies, poor information management, and a lack of coordination between the police and the prosecution that often contributes to delays and/or failed prosecutions. Many of them also suggested that many of the failed or delayed prosecutions can be attributed to poor investigation, weak case management, and poor police reporting, as well as the fact that the evidentiary requirements of a case may not have been adequately understood or addressed at the investigation stage. In many countries of the region, a large percentage of prosecutions for less serious offences are conducted by the police, without an effective charge approval process.

Another major symptom of inefficiency is the number of prisoners detained while awaiting trial (often measured as a proportion of the total number of prisoners in a country's prisons) and the average length of pre-trial detention. Incarceration rates in general are high in the Caribbean. Data collected for the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) on pre-trial detention in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, and Jamaica, as part of the JURIST Project,²²⁵ drew attention to the fact that with the exception of Jamaica, these countries had incarceration rates well above the international average of 145 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants.²²⁶ Incarceration rates as recorded by World Prison Brief in descending order are: The Bahamas (409 people per 100,000 inhabitants), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (353), Dominica (348), Grenada (335), Saint Kitts and Nevis (296), Belize (289), Saint Lucia (278), Trinidad and Tobago (276), Guyana (271), Barbados (258), Antigua and Barbuda

²²⁵ Dunn, Pierre, Barnett & Company (2021). *Consultancy to Gather Data on Pre-Trial Detention in the JURIST-assisted Countries of Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, and Jamaica*. Caribbean Court of Justice.

²²⁶ Trinidad and Tobago also falls in that category. See also: Carranza, E. (2023). *Delito y Prisión en América Latina y el Caribe: ¿Qué hacer?, ¿Qué no hay que hacer?* ILANUD.

(237), Suriname (185), and Jamaica (125). These can be compared to Canada's incarceration rate of 88 per 100,000 people.

Regarding pre-trial detention specifically, multiple CARICOM states have a high proportion of prisoners on remand. For reference, in the majority of countries worldwide, pre-trial and remand prisoners make up between 10% and 40% of the total prison population²²⁷, though Canada's percentage was 43.4% as of 2022.²²⁸ According to national data gathered by World Prison Brief, CARICOM states with more than 40% of prisoners held pre-trial or on remand were: Antigua and Barbuda (43.3%), Barbados (54.7%), Dominica (50.2%), Saint Lucia (61.1%), Suriname (50.0%), and Trinidad and Tobago (59.7%).²²⁹ The judicial officers and defence counsels consulted often pointed out that the problem is not strictly one of inefficient case management and processing, but also of lack of alternatives to pre-trial detention, antiquated and restrictive pre-trial release (bail) laws, lack of mechanisms for early case resolution (e.g., mediation, case bargaining discussions). Finally, when bail and other options for release pending trial are available in the legislation, there are other practical problems in ensuring that pre-trial detention is used as a last resort and for the shortest possible time.

It is frequently these prolonged periods of pre-trial detention (often measured in years) and their resulting denial of the rights of accused individuals that have drawn attention to the inefficiency of the criminal justice process. According to international law, unnecessary detention should be avoided and prolonged pre-trial detention should be the exception, not the rule. In many CARICOM countries pre-trial detention continues to be imposed systematically on those suspected of a criminal offence, even a relatively minor one, without considering whether it is necessary or proportionate, or if less intrusive measures could be applied, for instance bail.²³⁰

²²⁷ Walmsley, R. (2020). *World Pre-trial/Remand Imprisonment List, fourth edition*. World Prison Brief. https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/world_pre-trial_list_4th_edn_final.pdf

²²⁸ World Prison Brief. (n.d.). *Canada*. <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/canada>

²²⁹ World Prison Brief. (n.d.). *Caribbean*. <https://www.prisonstudies.org/map/caribbean>; World Prison Brief. (n.d.). *South America*. <https://www.prisonstudies.org/map/south-america>

²³⁰ Penal Reform International. (2016). *Ten-Point Plan on Reducing Pre-trial Detention*. www.penalreform.org/issues/pre-trial-justice/issue/

Pre-trial detention, case backlogs, and other factors such as inadequate facilities further contribute to prison overcrowding. World Prison Brief also gathers this national data, reporting Caribbean countries with prison populations exceeding official capacity are²³¹: Grenada (191.4% occupancy level), Bahamas (161.7%), Antigua and Barbuda (155.3%), Guyana (151.0%), Saint Kitts and Nevis (144.0%), and Saint Lucia (102.8%). From the data collected in the JURIST project mentioned above, all four countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica) have issues with prison overcrowding (with Guyana having the highest prison population and Jamaica having the least) and over-reliance on pre-trial detention is partly responsible for this.

National governments have recognized the effects of case backlogs and are implementing a number of initiatives in response. Notably, Jamaica's Strategic Plan for the Judiciary 2019-2023 introduced reforms that included a 'differentiated case management program' that sets standards and timelines for simple versus complex cases, among other efforts such as judicial training, improved workflows, and enhanced record retrieval systems.²³² By 2023, the Chief Justice of Jamaica noted that parish courts were nearly backlog free with under 3% of active civil and criminal cases in backlog.²³³ The plan also set an intention to become a member of the International Consortium for Court Excellence by following its framework of good court governance, including in levels of backlog, efficiency and service delivery, which was achieved in January 2024.²³⁴ This plan, among other programs, may be reflected in Jamaica's notably low proportion of pre-trial and remand incarcerated persons, at 22.5% in 2021.²³⁵

²³¹ The following data is from 2022, with the exception of The Bahamas which is from 2020 and Saint Kitts and Nevis which is from 2014. Saint Kitts and Nevis may have since reduced its occupancy rate to near 100% through a rehabilitation program aimed at reducing recidivism. See: Saint Kitts and Nevis Information Service. (2022, April 14). *Prison rehabilitation programme in St. Kitts and Nevis reaps success; prison population reduced significantly*. <https://www.sknis.gov.kn/2022/04/14/prison-rehabilitation-programme-in-st-kitts-and-nevis-reaps-success-prison-population-reduced-significantly/>

²³² Supreme Court of Jamaica. (2020). *Strategic Plan for the Jamaican Judiciary 2019-2023*. <https://supremecourt.gov.jm/sites/default/files/pdf/CMS-benchmarking-the-future%20.pdf>

²³³ Linton, L. (2024, January 8). *Judiciary Strategic Plan Bearing Fruit*. Jamaica Information Service. <https://jis.gov.jm/judiciary-strategic-plan-bearing-fruit/#:~:text=Implementation%20of%20the%20Strategic%20Plan,improve%20service%20delivery%20to%20citizens.>

²³⁴ Jamaican courts get international nod for excellence. (2024, January 9). *Jamaica Observer*. <https://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/jamaican-courts-get-international-nod-for-excellence/>

²³⁵ World Prison Brief. (n.d.). *Jamaica*. <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/jamaica>

Poor cost-effectiveness and an apparent or suspected disregard for costs in some of the decisions made within the system have also raised concerns among some of the stakeholders consulted. In particular, the costs associated with certain types of trials (e.g., jury trials for very minor offences) or procedures (e.g., management and disclosure of certain types of evidence) have grown at an alarming rate and require careful attention. The usual symptoms of inefficiency are typically amplified when the system is processing large and complex cases involving scientific, digital or expert evidence, multiple defendants, and transnational conspiracies and, as a result, some special attention must be given to the need to manage these cases in a more efficient and cost-effective manner.

Further, poor performance makes many aspects of the criminal justice process questionable and often also unsustainable. In CARICOM countries, diffused lines of accountability for performance within the system make it vulnerable to criticism and slow to adopt measures to improve its efficiency. A failure to meet public expectations of fairness, timeliness, and transparency often affects the system's credibility and authority. The general lack of transparency in the management of the various aspects of the system and a near absence of publicly available performance data obviously does nothing to increase the overall credibility of the system.

The focus of present justice reforms in countries of the region tends to be on reducing unnecessary delays by further capacity building, the injection of additional resources, improving rules and procedures, and inter-agency cooperation. A few countries have tried to address the system's inefficiency without addressing systemic issues or significantly increasing the system's capacity. These measures, because they mostly failed to address the underlying causes of the problem, can only have a temporary impact if any. A systems approach, as that which is recommended in the Needham's Point Declaration, is necessary but seldom adopted.

However, procedural innovations are contemplated by many countries. Some jurisdictions are focusing on promoting early case resolution, plea discussion and promoting more effective case progression through the process. Some have adopted new legislation over the last several years to establish a plea-bargaining process, new evidentiary rules, revised rules of procedure, use of summary proceedings or judge alone trials, measures to protect of victims and witnesses, or by establishing specialized courts. In the Eastern Caribbean region,

for example, countries are looking with interest at the experience of St. Lucia in implementing new rules of criminal procedure.

Similarly, countries of the region are looking with interest at the experience of some CARICOM countries in establishing specialized courts. The establishment of Sexual Offences Courts in Guyana (since 2017) and in Antigua and Barbuda (2019) was described as “pleasant winds of change” blowing across the Caribbean and inspired by the JURIST project.²³⁶ Guyana has also introduced specialized Family courts and Drug Courts, and last year, a Mental Health Court. Belize has had a Child Friendly Family Court in Punta Gorda since 2016, which deals with family cases, including custody, domestic violence and juvenile justice. The Children Court of Trinidad and Tobago, established in 2017 through the proclamation of the Family and Children Division Act, brought in a restorative and rehabilitative approach to addressing matters concerning children in conflict with the law and children in need of services, formerly deemed to be “beyond control”. Other countries of the region can be expected to follow suit, although the impact of these specialized courts has not yet been evaluated.

Progress has generally been slow in implementing such reforms, especially legislative reforms, and almost none of them has been systematically evaluated. Unfortunately, despite attempts to improve data management and collect performance data, there are still few effective performance monitoring systems in place in countries of the region. Whether regionally or nationally, justice system performance standards are often ill-defined and performance indicators are not systematically measured. In countries where the data exist, a steady increase in both the average time to completion of cases and average age of cases is observed.

Crime Control – Investigating, Prosecuting and Punishing Crime

Most countries of the region face major law enforcement and security challenges, particularly with respect to gang violence, organized crime, and various transnational criminal threats. The resources and capacity of law enforcement and prosecution agencies often cannot

²³⁶ Caribbean Court of Justice. (2022, October 21). *Remarks at the Virtual Launch of the Revised Model Guidelines for Sexual Offence Cases in the Caribbean Region*, the Honourable Mme Justice Maureen Rajnauth-Lee, Judge of the Caribbean. https://ccj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Rajnauth-Lee_20221021.pdf.

measure up to these challenges. Under-resourced law enforcement, especially when dealing with difficult geographical features such as long coastal stretches or vast inland jungle, is an ongoing issue, as is a lack of access to technology, training, and reliable information management tools.

In urban areas, community policing and community engagement are increasingly recognized as a method for reducing violence in ‘hot spots’ and supporting community cohesion and resilience.²³⁷ Nearly every country’s police force states it will prioritize community policing or has a dedicated community relations unit, but the implementation of that approach is still limited.²³⁸ At the same time, recent violent crime spikes may provide justification for reverting to a militaristic approach to crime. In Jamaica, the National Consensus on Crime allows for the military to be used as a ‘bridging mechanism’ to reduce crime (particularly gang violence)

²³⁷ For example, the national plans of every country except Montserrat and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines mention community policing or improving law enforcement’s relationship within communities.

²³⁸ See for example: Royal Bahamas Police Force. (2023). *Commissioner’s Policing Plan*. <https://www.royalbahamaspolice.org/statistics/Commissioner%27s%20Policing%20Plan%202023.pdf>, in which the first of six priorities is to revolutionize community policing.

The Barbados Police Service Community Relations Group. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved January 14, 2024, from <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2739884679384949/>

Gonzalez, Z. P. (2023, November 7). Prime Minister supports community policing initiative. *Breaking Belize News*. <https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2023/11/07/prime-minister-supports-community-policing-initiative/>

Commonwealth of Dominica Police Force. (n.d.). *Policing through partnership: Community-based policing operational objectives*. <https://www.cdof.gov.dm/resources/safety-security-of-all/policing-through-partnership>; *Community policing program in the works for this year*. (2023, February 23). *Dominica News Online*. <https://dominicanewsonline.com/news/homepage/homepage-carousel/community-policing-program-in-works-for-this-year/>

Royal Grenada Police Force. (n.d.). *Community relations department*.

<https://www.rgpf.gd/index.php/departments/community-relations-department-crd>

Guyana Police Force. (n.d.). *Community policing*. https://guyanapoliceforce.gy/?page_id=1431

Jamaica Constabulary Force. (n.d.). *Community policing in action*. <https://jcf.gov.jm/community-policing-in-action/>

Saint Kitts and Nevis Information Service. (2023, June 7). *Royal St. Christopher and Nevis police force strengthening its operations and increasing its community engagements*. <https://www.sknis.gov.kn/2023/06/07/royal-st-christopher-and-nevis-police-force-strengthening-its-operations-and-increasing-its-community-engagements/>

Andrew, R. (2024, January 6). Police force stresses the importance of community groups in combatting crime. *The Voice*. <https://thevoiceslu.com/2024/01/police-force-stresses-the-importance-of-community-groups-in-combatting-crime/>

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Ministry of National Security. (n.d.). *National committee on crime prevention (NCCP)*. https://security.gov.vc/security/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=35&Itemid=127; RSVGPF embarks on activities to strengthen community policing strategy. (2024, January 11). *St. Vincent Times*. <https://www.stvincenttimes.com/rsvqpf-embarks-on-activities-to-strengthen-community-policing-strategy/>

Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. (n.d.). *Community Policing*. <https://www.ttps.gov.tt/Branches/Branches-A-E/Community-Policing>

in the highest violence areas, which will end when certain conditions are met including sustained reduction in homicide. This is meant as a temporary, emergency response to “create space for initiating and progressing community programmes and JCF [Jamaica Constabulary Force] reform”.²³⁹

Many Caribbean leaders are now acknowledging the limitations of a repressive approach to violent crime. For example, during a special meeting of the Permanent Council of the OAS, Trinidad and Tobago’s attorney-general and minister of legal affairs, the Hon. Reginald Armour, pointed out that “in Jamaica, approximately 70 percent of the violence is related to criminal organizations, despite the government’s drastic measures to combat gangs, by the implementation of ‘Gang Suppression’ laws and states of emergency, repeated military and police operations and the arrest of 149 gang leaders”.²⁴⁰ He observed that “these gangs continue to evolve with new leaders and a ready supply of illicit firearms originating from the United States”.²⁴¹ Similar views were expressed by other criminal justice and community leaders during our consultations.

Also related to investigating crime, forensic science labs exist in Jamaica (Institute for Forensic Science and Legal Medicine), Belize (National Forensic Science Service), Saint Lucia (National Forensic Science Laboratory), Guyana (Guyana Forensic Science Laboratory); Trinidad and Tobago (Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre), Barbados (Forensic Sciences Centre). Saint Lucia was the first island in the OECS with modern forensic analytic capabilities. The facility is managed by the Ministry of Justice. In October 2023, the US announced that it would provide funding for a Forensics Regional Center of Excellence in Saint Lucia to serve Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, The Bahamas, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.²⁴² Various stakeholders in the region, including prosecutors, mentioned that the police tend to underutilize forensic services and overly rely instead on eyewitness testimony and confessions. Defence lawyers also rarely take advantage of these services.

²³⁹ Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica. (2019). *National Consensus on Crime*. <https://www.psoj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Jamaicas-National-Consensus-on-Crime-The-Agreement-Final-1.pdf>, p. 2.

²⁴⁰ Sandars, R. (2023). A call to arms against the surge of gang violence. *Caribbean News Global*. <https://caribbeannewsglobal.com/a-call-to-arms-against-the-surge-of-gang-violence>, Nov. 2, 2023.

²⁴¹ Idem.

²⁴² <https://bb.usembassy.gov/united-states-supports-forensics-regional-center-of-excellence-in-saint-lucia/>

Building a data and information management and sharing infrastructure is a priority for all police forces of the region. Four countries have established crime observatories, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, and Jamaica, some of them with a fairly broad mandate.²⁴³ These observatories collect and process primary data sources to inform evidence-based policies for the relevant ministry or ministries (e.g. of national security or legal affairs). Other CARICOM states have undertaken data strengthening programs with international assistance. Major programs include InfoSegura, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), and CariSECURE. InfoSegura is a USAID and UNDP joint initiative that improves the use and analysis of data regarding citizen security and justice, of which Belize is the only CARICOM beneficiary.²⁴⁴ CariSECURE 2.0 provided a good basis for developing a data collection and analysis capacity in Eastern and Southern Caribbean countries, including the development of a regional crime observatory.

Port security is another area in which deficiencies are frequently identified.²⁴⁵ In July 2022, the Center for Naval Analysis published a review of the maritime security and law enforcement capabilities of 12 CBSI partner nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.²⁴⁶ The report assessed the countries in 11 categories, including three that are particularly relevant for creating barriers to traffickers operating throughout the Caribbean, namely port security, interdiction capabilities, and intelligence gathering. Of the 12 countries, only the Dominican

²⁴³ Barbados Office of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs. (n.d.). *Criminal justice research and planning unit*. <https://oag.gov.bb/Departments/Criminal-Justice/>; Belize Crime Observatory. (n.d.). *Home*. <https://bco.gov.bz/>; Williams, R. (2020, January 24). Crime Observatory Gets Further \$16.7 Million. *Jamaica Information Service*.

<https://jis.gov.jm/crime-observatory-gets-further-16-7-million/>; Guyana Ministry of Home Affairs. (2022). *Citizen Security Strengthening Program*. <https://moha.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Details-on-the-CSSP.pdf>

²⁴⁴ InfoSegura. (n.d.). *About us*. <https://infosegura.org/en/about-us>

²⁴⁵ Hernandez-Roy, C. & Bledsoe, R. (2023). *Building barriers and bridges: The need for international cooperation to counter the Caribbean-Europe drug trade*. Center for Strategic and International Studies.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/building-barriers-and-bridges-need-international-cooperation-counter-caribbean-europe-drug>

²⁴⁶ Espach, R., Bradford, N. J., De Allende, V., Gold, Z., & Rosenau, W. (2022). *Assessment of CBSI Partner Nation Capabilities for Maritime Security and Law Enforcement*. The Center for Naval Analyses.

<https://www.cna.org/reports/2022/08/Assessment-of-CBSI-Partner-Nation-Capabilities-for-Maritime-Security-and-Law-Enforcement.pdf>

Republic was rated as having “high” port security; two, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, were rated as having “medium” security; and most of the rest had “low” security.

One of the security and international cooperation issues frequently raised during the consultations was the rising number of deportations of Caribbean nationals convicted of criminal offences in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom (UK). These deportations, primarily due to drug-related offences and illegal firearms possession, have significant social implications for the region, and it is widely acknowledged that the reintegration of these individuals is relevant to national and regional security.²⁴⁷ A report produced for IMPACS highlighted a number of troubling findings, including the fact that 97% of parents with children born overseas had left their children behind in the deporting country.²⁴⁸ The Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), the agency responsible for these deportations from Canada, indicated that it is limited in terms of the collaboration it can provide in such cases.

Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Recidivism Reduction

Recidivism rates are rarely measured in a reliable way, but officials in every CARICOM country generally acknowledge that these rates are unacceptably high. Rehabilitation and social reintegration programs are underdeveloped and generally lacking in most CARICOM countries. The prison and youth detention centres are often described by local officials during our consultations as major “crime pipelines”, “ideal recruiting grounds for gangs”, or “criminal training schools for young offenders”. National investments in rehabilitation and reintegration programs have been minimal, despite official declarations of intentions. Countries of the region typically rely on the general threat of future arrest and conviction (specific deterrence) as their main and clearly defective means of preventing recidivism. The stigma attached to a criminal conviction is very strong within the population and the non-criminal opportunities available to ex-offenders are very limited. As a former Minister of Home Affairs, Legal Affairs and National Security in St. Lucia explained during the Fourth Meeting of OECS Officials

²⁴⁷ Spotlight Initiative & United Nations Development Program. (2023). *Situation analysis of citizen security in the Caribbean: A spotlight on gender based violence and family violence*. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-12/publication3_guidelines_v2_ccrev_revas_ccdic.pdf

²⁴⁸ Barnes, A. and Seepersad, R. (2008). *A comparative study on criminal deportation in Antigua, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago*. CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security.

Responsible for Penitentiary and Prison Policies: "In order to reduce recidivism, we must give them the chance to reform and lead productive lives".²⁴⁹ However, offenders are rarely offered a genuine "second chance".²⁵⁰

Most if not all prison services in the region officially offer rehabilitation programs, mostly in the form of limited education and vocational training.²⁵¹ A report of the IDB on incarcerated persons in six CARICOM states (Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) between 2016 and 2019 concluded that rehabilitation and reintegration programs were insufficient in the region.²⁵² Moreover, prison conditions are rarely in a state that would support effective rehabilitation programs. In some countries, it is quite clear that addressing prison conditions, including safety and security, is a pre-requisite

²⁴⁹ Minister Francis: Inmate Rehabilitation, Social Reintegration Go Hand in Hand. (2020, March 7). *The Voice*. <https://thevoiceslu.com/2020/03/minister-francis-inmate-rehabilitation-social-reintegration-go-hand-in-hand/>

²⁵⁰ Senior prison officials urge the public to give rehabilitated ex-inmates a second chance to reintegrate into society. (2022, April 16). *St. Kitts Nevis Information Service*. <https://www.sknis.gov.kn/2022/04/16/senior-prison-officials-urge-the-public-to-give-rehabilitated-ex-inmates-a-second-chance-to-reintegrate-into-society/>

²⁵¹ See, for example: Bahamas Citizen Security and Justice Program. (n.d.). *About*. <https://www.csjpbahamas.gov.bs/about/>

Barbados Prison Service. (n.d.). *Programmes*. <http://prisonservice.gov.bb/programmes/>

Belize Central Prison (Kolbe Foundation). (n.d.). *Kolbe's Aim - To Provide a Secure, Humane Facility Geared, Towards Meaningful Rehabilitation*. <http://www.kolbe.bz/>

Dominica Prison Service. (n.d.). *Programmes*. <https://prisons.gov.dm/>

Guyana Prison Service. (n.d.). *Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Skills Training*. <https://gps.moha.gov.gy/training/>; Guyana

Prison Service. (n.d.). *Government to roll out new reintegration programme*. <https://gps.moha.gov.gy/fresh-start-for-inmates/>

Jamaica Department of Correctional Service. (n.d.). *Repurposing lives through rehabilitation*.

<https://www.dcs.gov.jm/rehab-infocus/>; Jamaica Department of Correctional Service. (n.d.). *Drive Programme*. <https://www.dcs.gov.jm/drive-programme/>

Prison rehabilitation programme in St. Kitts and Nevis reaps success; Prison population reduced significantly. (2022, April 14). *Saint Kitts and Nevis Information Service*. <https://www.sknis.gov.kn/2022/04/14/prison-rehabilitation-programme-in-st-kitts-and-nevis-reaps-success-prison-population-reduced-significantly/>

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Ministry of National Security. (n.d.). *Rehabilitation*.

https://security.gov.vc/security/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=117

Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service. (n.d.). *About Restorative Justice: Prison Transformation*.

<https://tprisons.com/official/about-restorative-justice/>

²⁵² Inter-American Development Bank. (2020). *Regional comparative report, survey of individuals deprived of liberty: Caribbean 2016–2019*. <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/idb-study-highlights-ways-reduce-prison-population-caribbean>

to implementing any rehabilitation programs.²⁵³ Even in the cases of relatively well-established programs (such as those in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago), the impacts of these programs on recidivism remains to be confirmed and public support for them is at best lukewarm.²⁵⁴

Violence Against Women and Children

Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago are all parties to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Belém Do Pará Convention). The progress they have made in implementing that convention varies.

A recent UNDP analysis found that Caribbean states have done relatively well at enacting gender-based violence laws through international treaties, their constitutions, legislation and common law.²⁵⁵ However, there are legislative gaps concerning sexual harassment, discrimination, intimidation and exploitation.²⁵⁶ In addition to legislation, many countries have implemented measures such as national plans on violence against women and/or children, women’s shelters, victim support offices, special police units, and funding of non-governmental organizations, though these are not consistently present, active or resourced across states. In several countries, there is public pressure for more concrete actions to be taken on existing rhetoric and planning.

Some countries have benefited from international assistance in implementing projects to improve criminal justice response to gender-based violence. For example, Guyana, with the support of Canada’s JURIST project, national guidelines were adopted based on a rights-

²⁵³ For example in Antigua and Barbuda, as evidenced by recent declarations of the prison authorities: Prison boss says security and education top HMP’s 2024 agenda. (2024, January 3). *Antigua Observer*.

<https://antiguaobserver.com/prison-boss-says-security-and-education-are-at-the-top-of-2024-agenda/>

²⁵⁴ Leslie, D. L. (2022). Reassessing Conditions of “Prison” in Jamaica. *International Criminal Justice Review*, 32(1), 48-67.

²⁵⁵ Spotlight Initiative & United Nations Development Program. (2023). *Situation analysis of citizen security in the Caribbean: A spotlight on gender based violence and family violence*.

https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-12/publication3_guidelines_v2_ccrev_revas_ccdic.pdf

²⁵⁶ *Idem*. See page 44 for a country-by-country table on domestic violence, sexual violence, and harassment laws.

based approach to the treatment of complainants and vulnerable witnesses, including children, involved in sexual assault cases, and a sexual offences court was commissioned at the Georgetown High Court.

A recent review by the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls and the UNDP in Latin America and the Caribbean analyzed gender mainstreaming, violence against women and girls, and family violence in regional citizen security frameworks, national development plans and general approaches and assessed the extent to which existing policies and strategies align with regional and international instruments on gender. The findings of that review underlined that “although the prevalence of VAWG in all its forms, whether sexual assault or intimate partner violence, is high in the region and constitutes perhaps the most notorious source of danger, harm and insecurity for large sectors of Caribbean society, it has not been adequately framed as a citizen security concern”.²⁵⁷ The review also emphasized the pivotal role of legislative and policy reforms and made several recommendations directed at both the national and regional levels. These included strengthening relevant legal frameworks and bolstering policing and prosecution responses so as to institute specialized intervention procedures for violence against women and girls, improving service and programme delivery such as legal aid services and psychosocial support. It also noted the importance of relying on well-designed model training curricula for Caribbean-wide capacity-building of the police and justice sectors.²⁵⁸

Several initiatives have also been undertaken in the region to prevent and respond to various forms of violence against children. The health sector is usually at the forefront of these activities and there is a growing emphasis in several countries on engaging the education sector, as the links between violence against children and learning outcomes are clearly revealed by recent research. There is also the issue of violence against children in detention, especially in pre-trial detention, a situation which is bound to prevent their rehabilitation and positive development. That is an issue that UNICEF and its partners have raised in many CARICOM Countries.²⁵⁹ Crime prevention programs have typically been slower to

²⁵⁷ *Idem*, p. 23.

²⁵⁸ *Idem*, p. 34.

²⁵⁹ See for example, de Vries, S. (2017). *Violence against children in Suriname - Sub-study children in (pre-trial) detention*. UNICEF / Guyana and Suriname.
<https://www.unicef.org/guyanasuriname/media/626/file/Executive%20Summary%20VAC%20Detention.pdf>

understand the link between child violence and future addiction, mental health issues, and criminal behaviour.

Interventions can be categorized into seven strategies for ending violence against children developed by UNICEF, PAHO, WHO, UNODC and other organizations, called INSPIRE: implementation and enforcement of laws; norms and values changes; safe environment creation; parenting and caregiver support; income and economic strengthening, response and support services (protective environment); education and life skills development.²⁶⁰ According to a review by the PAHO of governments' self reported initiatives to prevent and respond to violence against children, there are gaps in parenting programs and norms and values programs, and safe environments and income and economic strengthening were the least supported strategies in non-Latin Caribbean countries.²⁶¹

In Guyana and Suriname, UNICEF reported that the alarming rate of violence, abuse and neglect against children is not sufficiently addressed. Children and adolescents in contact-with-the-law do not always receive holistic support geared towards complete rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities. The primary focus of Suriname's development programme is on the strengthening of child protection systems, which will contribute to the realization of children's right to be free from violence, neglect and abuse, including the right of children to live in a family environment and their right to protection as a key element of justice for children. A mapping exercise of the situation of the existing formal care system will help to identify how to better develop a strong alternative care system that will prevent family separation and promote national adoption systems.

Transnational Organized Crime, Trafficking, and Money Laundering

CARICOM states are generally party to international conventions on organized crime, with Antigua and Barbuda and the Bahamas showing particularly high levels of ratification. All countries of the region are party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational

²⁶⁰ World Health Organization. (2016). *INSPIRE: seven strategies for ending violence against children*. <https://www.unicef.org/media/66876/file/INSPIRE-SevenStrategies.pdf>

²⁶¹ Pan American Health Organization. (2020). *Preventing and responding to violence against children in the Americas: Regional status report 2020*. https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/53038/9789275122945_eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

Organized Crime whose main purpose is to promote and facilitate cooperation among members states in combatting transnational crime. Several CARICOM countries have developed specific anti-organized crime infrastructure, including Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In some countries, for example Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, the scope of organized crime threatens to overwhelm substantial investments in counter initiatives. Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia, like Canada, are also parties to the Inter-American Convention on Extradition. In addition, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago are parties to Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters.

Antigua and Barbuda has an Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy, the country's primary counter-narcotics agency that collaborates with the police, defence force, customs and coast guard.²⁶² In the Bahamas, the police have a dedicated Drug Enforcement Unit, and the National Anti-Drugs Secretariat brings cohesions to drug control policy, data, and rehabilitation program planning.²⁶³ Further, the government has taken measures against money laundering to the extent that it is now rated 'compliant' or 'largely compliant' with the 40 FATF recommendations by the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF).²⁶⁴ In Trinidad and Tobago, the Organized Crime and Intelligence Unit is a division of police that partners with other relevant divisions (including the Transnational Organized Crime Unit), as well as regional and international partners.²⁶⁵ Multiple other CARICOM law enforcement agencies have established specialized units for countering organized crime,²⁶⁶ though understaffing, lack of coordination, and the need for better equipment are recurrent themes.

²⁶² Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy. (n.d.). *Overview of ONDCP*. <https://ondcp.gov.ag/about/overview-of-ondcp/>

²⁶³ Bahamas Ministry of National Security. (n.d.). *NADS: A Drug Control Body*.

²⁶⁴ Financial Action Task Force. (2023, January 9). *The Bahama's progress in strengthening measures to tackle money laundering and terrorist financing*. <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/Mutualevaluations/publication-detail-page.html>

²⁶⁵ Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. (n.d.) *Organized Crime and Intelligence Unit*. <https://www.ttps.gov.tt/Branches/Branches-N-S/Organised-Crime-And-Intelligence-Unit>; Renne, D. (2017, September 25). *Combined unit tackles gangs: Police squads join forces*. https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/combined-unit-tackles-gangs/article_2a483b2d-6091-520a-a383-cc7558020db6.html

²⁶⁶ Sometimes arms, drug, financial, and corruption units are separate while others are grouped.

The main Jamaican law enforcement body tasked with organized crime is the Major Organized Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency (MOCA). MOCA is an independent elite law enforcement agency with primary interest in fighting the scourge of corruption and in bringing high value criminals to justice. It focuses on disrupting organized crime networks and corruption in the public sector.²⁶⁷ It collaborates with relevant law enforcement agencies (police, defence force, financial investigations, customs) and regional and international partners (CARICOM, United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK FCDO), Transparency International, the UN, among others). MOCA was established in 2014 but became a fully independent entity in 2021.

Finally, of most concern are Belize, Guyana, and Suriname, whose anti-organized crime infrastructure is not perceived to adequately address their organized crime issues. Note that international treaty ratification varies, with Guyana signing on to some but not showing active participation in the international organizations that oversee implementation. Meanwhile, Belize is party to most relevant treaties but lacks the legal framework that would enable efficient implementation. It is no coincidence that the countries with insufficient responses - Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, Guyana, and Suriname - are those in which corruption is most present. Complicity of public servants will continue to undermine organized crime initiatives if not addressed.

With respect to human trafficking, there is scope for improvement in both regional and national responses. Gaps and challenges include inadequate data collection, the fact that the prevalence of the problem is underestimated by many key stakeholders, inadequate legislative framework, and a lack of law enforcement and border protection capacity and training. Prevention programs are also generally lacking.

The United States Department of State has developed a four-tier ranking system of countries published in their annual Trafficking in Persons Report.²⁶⁸ Rankings are based on government efforts to meet minimum standards to eliminate human trafficking.²⁶⁹ Tier placement is therefore not based on the size of the country's human trafficking issue, but on initiatives to

²⁶⁷ Major Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency. (n.d.). Home. <https://www.moca.gov.jm>

²⁶⁸ Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2023). *Trafficking in persons report*. United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Trafficking-in-Persons-Report-2023-Introduction-V3e.pdf>

²⁶⁹ The minimum standards are based on the United States' *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* of 2000.

address it. Such initiatives include laws prohibiting trafficking, criminal penalties, prosecutions, victim identification and protection measures, and government efforts to reduce demand, among other factors.

A Tier 1 ranking is the highest, meaning government efforts to address trafficking meet minimum standards. The only CARICOM states to receive a Tier 1 ranking were The Bahamas and Guyana. The Bahamas adopted a national anti-trafficking strategy from 2014 to 2018, and currently utilizes the following bodies to counter human trafficking: the Inter-Ministry Committee on Trafficking in Persons (which coordinates policy), the Trafficking in Persons Task Force (an operational body that conduct prevention, detection, victim assistance and prosecutions), the Special Prosecutorial Unit on Trafficking in Persons (which works with the Task Force and the police, in the Office of the Attorney General), and Trafficking in Persons Unit of the police.²⁷⁰ Guyana also has a national anti-trafficking strategy (2021 - 2025), a Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in Persons that collaborates with and trains law enforcement, and good identification of victims and referral to services.²⁷¹

A Tier 2 ranking means that the government does not fully meet the minimum standards but is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance. Most CARICOM countries covered by the Trafficking in Persons Report received a Tier 2 Ranking (Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname). The infrastructure for combating human trafficking in these countries is often similar to that in the Tier 1 countries, though nation-wide, coordinated direction may be lacking or implementation under-resourced.

A Tier 2 Watch list means the government does not fully meet the minimum standards but is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with those standards, and, a) the

²⁷⁰ Bahamas Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (n.d.). *Trafficking in persons: General information*; Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2023). *2023 Trafficking in persons report: The Bahamas*. United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/bahamas>

²⁷¹ Guyana. (2022). *National Policy and Strategy for Combating Money Laundering, Terrorism Financing, and the Financing of Proliferation 2021 - 2025*. <https://fiu.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Guyana-National-Strategy-for-combating-MLTFPF-2021-to-2025.pdf>; Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in Persons. (2023, June 15). *United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report for 2023* [Press release]. Guyana Ministry of Home Affairs. <https://moha.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023-TIP-Teir-1-Press-Release.pdf>; Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2023). *2023 Trafficking in persons report: Guyana*. United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/guyana/>

estimated number of victims is significant or significantly increasing without proportional response, or b) the government fails to show evidence of increasing efforts from the previous year.²⁷² Trinidad and Tobago was assigned to the Tier 2 Watch List in 2023. It has implemented much relevant structure, including a national anti-trafficking plan (2021 - 2025), the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (which sets policy direction) and the Counter Trafficking Unit (which implements policies and contains law enforcement personnel).²⁷³ However, prosecutions are low, efforts are stagnating, corrupt complicity in trafficking is a concern, victim identification and services are weak, and inter-agency coordination is poor. Trinidad and Tobago would have been downgraded to Tier 3 in 2023, but saved its place through devoting resources to the national plan which would constitute significant efforts to meet the minimum standards if implemented.

Finally, a Tier 3 ranking means governments neither meet the minimum standards nor make significant efforts to do so. No Caribbean country received a Tier 3 ranking in 2023.

Firearms Control

Firearms control and the prevention of trafficking in firearms in an obvious law enforcement priority and steps are being taken throughout the region to build a law enforcement capacity to address these issues more effectively. Disrupting illicit firearms trafficking in the Caribbean is a shared priority for Caribbean countries and their Canadian, American and European partners. It is an important aspect of cooperation to address rising levels of crime and violence in the region. As will be discussed later, several regional initiatives are supporting these efforts.

²⁷² Including increased investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials.

²⁷³ Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of National Security. (n.d.). *The Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU)*. <https://nationalsecurity.gov.tt/divisions/the-counter-trafficking-unit-ctu/>; Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2023). *2023 Trafficking in persons report: Trinidad and Tobago*. United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/trinidad-and-tobago/>

Cybersecurity

Cyber security is an important issue for countries of the region, and some of them are beginning to take some effective measures against cybercrime. Thirteen years ago, CARICOM countries agreed to the Caribbean Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Action Plan (2010). The action plan seeks to address the cybersecurity vulnerabilities in each participating Caribbean country and to establish a practical, harmonised standard of practices, systems and expertise for cybersecurity. Some CARICOM countries are ahead of others in terms of cybersecurity and have already implemented cybersecurity strategies to help fight cybercrime. For instance, Jamaica has the National Cybersecurity Strategy, developed in 2015; Trinidad and Tobago has a National Cybersecurity Strategy, developed in 2012; and Belize has its National Cybersecurity Strategy – Towards A Secure Cyberspace 2020–2023. These countries have all instituted cybersecurity strategies to strengthen technical measures, improve legal and regulatory frameworks, and raise public awareness, as well as implementing education campaigns to help ensure the confidence of citizens in cyberspace. Other countries are presently developing their own strategy.²⁷⁴

In 2019, the implementation of the Action plan was given a boost when IMPACS secured funding from the EU to undertake a ‘Capacity Development’ project across CARICOM nations. Furthermore, the World Bank instituted the World Bank Caribbean Digital Transformation Project 2020–2026 to improve cybersecurity, data protection and privacy by reviewing and updating regional and national cybersecurity regulations and legislations. Finally, the Council of Europe held a conference on Cybercrime Strategies and Policies in 2019, with the aim of encouraging Caribbean countries to ratify the Budapest Convention and ensure that national legislation is consistent with international cybercrime law.

Crime Prevention and Social Programs

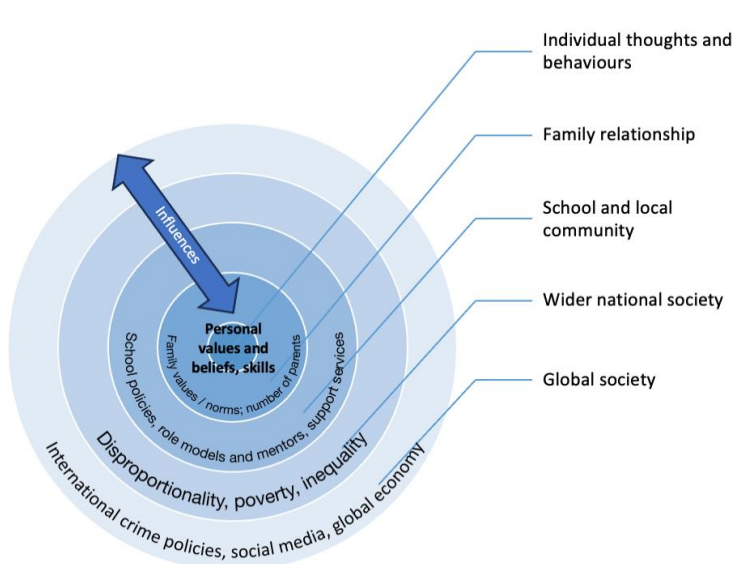
Traditional crime control measures do not address the underlying causes of violence, which include, among other things, broken families and social decay; neglected and abused children with early exposure to violence; the erosion of moral authority by entrenched

²⁷⁴ Brain, S. & Oyadei, O. (2023). Funding Crime Online: Cybercrime and its Links to Organised Crime in the Caribbean. *Commonwealth Cybercrime Journal*, 1(1): 84-110.

systems of lawlessness; and the influence of gang-dominated communities with poor physical infrastructure, poor education, and limited education and employment opportunities.

The broad field of crime prevention includes a range of responses developed over many years, including developmental, environmental, situational, social, and community-based crime prevention.²⁷⁵ The public health approach favoured in the recent Declaration of CARICOM Heads of Government understands crime and violence as a public health problem that is based in a deep-rooted social and economic context where problems of social inequality, unemployment, and lack of prospects for positive youth development negatively affect youths' opportunities and options. Other environmental factors, such as family dysfunction and negative or anti-social peers, can further influence an individuals' attitudes and behavior toward violence, increasing their level of risk.²⁷⁶

When these community and family factors coexist with individual factors, such as weak social controls, low self-esteem, problems with substance abuse, and other mental and emotional problems, individuals become exposed to higher levels of risk of violence.



The factors associated with crime are often termed risk factors. They include global changes and trends, factors affecting individual countries, local environments, and communities, factors relating to the family and close relationships, and individual factors. They can be represented visually by the following diagram showing the

²⁷⁵ *United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime* (2002). Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/13, annex.

²⁷⁶ Mizrahi, Y., Reisman, L., Cohan, L., & Costello, C. E. (2021). *Crime and Violence Prevention Field Guide*. United States Agency for International Development. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/PA00XGHG.pdf>, p. 22.

multi-faceted nature of the factors influencing crime and violence.²⁷⁷

Prevention programs that address social contributors to crime are also being implemented across CARICOM countries. For example, most CARICOM countries have a National Drug Council or equivalent and, over the last decades, they have developed various drug prevention and treatment programs, as well as public education initiatives²⁷⁸. The University of the West Indies, in collaboration with OAS and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (known by its Spanish acronym, CICAD), has developed an online certificate programme in substance abuse prevention and treatment training program.²⁷⁹ Other preventative supports at the individual, family, and community level may include parenting programs, mental health facilities, and conflict mediation centres. However, such services are inconsistently implemented in the region, even where there is rhetorical support, and the services are rarely integrated (making referral from one service to another, a holistic approach, difficult).

The majority of prevention programs focus on youth, often youth employment and gang involvement prevention. Further, national plans show an openness, at least in rhetoric, to recognizing social inequality and lack of economic opportunities (especially for youth) as factors in crime prevention, even if a lack of resources has prevented many programs from being implemented to date. In Jamaica, for example, one of the main goals of the country's Youth Policy is to minimize the number of at-risk and vulnerable youth, by improving Jamaica's ability to provide the right care and intervention to help vulnerable youth overcome their challenges and reintegrate smoothly into mainstream society. The policy supports the implementation of several strategies for the smooth inclusion of at-risk and vulnerable youth into nurturing environments.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2010). *Handbook on the United Nations Crime Prevention Guidelines*. https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_Crime_Prevention_Guidelines_-_Making_them_work.pdf, p. 10.

²⁷⁸ University of the West Indies. (n.d.). *National Drug Councils of the Caribbean Contact Information*. <http://addictionstudies.dec.uwi.edu/councils.html>

²⁷⁹ University of the West Indies. (n.d.) *On-line certificate in substance abuse prevention and treatment*. <http://addictionstudies.dec.uwi.edu/index.html>

²⁸⁰ Jamaica Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. (2019). *National Youth Policy 2017-2030 – Jamaica*. <https://moey.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2017-2030-NYP-Popular-Version.pdf>

As will be discussed in the following section of this report, international donors have supported several youth justice and youth crime prevention projects in countries of the region. For example, the CariSECURE project and the CBSI include a large component dedicated to prevention measures. The Citizen Security and Justice Program funded by the IDB and Canada also focused on increasing the employability of vulnerable youth and improving non-violent conflict resolution. Recent iterations of the program have been implemented in The Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica²⁸¹, and Trinidad and Tobago.²⁸²

6.2. Regional Initiatives

The Declaration of Heads of Government

In April 2023, the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the occasion of the Regional Symposium to address Crime and Violence as a Public Health Issue, issued a declaration expressing their commitment to:

“Undertake comprehensive overhaul of the criminal justice system to address criminal terrorists with a focus on proactive management of prosecutions, sentencing and the diversion of young people at risk;

Strengthen regional forensic capabilities and collaboration among national forensic agencies with a view to improving the quality of evidence and speed the conduct of trials;

Prepare regional model legislation to bring greater harmonization and efficiency to the development and revision of national laws;

Immediately and effectively implement the CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty;

²⁸¹ Note that Jamaica’s program was also funded by Canada, described in detail later in this report.

²⁸² Inter-American Development Bank. (n.d.). *Citizen security and justice program [Bahamas]*. <https://www.iadb.org/en/whats-our-impact/BH-L1033>; Inter-American Development Bank. (n.d.). *Citizen security strengthening programme [Guyana]*. <https://www.iadb.org/en/whats-our-impact/GY-L1042>; Inter-American Development Bank. (n.d.). *Citizen security and justice programme III [Jamaica]*. <https://www.iadb.org/en/whats-our-impact/JA-X1008>; United Nations Development Program. (2015). *Citizen security programme final report*. <https://www.undp.org/trinidad-and-tobago/publications/citizen-security-programme-final-report>

Augment the jurisdiction of magistrates, the consideration of defendants' options to judge-only trials, and the intra-regional rotation of judges and magistrates to admit or foster their greater exposure;

Strengthen the capacity of the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre (RIFC) to deliver its mandate through development of agreed protocols for data sharing amongst Member States;

Reform our education systems to empower our citizens and better enable their socio-emotional development, in recognition that the social and emotional learning of the child is as important as technical and academic achievements;

Agree to ban assault weapons in the region, except for security forces and sporting competitions;

Agree to stand with Mexico on its legal action against US gun manufacturers and retailers;

Establish an entity under IMPACS to assist in the containment of corruption and financial crimes, including money laundering and cybercrimes, through greater collaboration to harmonise related legislation and operational processes;

Empower and engage young people as positive content developers to offset the negative impact of social media and engage with the creative industries to re-engineer culturally acceptable norms;

Promote public awareness and education campaigns in our communities, that challenge harmful beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to crime and violence;

Work with all sectors and institutions to improve the equitable access to services and options for rehabilitation and reintegration into society, psychosocial support and parental education, addressing domestic violence, and integrating mental issues to treat with crime and violence;

Develop and implement targeted programmes and strategies to address young vulnerable youth at risk of becoming perpetrators and victims of crime;

Appoint an Eminent Person to lead and advise Heads and the Secretariat on further strategies and reforms and on effectively operationalizing the decisions of Heads.²⁸³

²⁸³ The Caribbean Community and Common Market. (2023, April 18). *Declaration by heads of government on crime and violence as a public health issue*. <https://caricom.org/declaration-by-heads-of-government-on-crime-and-violence-as-a-public-health-issue/>

The Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform

The CCJ Academy for Law is the educational arm of the CCJ dedicated to the advancement and promotion of legal education and research within the Caribbean region. In October 2023, at the conclusion of the Academy's Seventh Biennial Law Conference, in Barbados, participants adopted a declaration on criminal justice reform.²⁸⁴ The consultations conducted for the present review confirmed that there is a very broad consensus around the priorities for action identified in that declaration. Some countries, for example Saint Kitts and Nevis, have already initiated some of the needed legislative changes identified in it.

The Declaration called for states to adopt and implement a holistic and inclusive criminal justice reform strategy and identified several policy and legislative interventions to address what are seen as the major challenges currently facing criminal justice systems in Caribbean countries. The main priorities can be summarized as follows:

Legislative interventions

- The urgent need for human, financial and other resources to criminal justice institutions.
- Legislation to address the changing nature of crime and to address matters such as cybercrime, fraud, money laundering, gang related criminality, trafficking in firearms.
- Legislation to protect witnesses and allow the use of modern methods of investigation (e.g., control delivery).
- Legislation and mechanisms to facilitate effective criminal and asset forfeiture of proceeds and instruments of crime.
- Legislation to facilitate the greater use of forensic, scientific, digital, and expert evidence.
- Legislative review of rules of evidence relating to disclosure, hearsay, the admissibility of evidence of previous conviction and uncontested evidence.
- Legislation to support diversion of young offenders and the rehabilitation and the social reintegration of offenders.

²⁸⁴ Caribbean Court of Justice Academy for Law. (2023). *Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform: Achieving a Modern Criminal Justice System*. <https://ccj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/NEEDHAMS-POINT-DECLARATION.pdf>

-
- Legislation and other measures to reduce the length of remands in custody and to guarantee prisoners remand time, by favouring early guilty pleas and introducing maximum sentence indications.

Police and Prosecution

- Increase the capabilities and use of forensic science centres to enhance the prosecution of serious crimes, including organised crime.
- Implement measures for individuals with mental illness or disability issues.
- Enhance the witness protection systems and protocols and reactivate a Caribbean-wide system.
- Increase the likelihood of successful prosecutions by implementing pre-charge consultation between prosecutors and the police.
- Implement case progression units and national case file standards within police services.
- Adopt Code for Prosecutions within all prosecutorial agencies.
- Establish special prosecution teams to improve the quality of prosecutions of certain offences.

Various Measures to improve the representation and support of accused.

Measures to support and compensate victims/survivors of crime.

Judicial Interventions

- *Establish a new category of judicial officer to deal specifically with pre-trial issues in criminal matters.*
- *Ensure that there is appropriate constitutional protection, expansion of jurisdiction and increased sentencing power for Magistrates.*
- *Establish a Sentencing Guidelines Commission.*
- *Consider, where possible, Judge-alone trials.*
- *Adopt a focused and integrated approach to eliminate criminal case backlogs, through improved case-management and plea-bargaining discussions.*
- *Promote the greater use within the courts of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods, including mediation and restorative justice.*
- *Facilitate victims/survivors and witness support during proceedings.*

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- *Encourage a greater voice for victims/survivors in criminal proceedings, such as by broadening the scope of victim impact statements.*
 - *Encourage greater levels of co-operation and where appropriate, encourage consultation among criminal justice sector stakeholders, through measures such as Criminal Justice Boards.*
 - *Adopt key performance guidelines for the courts, including indicators of timely delivery of judgments.*

During the consultations conducted for the present review, many of the proposed reforms are already underway in some of the CARICOM countries, although with varying degrees of success. However, in some instances, best practices are emerging at the national level which can provide a model or some guidance to other countries of the region.

CARICOM - Implementation Agency for Crime and Security

The CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) is the nerve centre of the region's new multilateral crime and security management architecture, specifically designed to administer a collective response to the Crime and Security priorities of Member States, under the directives of, and with reporting responsibility to the Council of Ministers of National Security and Law Enforcement. IMPACS also has responsibility for the co-ordination of meetings of five sub-committees:

- The Standing Committee of Commissioners of Police
- The Standing Committee of Military Heads
- The Standing Committee of Chiefs of Immigration
- The Standing Committee of Heads of Custom
- The Standing Committee of Heads of Intelligence and Financial Investigative Units

Within its fold is a special department, called the Regional Crime and Security Strategy Central Coordinating Unit (RCSS-CCU) formerly known as the Liaison Office, and two sub agencies: the Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC) and the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre (RIFIC). Strengthening the capacity of the RIFIC was specifically identified as a priority in the April 2023 Declaration of Heads of Governments.

The JRCC is the central clearing house for the Advance Passenger Information and acts and on behalf of individual CARICOM Member States for the purpose of pre-screening passengers from air and sea carriers traversing the Region. In 2013, the Agency commenced activities geared towards the implementation of an Advance Cargo Information System and it is anticipated that this system will be operational by 2015. The JRCC acts as a conduit to ensure effective communication among Law Enforcement personnel, which is necessary to enhance border control related activities. The JRCC also assists regional law enforcement personnel in the detection of persons who are travelling with stolen, lost and fraudulent travel documents, along with the identification of and monitoring the movements of persons of interest, including those who may be a high security threat to the safety and security of the Region.

The RIFC provides intelligence support to key stakeholders in an effort to detect, deter and control crime within the Region. The Centre works closely with the JRCC in providing intelligence information to regional security agency personnel and other stakeholders, while providing strategic analysis of threat entities in the Caribbean Region.

The RCSS-CCU provides critical technical support, advisory services and assistance to Member States in fulfilling CARICOM IMPACS' mandate. The Unit coordinates the various activities of the regional security groupings within the CARICOM anti-crime and security management framework.

Regional Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Cooperation Mechanisms

Given the nature and impact of transnational crime in CARICOM countries, international cooperation among themselves and with other key international partners is an essential part of any strategy to counter organized crime activities. Success in addressing transnational organized crime hinges on multilateral cooperation.²⁸⁵ The region's current international cooperation mechanisms, although improving, have remained relatively ineffective at countering the rapid changes in the organized crime landscape. In addition, systems should be complemented by wider crime prevention and socio-economic measures to broadly

²⁸⁵ Dandurand, Y. and Jahn, J. (2022). The future of international criminal justice cooperation: A retreat from the rule of law. In Redo, S. (Ed.), *The Rule of Law in Retreat: Challenges to Justice in the United Nations World*. Lexington Books, 209-244.

prevent and counter transnational crime, and by rigorous monitoring and evaluation to measure effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.²⁸⁶

Cooperation in fighting various forms of trafficking, including in the maritime domain, was emphasized during both the 2023 Canada-CARICOM Summit and the 2023 Caribbean-US High Level Security Cooperation Dialogue²⁸⁷.

Multiple law enforcement cooperation mechanisms are in place, several of them with some support from Canada.

The CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty

In 2017, CARICOM countries agreed in principle to an extradition scheme known as the CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty.²⁸⁸ To date, only three countries have ratified the instrument: Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago. The recent Declaration of Heads of Government, as mentioned above, called for the immediate and effective implementation of the CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty.

The Regional Security System (RSS)

The RSS is itself an institution of regional security cooperation that effectively, albeit at a comparatively modest scale, integrates and coordinates information, personnel, and assets from its seven member states into a variety of operations. It is also a conduit for coordinating member state efforts with CARICOM and international partners, including Canada, the US, the UK, and some European countries.

Under the CARICOM Treaty on Security Assistance, RSS is the sole regional security organisation with the responsibility of and expertise in coordinating joint, combined operations in response to threats to national and regional security. Its focus is on direct support to the RSS Membership, including supporting national security architectures with improved diagnostic capabilities, improving legal, regulatory, investigative and prosecutorial

²⁸⁶ Albanese, J. (2018). Countering transnational crime and corruption: The urge to action versus the patience to evaluate. *Justice Evaluation Journal* 1(1), 1 – 14. [10.1080/24751979.2018.1478234](https://doi.org/10.1080/24751979.2018.1478234)

²⁸⁷ United States Department of State. (2023, November 22). *Joint Statement of the 2023 Caribbean-U.S. High Level Security Cooperation Dialogue*. <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-of-the-2023-caribbean-u-s-high-level-security-cooperation-dialogue/>

²⁸⁸ CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty. <https://caricom.org/wp-content/uploads/CARICOM-Arrest-Warrant-Treaty.pdf>

procedures in Member States to respond to financial crimes, strengthening national compliance with international standards for anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, improving capabilities for maritime surveillance, and institutional strengthening of law enforcement institutions, with particular reference to standardising policing procedures, case file standards, and supporting digital forensics investigations capabilities. RSS is also delivering training programs.

Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms

All CARICOM members (except Montserrat) are parties to the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

In May 2019, CARICOM Heads of Government formally adopted the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition Across the Caribbean, which consist of a list of reforms and regional engagements to more effectively address firearms trafficking within the region (see also the 2023 Addendum to the Caribbean Priority Actions). In 2020, IMPACS with and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) developed the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap. This framework provides timelines and baselines for implementing the Caribbean Firearms Trafficking Priority Actions.

The Caribbean Firearms Roadmap

15 CARICOM States and the Dominican Republic came together in October 2020 to formally adopt the 'Roadmap for Implementing The Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030' (Caribbean Firearms Roadmap). The vision for the Roadmap is a safer Caribbean, achieved by addressing the issue of illicit proliferation of firearms and ammunition. The Roadmap serves as a guiding document for commonly agreed levels of performance at the strategic, policy and operational levels.

The Roadmap takes into consideration the provisions found in the UN 2001 Programme of Action on Small Arms, as well as the legal obligations stemming from the Arms Trade Treaty and the Firearms Protocol. Its effective implementation will also contribute to the

implementation of Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal 16, with a specific focus on Target 16.4 aimed at significantly reducing arms flow.

The Goals of the Roadmap are:

- Goal 1: Reinforce regulatory frameworks governing firearms and ammunition.
- Goal 2: Reduce the illicit flow of firearms and ammunition into, within and beyond the region.
- Goal 3: Bolster law enforcement capacity to combat illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking and their illicit possession and misuse.
- Goal 4: Systematically decrease the risk of diversion of firearms and ammunition from government- and non-government-owned arsenals.

UNLIREC and its partner, CARICOM IMPACS, are the co-custodians of the Roadmap and are supporting its effective implementation in collaboration with other regional and international partners with the support of the donor community, including support from Canada.

To date, 12 Caribbean countries have adopted national action plans under the auspices of the Firearms Roadmap and Priority Actions.²⁸⁹ The United States stands ready to help countries implement their individualized priorities, plans, and timelines upon completion of their respective national action plans.

The CARICOM Crime Gun Intelligence Unit (CCGIU) - USAID/IMPACS

In October 2022, the CARICOM Council for National Security and Law Enforcement endorsed the establishment of a CARICOM crime gun intelligence unit (CCGIU) as a critical tool to assist CARICOM Member States in investigating and prosecuting firearm related crimes. On November 14, 2023, CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), in partnership with several US law enforcement agencies, launched the CCGIU. The CCGIU will assist regional law enforcement authorities in criminal investigations involving firearms, by utilizing modern intelligence tools and technology. It is located at IMPACS' Port of Spain headquarters and will work with IMPACS' RIFC and JRCC to provide intelligence

²⁸⁹ Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname.

analysis on illicit firearms and ammunition. The Unit facilitates collaboration and cooperation among regional and international law enforcement agencies and supports law enforcement agencies in Member States in the seizure of firearms, related parts, and components as well as in identifying, charging, and prosecuting co-conspirators.

CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan (CCSCAP)

This CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan (CCSCAP) was the main output of the Caribbean Stakeholders Meeting II – Cyber Security and Cybercrime held in Saint Lucia in March 2016.²⁹⁰ The CCSCAP is meant to address the Cyber Security vulnerabilities in each participating Caribbean country and to establish a practical, harmonised standard of practices, systems and expertise for Cyber Security, to which each Caribbean country could aspire in the short and medium terms. The plan identifies five priority areas of intervention for addressing Cyber Security and Cybercrime issues in the CARICOM region.

- Public awareness
- Building sustainable capacity
- Technical standards and Infrastructure
- Legal environment
- Regional and international cooperation and collaboration in incident response, cybercrime investigation and capacity building

The Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF)

The CFATF is an organisation of states and territories of the Caribbean basin which have agreed to implement common countermeasures against money laundering and terrorism financing. All CARICOM countries are participating.

6.3 International Assistance

In addition to Canada, several other countries are supporting bilateral and regional projects in CARICOM Countries in the areas of criminal justice, public safety and crime prevention,

²⁹⁰ CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security. (2022). *CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan*. https://ctu.int/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CARICOM-Cyber-Security-and-Cybercrime-Action-Plan_Final_Ver3-copy.pdf

most notably the United States through various mechanisms (especially United States Agency for International Development [USAID]) and the UK (especially through the UK FCDO). Various international organizations are also providing assistance, in particular the OAS, the EU, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the CDB, the IDB, as well as the United Nations and in particular the UNDP, as well as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UN Women, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Some of these projects cover a broader region than the Caribbean and include Central and Latin America. The present gap analysis consulted these organizations and reviewed their main projects and initiatives. These initiatives are summarized here by programming areas.

Strengthening the Criminal Justice Responses to Crime and Deterrence

In 2020, UNDP produced a needs assessment of the judicial system in nine CARICOM countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago.²⁹¹ UNDP’s approach to justice starts from a prevention perspective. Its cooperation initiatives are centred around strengthening institutional capacity, providing attention to women and vulnerable groups, promoting a culture of peace, and improving and appropriating safe and equitable access to justice. Modest efforts are also made to offer greater support to victims of crime, especially women victims of gender-based violence, and child victims of violence.

The EU *Support to the Caribbean Court of Justice* project (2022-2025) is promoting CARICOM citizens’ participation in, and access to, justice systems by: (i) strengthening the CCJ’s functions and outreach activities; (ii) establishing and operationalizing the Caribbean Community Administrative Tribunal, and (iii) modernising legal education (a new curriculum for the region’s law schools).

The **PACE Justice** project (2023-2027), funded by the EU (€10 million) and delivered by UNDP, is designed to enhance the institutional capacities of prosecutors, courts, police, and prisons in the Caribbean to manage criminal cases effectively and efficiently. The project prides itself on taking a system-wide approach and includes interventions along three

²⁹¹ United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Caribbean Justice: A needs assessment of the judicial system in nine countries*. <https://www.undp.org/latin-america/publications/caribbean-justice-needs-assessment-judicial-system-nine-countries>

interconnected dimensions: (i) the deployment of enabling technology and systems training to improve efficiency of criminal justice administration; (ii) the empowerment of stakeholders through gender-aware capacity building across all elements of the administration of justice, with a focus on service design and delivery; (iii) strengthening national and regional processes and procedures for improved efficiency and accountability within the justice sector. The project was officially started in March 2023. The project is expected to improve the efficiency of the criminal justice process and to reduce case backlogs in eight countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Belize, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, as well as at the Eastern Caribbean Court of Justice.

Several capacity building projects focused on supporting the greater use of technology to facilitate regular operations, improve performance or enhance public access to justice are being planned. For example, the IDB is considering a project to support the implementation of *Jamaica's Digital Justice Strategy 2024-2029*. The Jamaican strategy is meant to reduce case backlogs, reduce delays in delivering judgments, reduce the average length of pre-trial detention, or increase the level of citizen trust in the justice system. It is related to Jamaica's broader strategy to bridge the digital divide and to the government's broader collaboration with UNDP on digital transformation.²⁹²

Several of these projects, like some of the projects funded by Canada, also support the development of alternatives to prosecution, including mediation and restorative justice, sentencing alternatives, access to justice and the implementation of specialized courts, all with a view to increase the efficiency and public credibility of the justice system. Such initiatives are discussed further below, in 'Crime Prevention'.

Youth justice system reforms have been supported by several international partners as well. USAID and UNICEF were especially active in supporting such reforms. For instance, through the *Juvenile Justice Reform Project*, USAID, working with UNICEF and the OECS Commission, collaborated with Eastern Caribbean states to review, update, amend, and establish laws on multiple matters of social development in the Eastern Caribbean, including juvenile justice in the Eastern Caribbean. During the eight-year project (including Phase II)

²⁹² GOJ-UNDP Expand Community Wi-Fi Access, Measure Jamaica's Digital Readiness. (2023, May 4). *MENAFN Caribbean News Global*. <https://menafn.com/1106177847/GOJ-UNDP-Expand-Community-Wi-Fi-Access-Measure-Jamaicas-Digital-Readiness> .

child justice legislation was adopted in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The second phase of the program dealt specifically with youth in conflict with the law and the provision of diversion, rehabilitation, and reintegration mechanisms for assisting children in six OECS Member States, namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Building Law Enforcement Capacity

Several capacity development and law enforcement training projects have been supported by various organizations.

UNDP is managing a *Forensic Pathologists Project* to improve the capacity of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre through recruiting two forensic pathologists and providing staff training.²⁹³ The objective of this project is to improve the capacity of the forensic centre by providing hands-on support to deal with the various cases, and where possible provide training to staff as required, to ensure that the centre can support law-enforcement agencies in a timely and professional manner.

In Jamaica, the *NEC Connect* project supported by the IDB has helped Jamaica start collecting data which can now be analysed, and they can now connect data across police stations. The digitalization project is meant to support a problem-solving approach to the disruption of criminals using a breadth of existing law enforcement and other agency tactics. Organizational structure, culture and governance are still impeding police collaboration across the island.

The IDB Citizen Security Project (phases 1 and 2) contributed to the construction and strengthening of the Guyana Forensic Laboratory leading to its ISO accreditation.

UNDP's *CariSECURE 2.0* program is funded by the USAID and builds upon the past work of CariSECURE, which equipped national institutions and agencies with the technology, equipment, and training to better collect and analyse crime data, in order to create evidence-

²⁹³ United Nations Development Program. (n.d.). *Forensic pathologist project*. <https://www.undp.org/trinidad-and-tobago/projects/forensic-pathologists-project>

informed approaches to reducing crime. An evaluation of the first iteration of that program concluded that, despite its initial design issues, the project had paved the road for the full digitalization of police operations, a very important result, and provided the basis for producing homogenous crime data and valuable statistical information.²⁹⁴ Police forces are slowly engaging, and the leaders are becoming the examples to follow. CariSECURE 2.0 aims to use this robust and reliable information to design programs and support policy geared towards the reduction of youth involvement in crime, whether as perpetrators or victims, in all ten OECS countries.

The ***National Case File Standards*** initiative is a joint venture by the US/UK Criminal Justice Reform Project and the RSS. Standardised case files improve the ability of the police and prosecutors to prosecute cases in a timely and efficient manner and ensure that a case can be managed and presented in a coherent and professional manner at trial. The initiative is expected to contribute to reducing delays in the hearing of criminal matters and increase public confidence in the criminal justice system.

Countering Transnational Crime

Integrated Approaches against Transnational Organized Crime

Several international donors are supporting major projects in the security and justice areas, targeting organized crime, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and corruption. UNODC is in the middle of a criminal network study in CARICOM countries. The study will hopefully provide an analysis of the vulnerability of these networks and suggest strategies for disrupting them.

Among others, a priority identified by international donors has been building the law enforcement capacity for cross-border enforcement and international cooperation. All CARICOM countries are members of INTERPOL.²⁹⁵ Every INTERPOL member country hosts a National Central Bureau, which connects their national law enforcement with other countries and with the INTERPOL General Secretariat in order to share criminal data and

²⁹⁴ Sanchis Munoz, G. (2022). "Strengthening Evidence Based Decision Making for Citizen Security in the Caribbean (CariSECURE) – Final Report".

²⁹⁵ International Criminal Police Organization. (n.d.). *Member countries*. <https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/Member-countries>

cooperate on cross-border investigations.²⁹⁶ Staffing of NCBs varies from country to country, but they are generally part of the national police force. In 2021, INTERPOL and Barbados signed an agreement to open an INTERPOL liaison office, which will be housed by CARICOM IMPACS at its JRCC.²⁹⁷ It aims to strengthen Caribbean police cooperation, especially by increasing use of INTERPOL policing capabilities in national and regional investigations and will support law enforcement in all 14 CARICOM countries in this gap analysis, including Montserrat.

The OAS Department Against Transnational Organized Crime (OAS-DTOC) provides technical and legislative assistance to CARICOM countries to confront and respond to Transnational Organized Crime in its different manifestations. In particular, the OAS-DTOC supports countries that require assistance to comply with the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols (trafficking in persons; smuggling of migrants; and illicit trafficking in firearms), as well as the Hemispheric Plan of Action against transnational organized crime. With the support of the US and Canada, it offers tailored-made assistance projects to countries that request it. In April of this year, the OAS-DTOC will be hosting the annual meeting of the National Authorities on Transnational Crime.

The OAS PICAD project, supported by Canada, is aimed at strengthening the capacities of 7 Member States to prevent, investigate, and combat human trafficking and the illicit smuggling of migrants, particularly focusing on the exploitation of Venezuelan migrants and refugees. Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago are beneficiaries of this initiative. During 2023, PICAD in Guyana focused on enhancing border management for the detection of irregular migration through an intramodal cargo course in Georgetown, where selected customs officials were trained. Additionally, a detailed analysis of the situation concerning Venezuelan migrants was conducted, with the participation not only of government institutions but also of civil society organizations and migrant survivors of human trafficking and illicit migrant smuggling, underscoring the country's commitment to tackling these issues head-on. In the

²⁹⁶ International Criminal Police Organization. (n.d.). *National central bureaus (NCBs)*. <https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/Member-countries/National-Central-Bureaus-NCBs>

²⁹⁷ International Criminal Police Organization. (2021, September 2). *Closing ranks on emerging organized crime: INTERPOL to open new Caribbean office*. <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2021/Closing-ranks-on-emerging-organized-crime-INTERPOL-to-open-new-Caribbean-office>

coming days, a binational activity for discussing how to respond to a mass migration simulation will be carried out. In Trinidad and Tobago, the project is enhancing border management for detecting irregular migration in cargo and containers, as well as focusing on legal cooperation and proactive investigation techniques. Additionally, it includes activities to promote the integration of gender, human rights, and intercultural perspectives in the functions of migration and security authorities, and the promotion of social inclusion for trafficking survivors. It is expected that these activities will take place within the next month.

The OAS-DTOC also has a program that seeks to strengthen the capacities of the agencies in charge of fighting the finances of illegal mining throughout its irregular production chain. The program includes activities in Guyana and Suriname, two large gold producers. Along with illegal mining, there is a chain of illegal activities that range from the irregular importation of precursors and machinery to the commercialization of illegally extracted resources, including the laundering of profits that are used again in other illegal activities. The project focuses on the gaps in regulatory frameworks and procedural protocols, the insufficient coordination between the authorities responsible for the detection, investigation and prosecution of illegal mining and its illicit financial flows, as well as the need to improve the mechanisms to promote international cooperation.²⁹⁸ The capacity building activities could also be relevant to other resources extracting sectors (e.g., oil extraction) or to illegal fisheries which are also areas of concern for some CARICOM countries.

The US (USAID and US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs [INL]) has been funding a major regional security cooperation project, the ***Caribbean Basin Security Initiative*** (CBSI), a partnership between the US and Caribbean countries working together to reduce illicit trafficking, increase public safety, and promote social justice. It was launched in 2010 and supports a cooperation with 13 Caribbean countries, of which 12 are the subjects of this gap analysis: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.²⁹⁹ USD \$832 million has been dedicated to CBSI as of 2022. CBSI programs address maritime law enforcement, border and port security, firearms

²⁹⁸ Organization of American States Department Against Transnational Organized Crime. (n.d.). *On the trail of illicit gold proceeds: Strengthening the fight against illegal mining finances*. <https://www.oas.org/en/sms/dtoc/prog-illegal-mining.asp>

²⁹⁹ United States Department of State. (n.d.). *Caribbean Basin Security Initiative*. <https://www.state.gov/caribbean-basin-security-initiative/>

trafficking, transnational crime, gangs, law enforcement and justice sector capacity building, and youth crime and violence prevention. Very recently, CBSI has responded to rising firearms violence in the Caribbean through a joint initiative with CARICOM, the Caribbean ***CBSI Connect*** project, which promotes knowledge sharing across the Caribbean region. Since its implementation eighteen law enforcement educational institutions in the Caribbean are collaborating and sharing training.

The justice and security sectors are also a regional cooperation priority for the EU. Team Europe is the coordinated approach taken in ‘Global Europe’, the main financial tool of EU international cooperation from 2021 to 2027.³⁰⁰ Team Europe joins key European development actors, being composed of the EU, Member States (including their development implementing agencies and public development banks), the European Investment Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The Team Europe initiative active in the Caribbean is the ***Security and Justice Partnership in Latin America and the Caribbean***.³⁰¹ It focusses on rule of law and transnational organized crime through bi-regional³⁰² dialogue, technical assistance, and legislative support. This Team Europe Initiative joins efforts from EU member states, European Commission departments (‘Directorates-General’), the European Anti-Fraud Office, and specialized agencies such as the following:

- The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
- European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation
- European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
- European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
- European Border and Coast Guard Agency

The EU has supported many programs in security and justice over the years, including programs with IMPACS and RSS. The main new EU programs in that sector are:

³⁰⁰ European Commission. (n.d.). *Team Europe Initiatives*. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/team-europe-initiatives_en

³⁰¹ European Union. (n.d.). *Security & Justice Partnership: Team Europe Initiative*. https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/resources/team-europe-tracker/partner-countries/latin-america-and-caribbean/security-justice-partnership_en

³⁰² I.e. It operates at a regional or multi-country level and no bilateral projects are proposed under the program.

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- ***The Europe-Latin America Assistance Programme against Transnational Organised Crime*** (EL PAcCTO), an international cooperation program that provides technical assistance regarding organized crime to Latin American countries.³⁰³ The program is implemented with a ‘Team Europe’ approach, involving agencies from Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands. It is not a financial assistance program nor does it replace bilateral assistance between European and Latin American countries, but allows for sharing of good practices that address the whole criminal justice system, including police, justice and penitentiary. EL PAcCTO 2.0 was launched in November 2023 with a €58.8 million contribution from the EU.³⁰⁴ From now on, the program will be open to all Caribbean countries. The two main components of the program are: (i) creating the conditions for and conducting joint Investigations between European countries and Latin American and the countries; (2) direct exchanges between countries to build capacity. It is yet to be determined in which CARICOM states the project will be most active.
 - ***The Cooperation Program between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drug Policy (EU COPOLAD)***, a cooperation program with €15 million in funding from the EU to improve drug policies, including in both demand and supply reduction.³⁰⁵ The third iteration of the program, COPOLAD III, commenced in 2021 and extends for four years. It combines the traditional bi-regional and multi-country collaboration approach with direct technical assistance interventions at the national level. The objective of COPOLAD III is to improve the design and application of policies related to drug demand and supply reduction in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, guaranteeing that they are based on evidence, public health,

³⁰³ Europe-Latin America Assistance Programme against Transnational Organised Crime. (n.d.). *About EL PAcCTO*. https://elpaccto.eu/?page_id=6&lang=en

³⁰⁴ European Union External Action. (2023, November 11). *EU strengthens its cooperation with Latin America and Caribbean against transnational organised crime*. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-strengthens-its-cooperation-latin-america-and-caribbean-against-transnational-organised-crime_en#:~:text=EU%20strengthens%20its%20cooperation%20with%20Latin%20America%20and%20Caribbean%20against%20transnational%20organised%20crime,-22.11.2023%20Strategic&text=On%2021%20November%202023%2C%20the,Programme%20against%20Transnational%20Organised%20Crime

³⁰⁵ Cooperation Program between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drug Policy. (n.d.). *What is Copolad?* <https://copolad.eu/en/what-is-copolad/>

gender and human rights. More details on the project activities supported in CARICOM countries are available on the project's website.³⁰⁶

The UK has also been very active in this area. The work of the UK FCDO pertaining to crime control and crime prevention in the Caribbean is implemented through the UK–Caribbean Region Development Partnership.³⁰⁷ The UK FCDO's program policy is guided by an understanding that crime and violence are fueled by gang activity and a proliferation of firearms, with a high involvement of men as both victims and perpetrators. It notes that insecurity is the largest barrier to development in Jamaica and other CARICOM countries. UK FCDO's *Serious Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Programme* (2020-2025) covers a range of assistance activities, including projects in Jamaica such as: supporting the Ministry of Justice to enable the unification of the Prosecutorial Services; supporting to Ministry of Finance-Financial Investigations Division to recover assets acquired by corruption and organised crime; and establishing a Digital Forensic Escalation Unit.

Another UK-based organization, the Commonwealth Secretariat, recently released a report on the costs of organized crime in Caribbean, which offered the following policy recommendations:

- Short term: a) Focus on the young people becoming involved in criminal activity; b) Focus policies on unemployment, especially on youth.
- Medium term: a) Revise government spending allocation on law enforcement and carry out analysis on whether increased spending on justice administration and crime prevention would be more effective; b) Continue to invest in tools that protect against cyberattacks; c) Continue monitoring and investments in maritime smuggling operations.

³⁰⁶ Cooperation Program between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drug Policy. (n.d.). *Countries*. <https://copolad.eu/en/countries/>

³⁰⁷ Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office. (2023, July 17). *UK–Caribbean region development partnership summary* [policy paper]. United Kingdom. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-caribbean-region-development-partnership-summary/uk-caribbean-region-development-partnership-summary-july-2023>

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- Long term: a) Address inequality and relative deprivation – as these are more influential factors than poverty; b) Reduce inefficiencies in government spending.³⁰⁸

The UNODC also provides Member States with technical assistance in the fight against serious and organized crime. The UNODC Regional Office for Central America and the Caribbean (UNODC is headquartered in Panama but cooperates closely with CARICOM IMPACS and has several initiatives pertaining to the Caribbean. Some of its activities are funded by Canada. Its areas of work include citizen security, corruption, criminal justice and crime prevention, drug demand reduction, drug trafficking, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and organized crime.

One of the planned activities of the UNDP/EU PACE Justice program is to expand bilateral arrangements for witness protection by delivering adequate specialised support and advice to beneficiary countries. The exact nature of that activity has not yet been fleshed out.

Integrity and Anti-corruption Measures

The UNODC is supporting the ***Regional Platform to Fast-Track the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in the Caribbean***³⁰⁹ (with the financial support of the United States INL. The platform brought together Caribbean countries in October 2023 in a dialogue to fast-track the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and Inter-American Convention against Corruption. The event culminated in a strategic roadmap for 2023 to 2025 with four thematic areas: (i) stronger anti-corruption legal and institutional frameworks; (ii) transparency and accountability in public procurement and probity in business; (iii) reporting channels and whistle-blower protection; (iv) investigation and prosecution.

Further anti-corruption initiatives include the following. UK FCDO's ***Serious Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Programme*** (2020 to 2025) strengthens anti-corruption organizations in

³⁰⁸ Commonwealth Secretariat. (2023). *Underestimated and Overlooked: Reducing the Cost of Crime and Violence for Improved Financing for Development in the Caribbean*. https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-08/Underestimated_and_Overlooked_UPDF.pdf

³⁰⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.). *Fast-Tracking the Implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)*. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/es/ft-uncac/index.html>

Jamaica and at the regional level.³¹⁰ This includes projects support to major organised crime and anti-corruption agencies; support to the financial investigations division to recover assets acquired by corruption and organised crime; support to the Independent Commission of Investigations to hold public officials accountable for the abuse of power; support to the Integrity Commission to ensure that anti-corruption institutions in Jamaica are effective and accountable; strengthening civil society to combat corruption and serious organized crime; and developing a National Anti-Corruption Strategy for Jamaica. The Commonwealth Secretariat supported the establishment of the Commonwealth Caribbean Association of Integrity Commissions and Anti-Corruption Bodies which meets for regular conferences.³¹¹ In addition, USAID is presently developing a new Rule of Law Project in Jamaica which will include anti-corruption measures. Finally, the IDB *Transparency and Anti-Corruption* program supports many transparency and integrity reforms in various CARICOM countries. Projects are aligned with international standards and supported by digital technologies.

Maritime and Air Safety and Security, and Border Protection

The EU *Global Illicit Flows Programme* is supporting the participation of Caribbean countries in both the broader Seaport Cooperation Project (*SEACOP*) and Airport Communication Project (*AIRCOP*) programs. SEACOP aims to contribute to the fight against maritime illicit trade and associated criminal networks in the targeted countries and regions of Latin America, the Caribbean and West Africa. AIRCOP is a multi-agency project implemented by UNODC in partnership with INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO). Canada has been supporting the project as well. It aims to strengthen the capacities of international airports to target and intercept high-risk passengers, cargo and mail, as a contribution to the fight against illicit drugs and other illicit commodities (such as wildlife products or falsified medical products), terrorism-related threats (such as arms or potential foreign terrorist fighters), trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. It also aims at facilitating communication and coordination between origin, transit and destination countries to disrupt cross-border illicit flows and criminal networks.

³¹⁰ Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office. (2022, November 20). *Serious Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Programme*. United Kingdom. <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300970/summary>

³¹¹ Commonwealth Caribbean Association of Integrity Commissions and Anti-Corruption Bodies. (n.d.). *Home*. <https://ccaicacb.org/web/>.

Some international development partners (e.g., UK) mentioned that they would consider a joint program with Canada (e.g., CBSA) to build the capacity of the region's border protection agencies.

There are several other initiatives, including initiatives on cargo safety and container control programs (OAS, UNODC, and WCO), all of them supported in one way or another by Canada. The OAS Cargo and Container Security Program (part of the OAS Inter-American Committee against Terrorism [CICTE]) engages Transport Canada and CBSA and involves cargo conveyance security and inspection (once a ship is docked and also for air cargo), and the security of containers. The emphasis of the program in recent years has been on the control of firearms, explosives, and synthetic drugs. In CARICOM countries, the program works with Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados, and the Bahamas.

Money Laundering and Financial Crime

Since September 2018 the EU and the CFATF signed an Agreement that aims to enhance the region's capacity to comply with standards relating to Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism. This Agreement directly supports a project on the Implementation of the Mutual Evaluation Programme which is expected to undertake a series of workshops and seminars to build technical capacity, carry out public education and awareness activities, and develop an Information Communication Technology platform called the 'Virtual Learning and Collaborative Centre' which will allow CFATF members to access resource databases. The project also seeks to evaluate compliance in the financial and related sectors in CFATF member countries, to ensure that international standards are adhered to. The project's direct beneficiaries are the CARIFORUM Member Countries. The original duration of the project's implementation period was 58 months. Due to unavoidable delays caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, a 14-month 'Non' Cost Extension was approved by the EU Delegation Office. The original 58-month period (which would have ended in July 2023) was extended to 72 Months. The project now ends in August 2024. CFATF has continued to play an instrumental role in capacity development in the region through its own commitment to providing training and support by the Secretariat.

There have been some recent discussions about establishing a regional legal entity to deal with financial crime, including money laundering, and corruption. There are plans for a ministerial level dialogue on financial crime, corruption and money laundering in May 2024.

Assets tracking, seizure and recovery are important aspects of the fights against organized crime and corruption. Attacking the profits of money laundering is an approach favoured by law enforcement because it weakens criminal organizations while allowing governments to acquire funds for victims' support and for law enforcement. UNODC's *Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative*, in collaboration with the World Bank, supports international efforts to end safe havens for corrupt funds. A 2022 article addressed Latin America and the Caribbean directly, proposing non-conviction-based asset forfeiture (authorities' ability to forfeit proceeds of crime without a criminal conviction) as one of the most effective ways to remove economic incentives for organized crime.³¹² Not all countries in the region have implemented such measures, but several programs have included actions to build the capacity of CARICOM states to engage in and cooperate in asset tracking, seizure, and recovery. The OAS-DTOC, with the support of the US, has been working to help countries develop plans of action and make use of model laws and known best practices, as well as providing technical assistance with respect to financial investigation, and the use of anti money laundering tools. OAS-DTOC was instrumental in helping establish the ARINCARIBE information network for professionals working on assets recovering and assets management in the region.

Firearms Control

The *Reducing Small Arms & Light Weapons Joint Program in Jamaica*, also known as SALIENT Jamaica, jointly managed by UNDP, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, UNODC, and UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is geared at reducing violence and the proliferation of illicit firearms.³¹³ It will focus on undertaking the requisite legislative review and development of required national strategies while building the capacity of local law enforcement agencies to stymie the flow of small arms, including in schools and targeted communities. The project will further undertake research around violence in vulnerable communities by piloting a violence audit in Norwood and Denham

³¹² Stolen Asset Recovery Network. (2022, July 28). *Rooting out incentives to crime and corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://star.worldbank.org/blog/rooting-out-incentives-crime-and-corruption-latin-america-and-caribbean>

³¹³ United Nations Development Program. (n.d.). *Reducing Small Arms & Light Weapons in Jamaica joint programme (SALIENT Jamaica)*. <https://www.undp.org/jamaica/projects/reducing-small-arms-light-weapons-jamaica-joint-programme-salient-jamaica>

Town, for the purpose of more targeted prevention programs in these and similar communities.

The UNLIREC was involved in the development and monitoring of the 2020 Caribbean Firearms Roadmap, in collaboration with CARICOM IMPACS.³¹⁴ It plays a role in the implementation of the Roadmap.

Finally, UNODC has also delivered a small project (2021-2022), in collaboration with IMPACS, to strengthen legislative frameworks consistent with the international legal regime on firearms.

Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling

Several USAID projects in the region have focused on gender-based violence and human trafficking as priorities. USAID's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy for Eastern and South Caribbean³¹⁵ includes programs to address human trafficking. UNDP's *CariSECURE 2.0* program, funded by the USAID, is designed to, among other things, help build the capacity of countries to fight trafficking in persons.

UNODC's project *Transforming Alerts into Criminal Justice Responses to Trafficking in Persons within Migration Flows (TRACK4TIP)* is working in Trinidad and Tobago to improve regional criminal justice responses to human trafficking cases within migration flows. The project has a victim-centered approach with actions aimed at identifying, preventing, and prosecuting this crime.³¹⁶

The OAS-DTOC, with support from Canada, has offered assistance on investigation methods and on the use of anti-money laundering tools to disrupt or dismantle human trafficking and migrant smuggling activities. In February of this year, the OAS-DTOC hosted the annual

³¹⁴ United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. (2023, November 6). *3rd Annual Meeting of States of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap*. <https://unlirec.org/en/publicacion/3rd-annual-meeting-of-states-of-the-caribbean-firearms-roadmap/>

³¹⁵ United States Agency for International Development, Eastern and South Caribbean. (2021). *Regional Development Cooperation Strategy - December 31, 2020 – December 31, 2025*. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/Regional_Development_Cooperation_Strategy_RDCS_-_ESC_-_2020-2025.pdf

³¹⁶ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has also been actively involved in addressing the Venezuelan Migrant crisis in both Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Its goal is to help countries address the main challenges faced by Venezuelan migrants.

meeting of the National Authorities on Human Trafficking. The conclusions reached at that meeting have not yet been made public.

Crime Prevention

UK FCDO funded a review of the most promising strategies for reducing crime, violence, and conflict.³¹⁷ Its new [UK-Jamaica Violence Prevention Partnership](#) program (2023-2029), with a budget of £5,499,995, will help Jamaica to address underlying risk factors that promote violence (including violence against women and girls) for youth at risk.³¹⁸ The program adopts a multisectoral and integrated approach (with simultaneous delivery of key interventions, e.g., psychosocial, case management, literacy, parenting) in seven volatile communities, using their low performing schools as entry points. The program will fund research by the Planning Institute of Jamaica and support the Government to enable the design and delivery of a multi-sectoral violence prevention programme. The program is very innovative. It seeks to support the government of Jamaica to respond to the causes of violence with a whole of government approach, in contrast to past efforts in which various government departments worked in isolation. The project will benefit from a previous UK FDCO funded project by the University of the West Indies to strengthen the government's capacity to collect data for evidence-based policy making. The project requires a political commitment, leadership, and engagement. As a result, its implementation has been somewhat challenging.

Youth Crime Prevention

Several international development partners have worked with CARICOM countries to prevent youth crime.

As was mentioned earlier, Canada contributed to the IDB's Citizen Security and Justice Programme III (2014-2023) in Jamaica. The general objective was to enhance citizen security and justice in Jamaica in target communities. The specific objectives were to: (i) improve behaviors for nonviolent conflict resolution; (ii) increase labor market attachment

³¹⁷ Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab. (2021). *Governance, Crime, and Conflict: Initiative Evidence Wrap-up: Lessons from randomized evaluations on managing and preventing crime, violence, and conflict.*

https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/review-paper/GCCI-Evidence-Wrap-up_June-2021_5.pdf

³¹⁸ United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office. (2022, February 9). *UK-Jamaica Violence Prevention Partnership.* <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300973/summary>

among youth; and (iii) increase access to effective community and alternative justice services. In Guyana, the program covered job readiness training for youth, vocational skills training, entrepreneurship training and business start up grant, and psychosocial support.

UNICEF reported that the alarming rate of violence, abuse and neglect against children is not sufficiently addressed in most countries of the region. Children and adolescents in contact-with-the-law do not always receive holistic support geared towards complete rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities. Many UNICEF programs focus on strengthening child protection systems and, in some cases, specifically protecting children against violence within the criminal justice system.

Working with families and adolescent mothers to support healthy parenting is often an important part of youth crime prevention strategies. For example, in Guyana, adolescent pregnancy as a percentage of all pregnancies in Guyana has remained between 19 and 22 percent from 1997-2016.³¹⁹ UNICEF supported the development in Guyana of a National Policy for the Reintegration of Adolescent Mothers into the Formal School System, in part to address the exclusion of these adolescents from formal education systems.³²⁰

There are also multiple initiatives under the UNDP *Resilience and Inclusive Peace Project (TRIP)* in Trinidad and Tobago, including psychosocial interventions with incarcerated youth to reduce recidivism, building the capacity of the Children’s Court and Child Probation Officers to support restorative justice, a study on the perpetrators of gender-based violence, and a desk review on preventing violent extremism to support state responses.

UK FCDO’s project on *Youth Skills for Economic Growth* (2016 – 2023) was also relevant, in a more general way, as a form of primary crime prevention. It focused on improving the quality, reach and sustainability of technical and vocational education in the Eastern Caribbean.

³¹⁹ United Nations Children’s Fund. (2018). *Situation Analysis of Adolescent Pregnancy in Guyana*. <https://www.unicef.org/guianasuriname/media/481/file/SitAn-Report-Teenage-Pregnacy.pdf>

³²⁰ Guyana Ministry of Education. (2018). *National Policy for the Reintegration of Adolescent Mothers into the Formal School System*. https://www.unicef.org/guianasuriname/media/471/file/National-Policy-Reintegration-of-Adolescent_Mothers_into-Formal_School-System.pdf

The Commonwealth Secretariat recently supported an event in Trinidad and Tobago on male violence (including recommending mental health/trauma interventions, an increased safety net, and establishing a multi-agency committee)³²¹, and an entrepreneurial skills program for youth.³²²

USAID is particularly active in youth crime prevention, and has two missions that serve CARICOM countries: the ‘Eastern and Southern Caribbean’ mission and the Jamaica mission.³²³ The Eastern and Southern Caribbean mission administers programs to Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.³²⁴ Its crime-related programming priorities lay in reducing youth engagement in crime through preventative and evidence-based solutions including improved social services, data collection for the security sectors, child justice systems, and education.³²⁵ A holistic, multi-disciplinary approach means initiatives will involve families, life skills training, psychosocial support, literacy training, technical and vocational training, business and entrepreneurship training, career counseling, and job placement assistance. Programs work at both the national government level, to improve institutions and transparency, and at the level of local communities, to improve resilience.

The USAID mission in Jamaica³²⁶ also has ‘crime and violence’ as one of its programmatic priorities.³²⁷ USAID supports efforts that help targeted communities increase resilience

³²¹ Commonwealth Secretariat. (2023, June 15). *The Commonwealth Secretary-General urges early and targeted action to reduce crime*. <https://thecommonwealth.org/news/commonwealth-secretary-general-urges-early-and-targeted-action-reduce-crime>

³²² Commonwealth Secretariat. (2023, April 28). *Commonwealth and Caricom Secretariat running entrepreneurial skills scheme for 300 Caribbean youths*. <https://thecommonwealth.org/news/commonwealth-and-caricom-secretariat-running-entrepreneurial-skills-scheme-caribbean>

³²³ USAID also has a mission in Haiti.

³²⁴ United States Agency for International Development. (n.d.). *Eastern and Southern Caribbean*. <https://www.usaid.gov/caribbean-regional>

³²⁵ United States Agency for International Development, Eastern and Southern Caribbean. (2020). *Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) 2022 - 2025*. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/Regional_Development_Cooperation_Strategy_RDCS_-_ESC_-_2020-2025.pdf

³²⁶ United States Agency for International Development. (n.d.). *Jamaica*. <https://www.usaid.gov/jamaica>

³²⁷ United States Agency for International Development, Jamaica. (2023). *Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) 2020 - 2025*. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/Public_Jamaica%20Revised%20CDCS%202020-2025_v2_1.pdf

factors and reduce risk factors that drive youth involvement in crime and violence. Programming also includes work with youth at a higher risk of participating in crime and violence or those that have already committed such acts. This may involve support for rehabilitative initiatives, life skills training, psychosocial support, literacy training, technical and vocational training, business and entrepreneurship training, career counseling, and job placement assistance. One example is the *Positive Pathways* project (2020-2025) that supports Jamaican target communities, parents, and families to prevent youth violence through activities such as school safety programs, parenting interventions, conflict resolution sessions, and technical and vocational training. Another example is the *Violence Prevention in Targeted Vulnerable Communities & Schools in Jamaica* project (2022 –2024) which supports collaboration between communities and police to increase citizen security and reduce homicide levels in targeted communities. The activity aims to improve police-youth relations, encouraging tolerance, appreciation of the law, and behavior that reduces violence and promotes community safety.

Through several national or regional projects over the years, the US has refined its approach to youth crime prevention. It appears that many of the projects funded in the past have had a limited impact. Some of these projects, many of them part of the CBSI, are summarized in the following table.

USAID Projects in CARICOM Countries Youth Justice and Youth Crime Prevention
<p><i>Juvenile Court Project (JCP) (2010-2017). Trinidad and Tobago. (Managed by UNDP)</i></p> <p>The JCP initiative brought together the Judiciary, UNDP, and USAID/ESC to support the successful implementation of enacted Children’s Legislation through capacity building and reforms to critical aspects of the juvenile justice system. The program established two pilot juvenile courts, promotes innovative youth peer resolution mechanisms, and introduces a restorative justice approach to managing youth in conflict with the law. The project had three components: (i) support for the implementation of the provisions of the package of Children’s legislation inclusive of the development of a pilot juvenile court system; (ii) a Pilot Juvenile Court, inclusive of a Youth Court which involves young people and has sittings in Trinidad and Tobago; (iii) a public education and sensitization program.</p>

OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Program II (JJRP II). (2015-2020). Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Building on JJRP I and II, supported activities to strengthen juvenile justice systems and promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of youth in conflict with the law back into society. It targeted youth aged 18 and below who were in conflict with the law. The goals were: (i) to increase the use of alternatives to custodial sentences; (ii) ensure detention centers and diversion programs provide support services to foster rehabilitation; (3) facilitate the reintegration of youth leaving detention facilities back into their families and communities; (4) document and share successful models and solutions to reduce youth recidivism rates across the region.

Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Initiative. (2016-2021). St. Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Guyana.

The initiative aimed to: (i) improve the legal and regulatory frameworks by drafting model legislation and promoting a national juvenile justice strategy; (ii) build capacity for effective justice administration through training, development of operating procedures, and introduction of case management software and screening tools; (iii) modernize diversion, detention, and rehabilitative processes through investments in detention facilities and promotion of alternative sentencing options; (iv) improve linkages with civil society through public awareness and education activities.

The program evaluation noted that there remains a critical need for dedicated rehabilitation and social reintegration programs in all three countries. Some progress was achieved in facilitating coordination amongst agencies involved in juvenile justice service delivery, but unnecessary delays in the juvenile justice process remain a concern. Formal pre-trial diversion programs are still missing despite years of rhetoric paid to the importance of these types of programs.

See: Williams, D. et al., (2018). Evaluation of juvenile justice sector reform implementation in St. Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Guyana – Baseline Report. USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00T1BS.pdf

Barnes-Ceeney, K., Morse, B., Bhat, R., & Aziz, A. (2021). *Evaluation of juvenile justice sector reform implementation in St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Guyana – endline report*, Arlington, VA: Social Impact, Inc. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XSR9.pdf

Survey of Justice-Involved Juvenile in Guyana. (2021). Guyana.

The project involved a review of the impact of efforts of to transform Guyana's juvenile justice system which is viewed as placing excessive emphasis on punitive rather than rehabilitative policies. The Youth Empowerment Systems (YES) had helped modernize youth justice and promote diversion programs over confinement. The purpose of this study was to document how justice-involved juveniles are experiencing the criminal justice system in light of the recent and ongoing reforms.

Key Findings

- 1) Little evidence of progress and considerable room for improvement concerning the impact of reforms on juveniles' experiences with procedural justice, police abuse, and compliance with laws prohibiting detention in adult facilities.
- 2) An alarming proportion of the justice-involved juveniles (32 percent) experienced police brutality at the hands of the police, defined as punching, kicking, or beating.
- 3) Current reforms have thus far failed to effectively reduce recidivism.
- 4) Limited progress in terms of supporting successful reintegration of justice-involved youth back into mainstream society: employment and educational opportunities for justice-involved youth continue to be limited.

Recommendations

- 1) The GOG and its international partners should strengthen police accountability to ensure juveniles are protected from excessive use of force and are treated in a procedurally just manner, with dignity and respect.
- 2) To reduce recidivism, the GOG, the Probation Department within the Ministry of Social Protection, and international donors should invest in programs that disrupt ties to delinquent peer groups once juveniles' cases are settled or they are released from detention. These efforts must extend beyond promoting prosocial community engagement or the rebuilding of relationships with non-criminal peers or parent figures, as these activities alone do not deter recidivism.
- 3) Policymakers should be careful to avoid inadvertently strengthening delinquent peer networks by placing delinquent adolescents with delinquent peers in group-based interventions for at-risk youth.
- 4) The GOG and its international partners should invest in vocational education, entrepreneurship training, job placement training, and aftercare support programs that are tailored to the needs of this population.
- 5) The GOG and international partners should also consider investing in additional training and resources for social workers and probation officers, to enable them to play a greater role in aftercare support for young people leaving prison.

See: Barnes-Ceeney, K., Dasgupta, B., Morse B., and Pizatella-Haswell, R. (2021). *Uneven progress toward juvenile justice reform in Guyana: Findings from a survey of justice-involved juveniles*. Arlington, VA : Social Impact. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XKN3.pdf

Community, Family, and Youth Resilience (CFYR) – Family Matters. (2017-2020). *Saint. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Guyana*

The CFYR program aimed to: (i) create pathways away from crime for youth aged 10 to 29; and (ii) provide at-risk youth (identified through a risk screen) with services identified through a community-based approach in which the youth, their family, and local stakeholders collaboratively define problems, identify risk and protective factors, and create local solutions. The project was evaluated. Its key findings were:

- 1) The program had no impact on several key outcomes, including youth delinquency, peer group delinquency, and school participation.
- 2) Careful targeting is key to the success of family counseling programs. Accordingly, these programs should employ reliable risk screens to accurately target those who are at high risk of delinquency.
- 3) At the same time, family counselors should monitor program participants for signs of a highly unstable home environment that may pose a barrier to full participation. To ensure successful participation, family counseling programs need to be flexible and creative in tailoring the intervention to the specific needs of youth and their families; they may also need to work with referral networks to address home environment challenges in conjunction with the program.

See: Diaz-Cayeros, A., Gimenez Stahlberg, S., Pizatella-Haswell, R., Sabet, D., and Kresky, J. (2020). *Evaluation of Secondary Prevention in the Community, Family and Youth Resilience (CFYR) Program in St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and Guyana. Final Endline Report*. Arlington, VA: Social Impact, Inc. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X2GX.pdf

Improving Measurement of Youth and Young Adult Delinquency Risk (A follow up to the CFYR and YES programs). (2021) (Caribbean – regional)

Programs designed to prevent youth delinquency can only be effective if accurately targeted to at-risk youth. Recognizing the importance of targeting, many delinquency prevention programs employ risk screens designed to identify those who are most at risk and screen-out those who are not. To be effective, a risk screen must meet at least three criteria: it must be short and easy to administer; it must be easy for program administrators to grade and aggregate into a risk score; and it must accurately predict who is most at risk of falling into delinquency in the future.

The study assessed the C-YSET predictive value. The study found that the risk assessment tool (Caribbean YSET (C-YSET)) used in different youth prevention programs supported other USAID had limited predictive value. The longitudinal study developed a revised and streamlined risk assessment tool, the Youth Risk Screen (Y-RISC), which incorporates the strongest predictors from the C-YSET with a select subset of additional risk factors identified by recent research as strongly predictive of future delinquency.

See: Díaz-Cayeros, A. et al. (2021). *Improving Measurement of Youth and Young Adult Delinquency Risk – Final Report*, Arlington, VA: Social Impact, Inc. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XS75.pdf

Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment (SKYE) Project (2010-2014) (Guyana). (Part of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI))

The SKYE project's primary objective was to reduce violence in Guyana through strengthened economic participation and civic engagement of at-risk youth. It aimed to: (i) expand employment, education and skill building opportunities for youth at risk; (ii) strengthen the reintegration of youth offenders into society; (iii) strengthen an enabling environment for youth development; (iv) work with the judicial system to build SKYE into a viable sentencing alternative for youth, and with employers, to create employment opportunities for youth upon completion of the program. The direct work with youth was in the form of a formal training and mentorship program designed to enhance life and employment skills. Youth were engaged throughout the process with a coach who mentors and guides them through the development of a livelihood plan. Coaching was the cornerstone of the SKYE project; it was the cross-cutting element that connected all aspects of SKYE. The project was the subject of a mid-term evaluation which observed that SKYE has done much to advocate for alternative sentencing. However, even if the judicial architecture for alternative sentencing had been on the books for a long time, uptake on the part of the judiciary was limited. A final evaluation contains several recommendations for the delivery of similar projects.

See: De García, D. et al. (2014). *Evaluation of the Guyana Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment Program – Mid-term performance evaluation*. The Consultancy Group.

https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00K7TD.pdf

USAID (2016). *Skills and Knowledge for Youth (SKYE) Project. – Final Report*.

https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00TJTT.pdf

Youth Development and Juvenile Justice Program in Suriname (Kari Yu! Project). (2013-2016.) (Suriname)

The project which was delivered by the Pan-American Development Foundation (PADF) aimed among other things to strengthen Suriname's juvenile justice system and improve reintegration services for youth offenders. It also purported to increase youth access to training and employment opportunities. It was designed to bring together government, private sector, civil society and youth to develop and implement innovative projects and approaches that support the social inclusion and economic engagement of youth, for a more competitive Suriname. The impact of the project with respect to juvenile justice reform and improved reintegration services was not measured.

See: Pan-American Development Foundation (2016). USAID/PADF Youth Development and Juvenile Justice Program – Kari Yu – Final Report. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00ZK23.pdf

USAID has also funded the development of a *Crime and Violence Prevention Field Guide*³²⁸ by Democracy International to support USAID officers and other practitioners working on citizen security and violence prevention by providing a conceptual framework for understanding crime, violence, and prevention as part of broader citizen security systems; information about evidence-based interventions to prevent crime and violence; and practical advice and tools on how to design, implement, measure, and evaluate projects that address crime and violence or citizen security.³²⁹ USAID also funded an evidence review regarding the effect of education programs on violence, crime, and related outcomes.³³⁰ In the absence of specific program evaluations, many programs are based on the assumption that children and youth are most likely to avoid violence and crime if they remain safely engaged in school and continue their learning, while developing the social-emotional skills that will help them to avoid involvement in risky behaviors, violence, and crime.

Preventing Gender Based Crime and Violence against Children

UNICEF produced publications and surveys on violence against children in the Caribbean and Latin America, including a recent 2022 statistical profile that argues interventions must counter the normalization of violence itself, and highlights engaging at all levels of society in interventions (families, community services, and regional/national law reform).³³¹

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has a multi-country office in Barbados and supports all 14 CARICOM states that are the

³²⁸ See: Mizrahi, Y., Reisman, L., Cohan, L., & Costello, C. E. (2021). *Crime and Violence Prevention Field Guide*. United States Agency for International Development. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/PA00XGHG.pdf>

³²⁹ Note also that USAID has adopted a *Youth in Development Policy* (updated in 2022) which seeks to strengthen cross-sectoral youth programming, participation, and partnership in support of Agency development and humanitarian objectives. It applies to programming in all sectors and acknowledges the following types of youth programming at USAID: Youth-focused, youth relevant, and youth led. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/USAID-Youth-in-Development-Policy-2022-Update-508.pdf>

³³⁰ Bagby, E., Murray, N., Felix, E., Liuzzi, S., Meuth Alldredge, J., Ingwersen, N., Abarcar, P. & Aponte, A. (2021). *Evidence Review: The effect of education programs on violence, crime, and related outcomes*. Mathematica for the United States Agency for International Development. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XGXS.pdf

³³¹ United Nations Children's Fund. (2022). *A Statistical Profile of Violence against Children in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/media/38241/file/A-statistical-profile-of-violence-against-children-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean.pdf>

subjects of this gap analysis.³³² UN Women Caribbean supported the development of multiple national action plans to address gender-based violence, helped revise or adopt domestic and gender-based violence laws, and supported regional policing institutions, among other initiatives.³³³ UN Women is also one of the partners in *Caribbean Women Count*, the national survey initiative on gender-based violence in five Caribbean states (in collaboration with the UNDP, USAID, the CDB, and the IDB).

The *Spotlight Initiative* is a global initiative of the United Nations, with major support from the EU. Its goal is to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. It is focused on gender equality and women's empowerment as a precondition and driver for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Initiative has supported several projects in the CARICOM region, many of them delivered by the UN Women.

UNDP, the International Labour Organization, UNICEF, the UN Population Fund, UN Women and PAHO/WHO are delivering Spotlight initiatives in Grenada³³⁴, Jamaica³³⁵, Trinidad and Tobago³³⁶, and in Guyana and Suriname³³⁷. These are designed to coordinate a comprehensive national program for ending family violence and all forms of violence against women and girls. The initiative in Jamaica addresses violence against women and girls through three priority areas: (i) child sexual abuse, ii) intimate partner violence and iii) discrimination against vulnerable groups. This program takes an early prevention approach, addressing socio-cultural norms in schools and the community. It also recognizes that civil society groups have been at the forefront of responses to violence against women and will provide them with support. Finally, the program will also address law and policy gaps. In

³³² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Caribbean. (n.d.). *Countries*. <https://caribbean.unwomen.org/en/countries>

³³³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Caribbean. (n.d.). *Ending violence against women*. https://caribbean.unwomen.org/en/our-work/ending-violence-against-women_caribbean

³³⁴ United Nations Development Program. (n.d.). *Grenada spotlight initiative*. <https://www.undp.org/barbados/projects/grenada-spotlight-initiative>

³³⁵ United Nations Development Program. (n.d.). *Spotlight initiative-Jamaica*. <https://www.undp.org/jamaica/projects/spotlight-initiative-jamaica>

³³⁶ United Nations Development Program. (n.d.). *The spotlight initiative*. <https://www.undp.org/trinidad-and-tobago/projects/spotlight-initiative>

³³⁷ United Nations in Guyana (n.d.). *Spotlight Initiative* - <https://www.unicef.org/guyanasuriname/spotlight-initiative#:~:text=In%20Guyana%2C%20the%20Spotlight%20Initiative%20aims%20to%20address%20gender-based%20violence%2C%20intimate%20partner%20violence%20and%20school-based%20violence>.

Trinidad and Tobago, the initiative is focusing on building the capacity of essential services, including civil society, to reduce gender-based and family violence.

UNICEF, PAHO, WHO, UNODC and other agencies also co-developed INSPIRE: Seven Strategies to end Violence against Children, an evidence-based technical package that summarizes what works to prevent and respond to such violence. The seven strategies are: implementation and enforcement of laws; norms and values; safe environments; parent and caregiver support; income and economic strengthening; response and support services; and education and life skills.³³⁸

Supporting the Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration of Offenders

One of the planned activities of the UNDP/EU PACE Justice program is support for the reintegration and social inclusion of offenders. The exact nature of these activities has yet to be finalized. The program is in the process of establishing PACE Working Committees which will include prison officials, police, prosecutors, and others. These committees will help flesh out program activities at the national level.

One of four core components of IDB Citizen Security and Justice projects is prison rehabilitation.³³⁹ Iterations of the program have been implemented in The Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.³⁴⁰

Building Community Resilience

Strengthening community resilience is one of the key regional development objectives identified in USAID's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS – 2021-2025) for

³³⁸ World Health Organization. (2016). *INSPIRE: seven strategies for ending violence against children*. <https://www.unicef.org/media/66876/file/INSPIRE-SevenStrategies.pdf>

³³⁹ Inter-American Development Bank. (n.d.). *Citizen security and justice*. <https://www.iadb.org/en/who-we-are/topics/reformmodernization-state/citizen-security-and-justice>

³⁴⁰ Inter-American Development Bank. (n.d.). *Citizen security and justice program [Bahamas]*. <https://www.iadb.org/en/whats-our-impact/BH-L1033>; Inter-American Development Bank. (n.d.). *Citizen security strengthening programme [Guyana]*. <https://www.iadb.org/en/whats-our-impact/GY-L1042>; Inter-American Development Bank. (n.d.). *Citizen security and justice programme III [Jamaica]*.

the Eastern and South Caribbean region (2020-2025).³⁴¹ Building upon lessons learned over the previous five years, USAID is seeking to strengthen citizen security and community resilience through targeted programming. Efforts include reducing gender-based violence and other forms of crime and violence at the community level as well as engaging private sector entities to ensure youth are mentored and equipped with skills that can be more readily absorbed into meaningful employment. Interventions will also help communities reduce vulnerabilities by engaging citizens in governance, community development, and building disaster management capacity. In Jamaica, USAID supported *the Local Partner Development* (2017-2023) with activity focused on building the capacity of Jamaican institutions, civil society organizations and key public and private partners to become more effective in advancing collaborative, evidence-based youth crime and violence prevention strategies that mobilize and sustain targeted secondary and tertiary prevention efforts.

TRIP in Trinidad and Tobago, mentioned above, is part of the UNDP's violence prevention portfolio developed to address crime and recidivism in the country. The project encourages civil engagement and fosters community resilience.³⁴² Taking a multifaceted approach, the project works to enhance community resilience through the promotion of inclusive peacebuilding. The project also supports the government's violence prevention policy, legislative agenda and key projects. There are multiple initiatives under the project, including psychosocial interventions with incarcerated youth to reduce recidivism, building the capacity of the Children's Court and Child Probation Officers to support restorative justice, a study on the perpetrators of gender-based violence, and a desk review on preventing violent extremism to support state responses.

7. Canada's Engagement

Canada has delivered critical support to the region along a range of diplomatic, capacity building, relationship management, and legislative efforts. This has included significant efforts

³⁴¹ United States Agency for International Development, Eastern and South Caribbean. (2021). *Regional Development Cooperation Strategy - December 31, 2020 – December 31, 2025*. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/Regional_Development_Cooperation_Strategy_RDCS_-_ESC_-_2020-2025.pdf

³⁴² United Nations Development Program. (n.d.). *Trinidad and Tobago Resilience and Inclusive Peace Project (TRIP)*. <https://www.undp.org/trinidad-and-tobago/projects/trinidad-and-tobago-resilience-and-inclusive-peace-project-trip>

to advance the capacity of security institutions (including law enforcement, military, and intelligence) across the region to counter crime in all its forms; efforts to strengthen judicial, legislative, and criminal justice systems; and efforts to promote effective community crime prevention strategies, underscoring its commitment to fostering safer communities in the Caribbean.

In October 2023, under the theme “Strategic Partners for a Resilient Future”, The CANADA-CARICOM Summit, co-chaired by Prime Minister Trudeau and Prime Minister Skerrit of Dominica, discussed the priorities of climate change, access to finance, regional and global security, and trade and investment. The key security challenges in the region, including illicit trafficking of weapons and drugs, and surging violent crime, were specifically discussed and Canada committed \$6.6 million to tackle illegal arms trafficking in Haiti and the wider Caribbean, as well as \$4.6 million to address gender-based violence and women’s rights in the Eastern Caribbean.³⁴³ Initiatives advancing these priorities will be implemented through a number of Canadian programming avenues, of which the main mechanisms are discussed below.

7.1 Existing Programming Mechanisms

Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy³⁴⁴ recognizes that supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the best way to build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Canada’s feminist international assistance aims to protect and promote the human rights of all vulnerable and marginalized groups and increase their participation in equal decision making. The policy is interwoven in all assistance programming mechanisms.

The main programming mechanisms involved in delivering assistance and support to CARICOM countries in the justice, security and crime prevention sectors are the Caribbean Regional Development Program (CRDP), The Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program

³⁴³ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada. (2023, October 19). *CANADA-CARICOM Summit Joint Communique*. <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2023/10/19/canada-caricom-summit-joint-communique>

³⁴⁴ Global Affairs Canada. (2017). *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy*. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/iap2-eng.pdf?_ga=2.240148352.227858769.1697579868-229067090.1697579867

(ACCBP), the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOP), and the Foreign Policy and Diplomacy Service (FPDS).

Through its CRDP, Canada has emphasized the importance of strengthening the justice systems in the Caribbean by improving access to justice, reducing court case backlogs, promoting greater transparency and accountability in the judicial process, facilitating court modernization (through judicial training, public engagement, knowledge management and technology), as well as introducing alternative dispute resolution and restorative justice. CRDP initiatives have also emphasized equal access to justice for women and to reduce violence against women and girls. Interventions to date have aimed to improve ‘whole-of-government’ and community-involved approaches to crime reduction, often focusing on multiple national institutions and actors including legislators, law enforcement, and judiciary. Support mechanisms include capacity building and training, legislative or policy reform, community engagement, and diplomatic and partnership building efforts.

Over the last three decades, Canada has funded multiple security and justice sector reforms through the CRDP in eight CARICOM countries eligible for international assistance. Canada is the third largest bilateral donor in the Caribbean region. Programming included specific development projects such as JURIST, IMPACT Justice, JUST, CSJP , as well as bi-lateral projects. Recent CRDP projects funded by Canada have demonstrated a more robust monitoring and evaluation framework, essential for recognizing which objectives were not met, learning from past projects, and adjusting future objectives. For example, the latest CSJP (III) improved upon its former iterations with a detailed and largely measurable results matrix, assessed by a third-party evaluator.

The CRDP was evaluated in 2018.³⁴⁵ On the modalities of providing assistance, the review noted that “given that countries in a region are not all equally motivated by regional cooperation, programs may consider regional programming with select countries that are more supportive of this approach”. The evaluation also recommended the mapping of current and planned initiatives in the region including funding from all donors and favouring simplicity of project design at the national and regional level to account for the limited institutional capacity of implementing partners. It further recommended to facilitate coordination with

³⁴⁵ Global Affairs Canada. (2018). *Evaluation of the Caribbean Regional Development Program, 2011/12 to 2016/17*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/publications/evaluation/2018/evaluation-caribbean-caraiibes.aspx?lang=eng>;

multiple stakeholders, as well as improved project monitoring and evaluation. It suggested that aid delivery efficiency could be improved by decentralized programs that provide field-based teams in partner countries with advisory and managerial capacity, and with program and financial authority. In response to the evaluation, and in keeping with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, the CRDP developed a Gender Action Plan to align international assistance investments in the region with the policy's gender equity targets.

The ACCBP works to improve the capacity of beneficiary states, government entities and international organizations to deal with transnational crime. The mandate of the anti-crime program is global, but focuses on the Americas, mainly Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico. Canada has worked together with other international stakeholders to develop partnerships with CARICOM countries and improve their capacity to deal with transnational crime and cooperate across borders. The program has supported partnership development and capacity building initiatives by Canadian security institutions, notably the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the CBSA, the Department of National Defence, and the Canadian Coastguard, to improve detection, information sharing, investigation, cooperation, and the disruption of organized crime activities.

The ACCBP also administers the Canadian annual voluntary contributions to the OAS. Canada's current projects in the Caribbean through ACCBP represent a total value of \$82,500,000.³⁴⁶ Efforts are focussed on illicit drugs and firearms; corruption; human trafficking and migrant smuggling; money laundering and proceeds of crime; security sector reform, and crime prevention including cyber-crime.

Either through or independently from the ACCBP, several Canadian institutions and government agencies are engaged in delivering support and assistance and developing partnerships with their counterparts in CARICOM countries.

The PSOP is the Government of Canada's principal platform for conflict prevention, stabilization and peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected states. Among other things, PSOPs' policies and programming seek to engage women and girls, as well as men and

³⁴⁶ Global Affairs Canada. (2023, September 1). *Programming for Security and Defence in the Caribbean - Canada's Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program*.

boys, as agents of change in peace and security efforts since supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the best way to build a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world.

The FPDS provides regional and country specific information and analysis to inform security programming design and delivery and maintains relationships with partner governments and organizations such as IMPACS and RSS. Heads of Mission and colleagues in the field participate in project activities and monitor the implementation and impact of Canada's contribution.

The following subsections provide further details on projects within the CRDP and ACCBP.

7.2 The Caribbean Regional Development Program (CRDP)

The following are the main projects in the justice and crime prevention sectors supported by the CRDP in recent years. However, in the absence of independent evaluations, it is difficult to assess the impact of these initiatives. It is also evident that some countries may have been better able than others to respond, absorb and benefit from the assistance provided.

Nevertheless, based on the many interviews conducted during the present gap analysis with project participants, beneficiaries, and partners, it is amply clear that Canada's development assistance through these projects has been beneficial and is recognized by all as a catalyst for positive improvements in justice institutions, especially with respect to gender sensitive practices and institutional responses to gender-based violence. Canada's assistance is also credited by the region's key stakeholders and international development partners with having significantly contributed to capacity building in the justice sector.

That being said, there remains great frustration among many of the stakeholders interviewed about the slow pace of change, the persistent inefficiency of the justice systems, and the apparent failure of law enforcement and justice institutions to counter violence and crime. The public credibility of the justice system in countries of the region remains very low. As a result, there seems to be a growing realization that addressing the ever-growing problem of crime and violence in the region requires more than justice reforms and institutional capacity building. A whole of government approach and civil society engagement is increasingly called

for, as acknowledged by the recent Declaration of Heads of Government of CARICOM on Crime and Violence as a Public Health Issue.

Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST)

The JURIST project started in 2014. In 2019, the project was extended until 2023 and has now wrapped up its final year. The CCJ implemented JURIST on behalf of the Conference of Heads of Judiciary of CARICOM. It had a budget of \$19,800,000.³⁴⁷ The following countries were the focus of the project:

- Belize (6.67%)
- Barbados (7.41%)
- Jamaica (4.45%)
- Saint Lucia (5.93%)
- Antigua and Barbuda (5.19%)
- Saint Kitts and Nevis (4.45%)
- Suriname (5.19%)
- Guyana (9.63%)
- Dominica (5.19%)
- Trinidad and Tobago (5.19%)
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (5.14%)
- Grenada (5.19%)
- Montserrat (4.45%)
- West Indies, regional (25.92%)

The project responded to legal systems in CARICOM member states that produced delays and inefficiencies, unpredictability, and a lack of transparency. The stated goal of this project was to produce “a judicial system in the Caribbean that is more responsive to the needs of women, men, youth and the poor”.³⁴⁸ Its expected outcomes were:

³⁴⁷ Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - Judicial reform and institution strengthening*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/ProjectProjet/Details/A035272001>

³⁴⁸ Judicial Reform and Strengthening Project. (2023). *Judicial reform and institutional strengthening (JURIST) project: Annual results report*. Caribbean Court of Justice, p. 10.

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- Strengthened customer-focused and gender-responsive court and judicial service delivery.
 - Improved capacity of courts to deliver gender responsive and customer focused court services.
 - Enhanced capacity of the courts to undertake public education programs.
 - Improved gender responsive systems, court policies and procedures.
 - Strengthened capacity of courts for efficient court governance, case management and case disposition.

The CCJ report for the final year of the project recorded progress in meeting these outcomes. The overall target the project had set for itself, and which was achieved, was for six countries to adopt reforms consistent with international standards and best practices in relation to at least four of six reform areas.³⁴⁹ Other specific targets were met or exceeded with respect to the number of judicial officers and court staff trained in gender-responsive and customer-focused court services, and in the number of plans produced by courts for more efficient case management and disposition. Gaps remained but substantial progress had been made in courts instituting customer focused and/or gender responsive reforms, in the number of gender-responsive public education programs developed, in court staff trained to implement public education programs, in the number of new reforms and policies implemented regarding gender-responsiveness, and in the number of courts implementing improved gender-responsive data collection systems.

Not all project targets were met or even measured. However, in the final year of the project, many activities were finalized, or courts demonstrated that they would continue building on efforts of the past years. For example, the project supported the development of Model Guidelines for Sexual Offence Cases in the Caribbean Region³⁵⁰, and the establishment of a Sexual Offences Model Court (SOMC) at the High Court of Antigua and Barbuda, to implement and test the Model Guidelines. The Model Guidelines have also been adopted by the Guyana judiciary which has also established three sexual offences courts to date. The judiciary in several states have since expressed an interest in establishing sexual offences

³⁴⁹ Access to justice, completeness and timeliness of cases, equality, fairness and accountability, public trust and confidence, and environment for conducting the work of the court.

³⁵⁰ Caribbean Court of Justice. (2022). *Revised Model Guidelines for Sexual Offence Cases in the Caribbean Region*. <https://ccj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Revised-Model-Guidelines-for-Sexual-Offence-Cases-2022.pdf>

courts. Notably, the only part of JURIST that was systematically evaluated was the Sexual Offences Court project.

Further, several technologies and guidelines were finalized that improve court administration and case management, and the Caribbean Judicial Information System continues to be populated with information related to judicial reforms (including judgements, policies, guidelines, treaties and legislation, and practice directions).³⁵¹ The annual report also testifies to a “shift in institutional culture and narrative” resulting from the project, in which there is strengthened collaboration between judiciaries, increased knowledge of evidence-based planning, a willingness to recognize need for improvement, and a more rights-based and gender-sensitive justice ethos.³⁵²

Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean (IMPACT Justice)

The IMPACT Justice project was delivered by the University of the West Indies. The project had a budget of \$19,800,000 and took place between March of 2014 and March of 2023.³⁵³ The recipient countries were:

- Suriname (1.68%)
- Guyana (13.85%)
- Montserrat (5.61%)
- Trinidad And Tobago (2.84%)
- Saint Kitts and Nevis (3.09%)
- Grenada (3.03%)
- Antigua and Barbuda (3.16%)
- Belize (8.31%)
- Saint Lucia (3.03%)
- Barbados (8.25%)
- Jamaica (3.61%)

³⁵¹ See Caribbean Court of Justice. (n.d.). *The Caribbean judicial information system (CJIS)*. <https://ccj.org/services/cjis/>

³⁵² Judicial Reform and Strengthening Project. (2023). *Judicial reform and institutional strengthening (JURIST) project: Annual results report*. Caribbean Court of Justice, p. 5.

³⁵³ Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/ProjectProjet/Details/A035470001>

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- Dominica (3.03%)
 - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (4.95%)
 - West Indies, regional (35.56%)

The project responded to a need for a stable and predictable environment for addressing violent crime and disputes between citizens, promoting business, attracting foreign investment, and meeting international obligations. The overall goal of the project was to enhance access to justice, for the benefit of men, women, youth and businesses in CARICOM states.³⁵⁴ The goals of the project were to:

- Strengthen legislation and treaty policy making at national and regional levels that is gender-equitable and environmentally sensitive.
- Increase access by CARICOM states to regional model laws and new or amended national laws that are gender-equitable and environmentally sensitive.
- Improve legal services, including legal education and information for women, men, youth and businesses at the national and regional levels.
- Enhance gender-responsive accountability framework, including legal profession skills upgrading.
- Improve equitable access by the legal profession and public to legal information.
- Strengthen gender-responsive alternative dispute resolution (ADR), restorative justice and community-based peace-building services for women, men, youth and businesses in CARICOM member States, including training of ADR practitioners.

Project activities included developing model legislation, delivering graduate and undergraduate courses on legislation and treaty drafting, conducting a survey of legal education in the region, delivering professional workshop and public education on alternative dispute resolution, restorative justice, and community-based peace-building initiatives. The project reported that it had supported the establishment of a Law Revision Commission and

³⁵⁴ Global Affairs Canada. (2023). *Improved access to Justice in the Caribbean (IMPACT Justice) Final Report (April 1, 2014-March 31, 2023)*.

reviewed domestic violence legislation in Guyana, reviewed proposed legislation, and held workshops on addressing domestic violence against women and girls.

The progress achieved in meeting the project's objectives is recorded in the project's final report, according to which the project's overall targets were either met or exceeded, including the adopting of model legislation to remove gender inequalities in at least six countries, and the percentages of disputes referred to mediation centres.³⁵⁵ The project reported that it had surpassed its targets relating to public legal education programs and the number of materials delivered, although only two of six targeted countries offered accredited continuing legal professional development programs. Targets relating to the training of justice professionals in delivering gender-responsive alternative dispute resolution were met. Crucially however, the target for at least one alternative dispute resolution service point to be established in six CARICOM member states was not achieved. Only three of the targeted countries established such services. The project's impact was not independently evaluated.

Review of CARICOM Regional Institutions

The Review of CARICOM Regional Institutions project was implemented by the CARICOM Secretariat. It had a budget of \$2,000,000 and a timeline from October 2019 to September 2023.³⁵⁶ This is a regional project, focussing on the West Indies. The expected results of this project were to produce a better understanding of how CARICOM can provide gender-sensitive service to member states and how member countries can benefit from regional integration and cooperation. Specifically, the project outlined measures for seventeen CARICOM regional institutions to rationalize their functions, funding and structures in order to provide equitable services to member states. Gender streamlining was another important focus of the project, contributing to CARICOM institutions' ability to deliver gender-sensitive services to member states.

³⁵⁵ Idem.

³⁵⁶ Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - Review of CARICOM regional institutions*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/P007500001>

Judicial Strengthening Program for the Eastern Caribbean

The Judicial Strengthening Program for the Eastern Caribbean will be implemented by the Justice Education Society of British Columbia. It was approved in October 2023 and will extend to September of 2028, with a budget of \$4,600,000.³⁵⁷ Implementation will begin in 2024.³⁵⁸ The project will take place in Saint Vincent and The Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Grenada, and Dominica. It will provide technical assistance regarding sexual and gender-based violence to the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, High Courts, and Magistrates Courts in each country. Its goals are to increase the capacity of vulnerable populations to know and exercise their rights in judicial processes, as well as to increase the capacity of judges, prosecutors, and public defenders to reduce delays in processing such cases.

Project for the Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC)

The PRASC was implemented by Statistics Canada from March 2015 to September 2023, with a budget of \$19,893,569.³⁵⁹ Statistics Canada provided technical assistance to improve national statistic's agencies' provision of credible social and economic statistics, in turn supporting evidence-based policy making. The project supported 14 national statistics organizations as well as regional institutions.

The four main outcomes of the project were 1) introducing new compilation methods, improving data gaps, and increasing compliance with international standards, 2) developing a business survey infrastructure to improve economic statistics, 3) developing a household survey infrastructure to improve social statistics, including sex-disaggregated indicators, and 4) improving statistical and expertise sharing at national and regional levels through improved communication and dissemination strategies.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁷ Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - Judicial strengthening program for the Eastern Caribbean*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/P011397001>

³⁵⁸ Based on correspondence with the Justice Education Society of British Columbia.

³⁵⁹ Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - Project for the regional advancement of statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC)*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/D000686001>

³⁶⁰ Statistics Canada. (2023, January 31). *Project for the regional advancement of statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC)*. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/about/cooperation/prasc>

Integrity, Mobilisation, Participation, Accountability, Anti-corruption and Transparency (IMPACT)

Transparency International implemented the Integrity, Mobilisation, Participation, Accountability, Anti-corruption and Transparency project (IMPACT) with a \$13,610,805 contribution from GAC.³⁶¹ The project took place between March 2016 and June 2021. The project operated in Latin America and Africa, and included two recipient countries in the Caribbean, Jamaica (9.84% of the project funding) and Trinidad and Tobago (7.44% of the project funding). In Latin America and Caribbean, the project aimed to increase adoption of accountability laws and standards by governments and judicial institutions. The project was independently evaluated.³⁶²

Citizen Security and Justice Program (CSJP) III – Jamaica

The Citizen Security and Justice Program (CSJP) III (2014 – 2020) was implemented by Jamaica’s Ministry of National Security, with \$20,000,000 in funding from Canada, and contributions from the IDB and the UK Department for International Development.³⁶³ This was the third phase of CSJPs, which operated in Jamaica since 2001.³⁶⁴ The program’s main goal (‘ultimate outcome’) was to improve security and justice for citizens in targeted, crime-prone communities in Jamaica. It included three components: Culture Change and Community Governance, to enhance citizen security and justice in target communities and improve behaviours for non-violent conflict resolution in target communities; Labour Market Attachment and Employability, to increase labour market attachment among youth of target communities; and, Community Justice Services, to increase access to effective community and alternative justice services in target communities.

Project activities included: (i) providing training in conflict resolution, healthy parenting and gang interruption techniques to community members, including school children: (ii) setting

³⁶¹ Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - Integrity, mobilisation, participation, accountability, anti-corruption and transparency (IMPACT)*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/d002613001>

³⁶² Aleph Strategies. (2021). *Evaluation of IMPACT Grant: Final Report*. https://files.transparencycdn.org/images/Aleph-Strategies_Evaluation-of-the-IMPACT-Grant_Final.pdf

³⁶³ Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - Citizen security and justice program*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/ProjectProjet/Details/D000158001>

³⁶⁴ Rengifo, A. F. & Rees, D. (2021). *CSJP III Final Evaluation - Final Report*. Ernst & Young Caribbean.

up Community Action Committees to implement safety plans, promote positive citizen-police relations, and ensure government services are better coordinated at the local level: (iii) making job skills and entrepreneurship training more accessible for vulnerable groups, particularly at-risk youth and women: and (iv) increasing access to justice for people, especially women, by providing victim support services, dispute resolution, and public education on justice-related rights and services, and by diverting children from courts and incarceration by channelling them into reintegration programs.

A final project review by a third-party evaluator found that CSJP did not meet its high level, ultimate outcome, especially regarding community-level reductions in crime.³⁶⁵ The program did meet most of its intermediate outcomes, accomplishing meaningful impacts at the individual level for many (particularly in reducing risk levels, improving parenting practices, and strengthening markers of employability). Further, the program was strong in monitoring and evaluating progress, particularly compared to past CSJPs. The Results Matrix was clear and tracked tangible outcomes (e.g. murders and shootings per parish, number of people receiving education or counseling, and perceptions of safety through survey-based evidence). However well-implemented, the program's planned interventions were not sufficiently broad nor sustained to produce the changes envisioned in the ultimate outcome, and the work was not insulated from national shifts in safety conditions.

Within the broader context of increasing violence in Jamaica between 2017 and 2020, the evaluation concluded that the full implementation of CSJP III may have protected some local communities from upward, nationwide trends in homicides/shootings while also promoting speedier, more significant recoveries post the extreme peak of violence experienced in the country at that time. According to the evaluation report, "the implementation of CSJP III did not change significantly pre-intervention trends nor levels of reported murders/shootings in targeted communities net of other co-occurring interventions and baseline differences in socio-economic conditions. In other words, the results of these models indicate that the variation in murders/shootings in targeted communities during the intervention (2017-2020) did not differ statistically from the values observed pre-intervention (2014-2016). Similarly, the evaluation did not find evidence of an average crime-suppression effect in CSJP III

³⁶⁵ Rengifo, A. F. & Rees, D. (2021). *CSJP III Final Evaluation - Final Report*. Ernst & Young Caribbean.

communities relative to comparison communities with similar socioeconomic characteristics.”³⁶⁶

Justice Undertakings for Social Transformation (JUST) – Jamaica

The JUST program (2008 – 2021) was implemented by the UNDP in Jamaica with a \$8,506,000 contribution from Canada.³⁶⁷ The program ran from August 2008 to June 2021. It focused on legal and judicial development, with the ultimate outcome to modernize the justice system and improve security for Jamaicans. It aimed to do so through strengthening justice institutions, promoting legislative reform, and facilitating community input on justice system reforms.

The project included three components:

1. *Technical-Legal Assistance*: Department of Justice (DOJ) Canada provided support to MOJ, the ODPP and the Courts to address a wide range of matters to improve the management and implementation of their core business, utilizing Canadian and Jamaican technical experts and DOJ Personnel assigned to Jamaica.
2. *Institutional Strengthening*: The building of technical and result-based management capacity of the beneficiary agencies within the justice sector, through a number of priority actions integrated into the organisational structure, corporate plans and annual work programmes of these agencies. This component was implemented primarily by the Justice Reform Implementation Unit (JRIU), which was embedded in the MOJ, with technical support from the DOJ and oversight, project management and quality control support from the UNDP.
3. *Social Order*: The implementation of initiatives, primarily by NGOs, aimed at improving the capacity of women, men and youth to access justice information, advice and services, as well as improving the capacity of civil society representatives and legal

³⁶⁶ Idem, p. 15-16.

³⁶⁷ Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - Justice Undertakings for Social Transformation - United Nations Development Programme*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/ProjectProjet/Details/A032861003>

professionals to participate in the justice reform process. This component was managed by the UNDP with the support of the GAC Project Coordinator.³⁶⁸

A third-party evaluation found that 0% of targets under the ultimate outcome were met, 50% of intermediate outcomes were met, and 64% of immediate outcomes were met.³⁶⁹ However, the evaluator posited that the ultimate outcome may be achieved after the official close of the project, as the Jamaican Ministry of Justice was catalyzed by the project to reform the justice system. Further, the evaluator found that the program reached an overall high level of effectiveness as 90% of the 140 project targets were met or exceeded, and 11 key achievements made a positive impact. These achievements were:

- *General*: (1) The program was truly a catalyst for the reform of the entire justice system. (2) The program helped the justice sector to recognize the importance of results-based Management (RBM). (3) A sector-wide M&E framework was prepared, including a Citizen Scorecard. (4) The entire justice sector benefited from the extensive investment in ICT Infrastructure and technology, which was an essential component of modernizing the justice system.
- *Ministry of Justice (MOJ)*: (5) The program enabled the fundamental restructuring of the MOJ and provided long-term support to its institutional strengthening. (6) Communication and visibility of the justice sector and the MOJ was hugely enhanced. (7) Through the sector coordination activities convened by the MOJ with the JRIU acting as the secretariat.
- *Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP)*: (8) A standardized knowledge-based Prosecutor's Manual and Code of Conduct were produced and are well-used by prosecutors, clerks of court and other legal professionals.
- *Judicial Branch (the Courts)*: (9) Court Case Management Reforms, including the introduction of Judicial Case Management Rules, a Case Information Statistics

³⁶⁸ Government of Canada. (n.d.). Project profile - Justice Undertakings for Social Transformation - United Nations Development Programme. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/ProjectProjet/Details/A032861003>

³⁶⁹ Griffiths, P. A., Chambers-Johnson, C., McPherson, U. M., Voordouw, J. J., & Williams, D. M. (2021). *JUST – End of program & lessons learned assessment: FINAL assessment report NO P-000047*, p. 6 & 32.

System and Case Progression Officers, were successfully developed and piloted in the Jamaica Court System, enabling the re-engineering of business processes.

- *Drafting, law reform & legislative policy:* (10) Drafting and law reform were significantly improved by the JUST program, through introduction of new management systems within the OPC, the enhanced professional development training provided to drafters and legal officers, as well as the production of manuals and electronic systems.
- *People centered justice:* (11) The launch of the Social Order component has brought a host of people-centered benefits to the justice system, through the targeted engagement of civil society in communications, public education and multi-agency partnerships.

The evaluation also commented on the coherence, sustainability, and gender-inclusivity of the program. They found good coherence, meaning there was effective donor coordination and duplication of efforts was avoided.³⁷⁰ Sustainability was particularly strong with the government of Jamaica and courts as members were well-engaged with the project and developed ownership over it. However, involvement of the public (with regard to the third component, Social Order) was only just starting at the time of the final evaluation and civil society organizations made limited progress in improving their skills and resources for addressing legislative and policy areas.

The Social Justice Project (So-JUST) – Jamaica

The So-JUST project focuses exclusively on Jamaica, from March of 2022 until December 2028. The project partner is the UNDP. GAC contributed \$12,000,000.³⁷¹

The project targets systemic change within the Ministry of Justice, including the Courts and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to improve social justice in Jamaica, using a human rights and gender responsive approach. The expected outcome of the project is an improved, rights-based and gender-sensitive justice system that achieves more equitable

³⁷⁰ Specifically, the JUST program fits well with other development programs such as JSAT and CSJP, and supported the EU Budget Support Program, and IDB-, USAID- and DFID-supported actions. The learnings should be useful for the regional IMPACT Justice and JURIST programs.

³⁷¹ Government of Canada. (n.d.). Project profile - *The social justice project (So-JUST)*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/P010384001>

outcomes for Jamaicans, through strengthened institutions, systems and legislation as well as improved effectiveness in the delivery of justice services to disadvantaged groups, including women and girls.

Seven focus areas are anticipated to lead to this outcome: 1) gender-responsive alternative justice services (such as mediation, restorative justice, child justice systems) which also reduce case backlog in courts, 2) improved legislative and policy frameworks for gender responsive justice services, 3) strengthened legal aid services for women and underserved or rural communities, 4) gender responsive witness care and child justice coordination systems, 5) gender responsive information, education and communication products, 6) strengthened capacity of the Justice Training Institute, including by updating gender responsive curricula and online technology, 7) development of a courts record management system.

WE-Talk for the reduction of gender-based violence – Jamaica

Taking place in Jamaica, Oxfam Canada is implementing the WE-Talk for the reduction of gender-based violence project with a \$4,900,000 contribution from GAC. The project will run from March of 2022 until March of 2027.³⁷²

WE-Talk aims to reduce gender-based violence through changing social norms and supporting collective action of local women’s rights groups. Specifically, the two expected outcomes of the project are 1) adoption of positive social norms by girls, boys, women and men to advance gender-transformative responses to gender-based violence, and 2) enhanced collective action of women’s rights groups, civil society, youth organizations, and feminist collectives working to alter social norms and behaviours that underpin gender-based violence.

Activities leading to these outcomes include conducting participatory research to identify the social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence, developing a national directory of support services for survivors of gender-based violence, training male influencers encourage positive masculinities and gender-equitable attitudes, providing training and tools to women’s

³⁷² Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - WE-Talk for the reduction of gender-based violence*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/P010434001>

rights groups, and establishing a fund that awards micro-grants to local organizations. The project will benefit 35 local partners and a total of 315,000 people, 169,000 of which will be women and girls.³⁷³

Strengthening Justice for Women, Girls, and Indigenous Peoples in Guyana

The Strengthening Justice for Women, Girls, and Indigenous Peoples in Guyana project (2022 – 2026) will be implemented by the Justice Education Society of British Columbia.³⁷⁴ GAC contributed \$2,250,000 to the project.

The project aims to improve access to justice for women and girls in Guyana, particularly regarding sexual and gender-based violence. The two expected outcomes for this project are: (1) justice institutions that have strengthened capacity to respond to sexual and gender-based violence, through a human rights and gender responsive approach, and (2) increased access to justice for Indigenous women and girls who experienced sexual and gender-based violence.

Activities leading to these outcomes include training the Guyana Police Force in report taking with a trauma-informed approach, interviewing and reporting training for the Sexual Offences Unit, training for law enforcement and court actors on gender bias and stereotypes and on the use of forensic evidence, and training for women to navigate the justice system. 12,000 women and girls living in vulnerable communities will be directly impacted by the project. The project will additionally support women's groups, civil society organizations, and Indigenous leaders to deliver legal education and strengthen rural community responses to gender-based violence.³⁷⁵ Interviewees for this gap analysis in Guyana expressed support for expanding the project to more regions of the country.

During the first year of the project, the project team was hired, consultations began with local stakeholders (including the Guyana Police Force, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and members of the judiciary) and training sessions began.³⁷⁶ Training is being delivered at the

³⁷³ Oxfam. (n.d.) *Development project: WE-Talk*. <https://www.oxfam.ca/project/we-talk/>

³⁷⁴ Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Project profile - Strengthening justice for women, girls, and indigenous peoples in Guyana*. <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/P010388001>

³⁷⁵ Justice Education Society. (2022). *Annual report*. https://justiceeducation.ca/sites/default/files/2023-04/New%20Annual%20Report%2021_22_1.pdf

³⁷⁶ The following information is from a meeting with project director Lisa Thompson, December 12, 2023.

school level, in communities, and within the judiciary. In Georgetown specifically, the project is also training police on investigation techniques, crime scene management, and reporting.

7.3 The Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program (ACCBP)

Current ACCBP projects address illicit drugs and firearms, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, money laundering and corruption, security sector reform, and cybercrime. The following paragraphs provide an overview of current ACCBP programming.

Regarding drug trafficking (and illicit drug use), 12 projects supported through the ACCBP are currently active in the Caribbean, with a value of approximately \$29,830,000. ACCBP is countering firearms trafficking through a contribution of \$2,100,000 to the UNLIREC to support implementation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap.

13 ACCBP projects address human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and border management. These are valued at \$36,900,000 and are coordinated in partnership with the UNODC, RCMP, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and INTERPOL, among others. These projects' activities include training on document examination, customs integrity, regional information sharing, investigative and prosecutorial protocols, and legislative drafting and reforms aligned with international standards on illegal movement of people.

There are four ACCBP projects currently targeting corruption and money laundering, with an approximate value of \$8,400,000. Eight projects valued at \$21,200,000 are aimed at combating cybercrime and improving cybersecurity.

The following are select ACCBP projects on which more information was gathered during consultations and desk research for the present gap analysis.

Operation ACKEE

Operation ACKEE is an ongoing training program, beginning in 2009, that mentors the Jamaica Defence Force to combat transnational threats in the Caribbean.³⁷⁷ Specifically, the

³⁷⁷ Global Affairs Canada. (2023, September 1). *Programming for Security and Defence in the Caribbean - Canada's Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program*.

training develops the Jamaica Defence Force as a Special Operations Forces leader in the region. Other partners include Belize, the Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Suriname.

The Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP)

Through the ACCBP, Canada supports the AIRCOP, as mentioned previously. UNODC implements the project in collaboration with the WCO and INTERPOL, and other funding is provided by the EU, Japan, Norway, and the US.³⁷⁸ AIRCOP was established in 2010 and builds capacities in 41 international airports for the detection and interdiction of illicit trafficking (including all illicit drugs, wildlife, counterfeit medicines or weapons) and high-risk passengers (including foreign terrorist fighters).³⁷⁹ The CARICOM countries currently included in the project are Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago.³⁸⁰ Canada also provides trainers from law enforcement, who teach on topics such as intelligence collection, profiling and search techniques, use of databases, and specialized training on specific illicit goods.

Cybercrime Capacity Building in the Americas Phase II

This regional project³⁸¹ was funded by GAC and implemented by INTERPOL from 2018 to 2021.³⁸² The project built on phase I (2015 to 2017), and involved assessments of cyber threats, mentoring and training, public awareness efforts, and operations to prevent, detect,

³⁷⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.). Training and mentoring. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/AIRCOP/8-aircop-activities.html>

³⁷⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.). *Project – AIRCOP*. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/AIRCOP/2-aircop-project.html>; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.). *AIRCOP*. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/AIRCOP/1-aircop-home.html>

³⁸⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.) *Current expansion of AIRCOP network*. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/AIRCOP/4-aircop-network.html>

³⁸¹ The countries in this gap analysis that benefited from the project were all but Montserrat.

³⁸² International Criminal Police Organization. (2021). *Cybercrime capacity building in the Americas*. <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Cybercrime/Cyber-capabilities-development/Cybercrime-Capacity-Building-in-the-Americas#:~:text=Phase%20II%20enhances%20the%20capacity,cybercrime%20in%20a%20comprehensive%20manne> [L].

and investigate cybercrime. The activities were conducted through regional cooperation and through missions to select countries with recently established cybercrime units.

Support for the Training and Cooperation Activities of the RCMP in CARICOM Countries

The RCMP supplies resources and expertise for international police training programs. The *RCMP's International Policing Program* works to promote collaboration between law enforcement agencies in Canada and abroad to better fight against global crimes. The program provides learning opportunities for personnel in the international police community. However, its international capacity building program is completely dependant on funding from the ACCBP program. Over the years, the RCMP engaged in training and capacity building activities in CARICOM countries, especially in Jamaica, although these activities were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the requests for training come to the program through the RCMP Liaison Officers. The RCMP is contemplating further programming in the region, using a few countries as a hub. Due to limitations in the funding available to cover the costs of the officers involved, the RCMP is sometimes making use of partners (for example a project on migrant smuggling in partnership with UNODC which came to an end in 2023).

The RCMP also has liaison officers in Jamaica and Barbados (covering other Eastern Caribbean countries). They maintain a link between Canadian law enforcement and the law enforcement agency of a host country, help major Canadian investigative inquiries in foreign countries, maintain the exchange of criminal intelligence between the RCMP and foreign authorities, and help with training and capacity-building initiatives.

Support for the Training and Cooperation Activities of the Canadian Coast Guard

The Canadian Coast Guard's *International Capacity Building Division*, part of the Maritime Security and Intelligence Branch, has been delivering a program of assistance in the Caribbean with funding from the ACCBP program. It is in fact entirely dependent on GAC funding to deliver these capacity building activities. The Division has a memorandum of understanding with GAC that runs until March 2026 and covers two CARICOM countries, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. The main goal of the program is to enhance global maritime safety and security by advancing the capabilities of partner countries. The program

operates alongside other maritime and security partners (e.g., RCMP, CBSA) and sometimes cooperates with international partners (e.g., UNODC's Global Maritime Crime Prevention Program, INTERPOL). To date the program has provided capacity building in Africa and in the Caribbean (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominican Republic). The program builds capacity by participating in multinational, multiagency exercises and operations, responding to requests to provide training in core coast guard skills and, in some cases, supplying technology and equipment. Some of the training in CARICOM countries has been delivered in cooperation with UNODC.

Support for the Training and Cooperation Activities of the Canada Border Services Agency

The CBSA has two liaison officers posted at the Canadian embassies in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. CBSA is an integrated agency that deals with various transnational issues (immigration, customs, prevention of various forms of trafficking, etc.). This is not necessarily the case in CARICOM countries, which means that CBSA may have several partners in each of the countries. CBSA cooperates with international partners active in the CARICOM region (e.g., the joint Container Control Program of the WCO and the UNODC). It also maintains partnerships with regional organizations such as the RSS, and CARICOM IMPACS JRCC. In August 2023, for example, it participated in the Second Regional Training to Combat Trafficking of Dangerous Synthetic Drugs in the Caribbean (Bridgetown, Barbados) jointly organized by International Narcotics Control Board's Global Rapid Interdiction of Dangerous Substance Program and IMPACS and funded by the Government of Canada. The training aimed to bolster the capabilities of participating officials in identifying new psychoactive substances, sharing intelligence, and acquiring techniques for the safe interdiction of dangerous synthetic opioids.

8. Priority Areas and Gap Analysis

This section, in view of the priorities identified by review participants and national and regional mechanisms, discusses perceived gaps in crime prevention and criminal justice response interventions. It analyzes these gaps in three main areas: (i) measures to strengthen the criminal justice system's responses to crime and deter or reduce it; (ii) measures to control transnational organized crime, emerging crimes, and corruption; and (iii) measures to

prevent violence and crime, including at the school and community levels and measures to prevent recidivism and reintegrate offenders.

8.1 Measures to Strengthen the Criminal Justice Response to Crime and Increase Deterrence

The main purposes of the criminal justice response to crime are deterrence (general or specific), the reduction of crime and recidivism, and the rehabilitation and successful social reintegration of offenders. The current criminal justice responses in CARICOM countries are largely ineffective in deterring crime and preventing recidivism. Recidivism rates are very high everywhere. Moreover, the countries are facing serious challenges in relation to emerging forms of crime and transnational criminal threats. Several reforms are required, most of them already identified by these countries either at the national or regional levels. These include interventions, usually within law enforcement, the judiciary and correctional systems, designed to reduce crime, dismantle criminal networks, and prevent recidivism. These often include activities to build the capacities of law enforcement and prosecutors, foster inter-agency cooperation for better investigations and more effective prosecutions, strengthen existing legislative frameworks, resource law enforcement, prosecution, and judicial institutions, improve transnational law enforcement cooperation, and improve sentencing and sentence execution practices and programs. Over the years, CARICOM member states have identified justice sector improvement as a core development priority, and it is a key element of the CARICOM Strategic Plan.³⁸³ CARICOM'S ten-year-old Crime & Security Strategy identifies and prioritises the common security risks and threats which CARICOM was and is still facing. It proposes an integrated and cohesive security framework to confront these challenges.³⁸⁴ It also stresses the paramount importance of a strengthened criminal justice sector. Since then, CARICOM countries have made notable progress toward enhancing citizen security, strengthening law enforcement and justice institutions, and

³⁸³ Strategic Goal 5: Enhance Law Enforcement and Security Capabilities and Strengthen Regional Security Systems, Strategic Goal 7: Strengthen the Effectiveness of Criminal Investigation Through Modern Technologies and Scientific Techniques; Strategic Goal 10: Strengthen the Justice Sector; Strategic Goal 11: Modernise and Enhance Correctional Services and Institutions Management.

³⁸⁴ The Caribbean Community and Common Market. (2013). *CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy: Securing the Region*. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/210844.pdf>

improving access to justice. Nonetheless, several critical challenges remain to ensuring that national and regional justice systems are accessible, equal, and consistently deliver efficient justice. Delays and case backlogs have continued to hinder the system's effectiveness and efficiency. These unacceptable delays in the disposal of court matters resulted in remand population rates in the region that are among the highest in the world.

Resource constraints have slowed down the justice reform process, especially in the areas of support to victims of crimes, diversion programs, alternatives to prosecution, alternatives to imprisonment, and rehabilitation and social reintegration programs for offenders, most critically juvenile offenders. While several countries of the region are establishing specialized courts, much still needs to be done to bring the judicial system up to international standards in dealing with both perpetrators and victims.

Large segments of the population have lost confidence in their justice system. Review participants from every CARICOM country have identified the lack of public confidence in the justice system as persistent issue, one that affects the system itself as well as the social and economic development of their nation. In several countries of the region (e.g., Belize, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago) the loss of public confidence and trust in the criminal justice system is a matter of deep concern.

As mentioned previously, the Needham's Point declaration urgently called for "each Member State of the Caribbean Community to develop, adopt, and implement a "holistic and inclusive Criminal Justice Response Strategy". To be successful, reform initiatives need to adopt a systems approach, based on a system-wide, strategic, integrated and sustained attempt to enhance the criminal justice process as a whole. Proposed reforms must also be founded on an empirically based understanding. Therefore, part of the challenge for reformers is to try to understand how various types of reforms can influence complex systems, particularly when dealing with self-organizing yet highly regulated systems interacting with each other in complex and evolving ways.

Most of the promising developments in that field come from the evolving knowledge and expertise in the areas of systems, organizational change, change management and organizational behaviour. It is hardly surprising that the recent literature on criminal justice efficiency focuses on concepts of leadership, goal and target setting, strategic planning,

change management, performance monitoring and feedback loops, indicators of performance, and accountability. Many of countries have developed their own “to do list” for criminal justice reforms (e.g., St. Vincent or Guyana), but that does not amount to a strategy. With the exception perhaps of Jamaica, few countries of the region have developed a comprehensive criminal justice reform strategy and most of them could use help to do so. That kind of assistance could build on the capacity already developed through the JURIST project.³⁸⁵

Strengthening the Judicial System

In 2020, UNDP produced a needs assessment of the judicial system in nine CARICOM countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago.³⁸⁶ The needs assessment concluded that:

“In the region, several attempts have been made and some progress achieved in terms of modernization of justice structures and processes, reforms in human resources, application of legal aid and specialized courts in some jurisdictions. Data and information systems have also been part of ongoing reform efforts. Nevertheless, the findings indicate a need to further strengthening and room for improvements regarding the quality of justice”.³⁸⁷

Priority areas for further interventions were identified in that report, including diversionary measures (i.e. alternative dispute resolution), effective prosecution, eliminating unnecessary adjournments, case flow management, sentencing, bail, pre-trial detention and rehabilitation programs. The priorities thus identified remain valid ones.

The people consulted for the present review agreed that urgent action is needed to confront and address the underlying causes of the criminal case backlogs, improve the efficiency of

³⁸⁵ One could also consider Canada’s experience in attempting to address to reduce delays in the criminal justice process through a legislative initiative, S.C. 2019, c. 25. See: *Legislative Summary of Bill C-75: An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/LegislativeSummaries/421C75E

³⁸⁶ United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Caribbean Justice: A needs assessment of the judicial system in nine countries*. <https://www.undp.org/latin-america/publications/caribbean-justice-needs-assessment-judicial-system-nine-countries>

³⁸⁷ *Idem*, p. 14.

the judicial system and promote equitable access to justice. The causes of the case backlogs are complex, and people do not necessarily agree on a solution. The Needham's Point Declaration, described earlier in this report, suggests several elements of a solution around which there seems to be a consensus, at least at the leadership level. However, nothing guarantees that a piecemeal implementation of these initiatives would be enough to resolve the issue. In fact, many review participants emphasized the need for a system's approach to criminal justice reforms.

During the present review, participants referred to various national initiatives to reduce case backlogs and processing delays, including: introduce a proposed bail scheme to promote a uniform approach to bail at the Magistrate and High Courts (St. Vincent); improve case management methods (St. Vincent); abolish or replace the preliminary inquiries (St. Lucia, and also being considered by other OECS members); support the timely completion of police investigations (Guyana); improve case filing systems (all OECS countries); promote the early resolution of cases through the introduction of plea bargaining (Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana); introduce a new charge screening or approval process, or a pre-charge consultation between police and prosecutors (Jamaica and Guyana); promote diversion and various alternatives to the criminal justice system, including mediation and restorative justice (Jamaica, Guyana).

The Needham's Point Declaration encourages the greater use of diversion for young offenders but stops short of recommending it for adult offenders. The Declaration also recommends that courts make greater use of alternative dispute resolution methods, including mediation and restorative justice for first time offenders. However, the practice of mediation and restorative justice, as alternatives to the criminal justice process, is not very developed in the region.

Guilty pleas, particularly when they are entered early in the criminal process, can significantly speed up the process, eliminate the need for many adjournments and a trial, reduce the need for costly and complicated disclosure processes, and reduce the overall costs of the system. They may also contribute to reducing the existing case backlog. Plea discussion and fast track procedures can be developed to improve the efficiency of the criminal process and reduce the workload and costs of several of the agencies and institutions involved in criminal

proceedings. In most instances, such innovations require changes in criminal procedure law, an area where countries of the region have been notoriously slow.

The Needham's Point Declaration recommended new laws to provide for Maximum Sentence Indications Hearings and effective early guilty plea or plea-bargaining schemes. In CARICOM countries, progress in introducing and implementing a plea discussion and agreement scheme has been slow and, in general, these efforts have not yet yielded the expected results. There are apparently noticeable differences between countries of the region in the frequency of guilty pleas and the time at which guilty pleas are normally entered, but the data to confirm such patterns is not available. It seems that the same rules and procedures can yield different results based on local factors.

In Jamaica, there already is legislation encouraging plea bargaining, but there is also legislation imposing minimum sentences for some offences (e.g., firearms offences). And while there has been an increase the practice of plea discussion, it apparently remains quite limited because there are very few incentives for defendants to enter an early guilty plea. There may be more guilty pleas entered as a result of plea discussions, but these pleas are not necessarily entered at an early enough stage in criminal proceedings. In Guyana, the practice has been introduced several years ago but has not been implemented systematically; there is presently a new Bill proposing changes to the existing scheme. In Trinidad and Tobago, the legislation is in place, but the practice of plea bargaining is not very well developed, and it seems that, given the inefficiency of the criminal justice system and the high probability of failed prosecutions, defendants often prefer to "take their chances" instead of agreeing to plead guilty. Belize is presently considering a new Bill that will allow plea bargaining and introducing such a scheme is apparently on the country's list of law reform priorities. However, a plea-bargaining scheme works more effectively when defendants are represented by counsel (or a public defender), something which is not necessarily the case in most CARICOM countries. Finally, it was suggested that plea bargaining works better when the case for the prosecution rests on effective investigation and strong evidence.

All three of the above practices (diversion, mediation/restorative justice, and plea bargaining) are areas where there is considerable expertise in Canada and where assistance could be provided to interested CARICOM countries. Several review participants suggested also that,

in order to support a strategic approach to reducing delays and case backlogs, especially in OECS countries, it would be useful to support a comprehensive regional study on: the nature and age of cases that are part of the countries' case backlogs; case management practices, especially the charging (often by the police) and charge screening and approval process, and the practice of plea discussion and agreement. It was also suggested that a review of best practices in plea bargaining within the region and in other common law countries would help countries of the region move forward with effective reforms in that area.

Youth Justice System

In addition to the need to support continued implementation of effective diversion programs and alternatives resolution processes such as restorative justice, review participants have suggested that training of civil society practitioners would be very helpful in the youth justice sector. Further, Saint Vincent is hoping to bring its Child Justice legislation into force and would benefit from the experience of other countries of the region and Canada. Jamaica is moving forward with the implementation of its children's courts and has received some international assistance in doing so. In many ways, it is pioneering a different approach to youth crime and trying to emphasize the rehabilitation and social integration of young offenders. Some of these reforms are possibly replicable in other countries of the region. It was also suggested that Jamaica could lead the way in promoting the use of restorative justice practices for more serious offences, and not necessarily only as part of a diversion scheme. In the past, Canada together with other international development partners has supported juvenile justice reforms and capacity building initiatives in the region, sometimes through UNICEF. People of the region are expecting Canada to continue to do so.

Victims and Witnesses

Many countries of the region have taken some steps to improve the assistance and support that is provided to victims and witnesses of crime, especially vulnerable victims, child victims and victims of gender-based violence. Victim services, however, remain limited, especially safe shelters for victims of domestic violence, and services for victims of human trafficking. The Needham's Point Declaration (para 24 to 26) emphasizes the need to provide support for victims/survivors of crime and make compensation and restitution available to them (including the establishment of a Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund where none exists). It recommended that victims/survivors (especially survivors of sexual assaults) be given a

greater voice in the prosecution and sentencing process. It also recommended special measures for witnesses and victims with mental illness or disability issues (para. 11).

The need for better witness protection practices and programs, including international cooperation for witness relocation, has been raised by multiple participants. There exists a whole range of witness protection measures that could be implemented, but such programs are typically difficult to manage in small island-states where no one can effectively hide. However, a Caribbean-wide protection program could potentially counter this challenge, as discussed in the paragraph below. Many participants identified a need for training, policy development (for police, prosecutors, courts, and prison managers), and in some cases legislative changes. Protection measures have already been introduced in some countries as they established child-friendly courts. Procedural measures can be introduced in national legislation and practices to better protect witnesses. These measures must ensure an appropriate balance between the need to protect the safety of witnesses and the obligation to safeguard the defendants' right to a fair trial. The Needham Point's Declaration appears to promote legislative, procedural and practical measures to protect the "anonymity" of witnesses. Appropriate victim/witness protection measures throughout the justice system are particularly important when dealing with vulnerable victims, child victims of violence, and women and girls victims of domestic or intimate partner violence.

Establishing special witness protection programs or units can be considered, sometimes as part of specialized organized crime units that need to rely on effective human sources management. Witness protection is also very important in the fight against organized crime and gangs or corruption conspiracies as intimidation of informants and potential witnesses is one of the defining characteristics of criminal groups. Offering protection to agents, informants and witnesses is necessary to obtain and sustain their collaboration. Indeed, effective and reliable witness protection programs have proven their value as essential tools in the fight against serious crime.³⁸⁸ The importance of improving witness protection mechanisms was discussed at the last conference of the Caribbean Association of Police Commissioners. The Needham's Point Declaration further recommended that "the witness

³⁸⁸ Dandurand, Y. & Farr, K. (2010). *A Review of Selected Witness Protection Programs*. Research and National Coordination, Organized Crime Division, Law Enforcement and Policy Branch, Public Safety Canada. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/sp-ps/PS4-96-2010-eng.pdf

protection systems and protocols be enhanced to include or reactivate a Caribbean-wide system” (para. 12).

As mentioned previously, one of the planned activities of the UNDP/EU PACE program over the coming four years is to expand bilateral arrangements for witness protection by delivering adequate specialised support and advice to beneficiary countries. The exact nature of that activity has not yet been fleshed out. It is not clear what further assistance is required although it is worth noting that Canada has both a reputed federal witness protection program and several provincial programs which could contribute their expertise to witness protection initiatives in the Caribbean. It is also worth noting that Canada is increasingly receiving international requests for witness relocation, including requests from CARICOM countries.

In addition, IMPACS developed a proposal several years ago to improve witness protection mechanisms in CARICOM member states³⁸⁹, referred to in the region as “justice protection”.³⁹⁰ The project has not yet been funded.

Capacity Building

Projects to support the greater use of technology to facilitate regular operations, improve performance or enhance public access to justice are being planned, including a possible project by the IDB to support the implementation of the *Jamaica’s Digital Justice Strategy 2024-2029*. The Jamaican strategy is meant to reduce case backlogs and delays in delivering judgments, reduce the average length of pre-trial detention, and increase the level of citizen trust in the justice system. Other courts and justice systems of the region, for example Guyana,³⁹¹ are also making plans for the greater introduction of technology to increase access to justice and improve efficiency.

³⁸⁹ With reference to The Region’s articulation of the Justice Protection Program further acts in support of Article 4 of the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime* which affirms that each State Party must take appropriate measures to provide effective protection for witnesses in criminal proceedings from potential retaliation or intimidation.

³⁹⁰ Implementation Agency for Crime and Security. (n.d.). *Strengthening of the CARICOM Justice Protection Program – Project Proposal*.

³⁹¹ Supreme Court of Judicature of Guyana. (2023). *5-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2029*.

Data Management and Performance Measurements

The need for capacity building within the judicial system is typically defined as the need for more resources, human, financial, and technological, as well as further training, all of which are crucially important to support effective and efficient criminal justice practices. However, the issue of building capacity within criminal justice institutions to collect and analyze data for both operational and policy purposes is often neglected. With few exceptions, countries of the region have not yet set in place the mechanisms they need to evaluate new initiatives and to measure and monitor the justice systems' performance. Performance measurement is still embryonic in law enforcement and criminal justice institutions. We were repeatedly told that there is an understandable resistance to rigorous project evaluations and that donors could address that question more effectively. When some performance data or evaluation findings are available, they are rarely made public, and that lack of transparency is a real issue as it affects the credibility of the system and potential political support for further investments.

Technology makes it possible to digitalize, store, analyze and use administrative and other data on a very large scale and at fairly low cost. Using data to monitor, assess and improve performance is routine in both the public and private spheres, but is not so common in the field of justice. The availability of new technology, it turns out, is not always sufficient to generate good justice performance data.³⁹²

Nonetheless, justice indicators can be used to summarize and communicate large amount of critical data on various aspects of the justice system. They are useful tools to evaluate performance, draw attention to issues, establish benchmarks, monitor progress, and evaluate the impact of interventions or reforms. Key performance indicators, together with other monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, are essential to making justice institutions more transparent and accountable. They are also necessary for providing valuable feedback to managers and policy makers.

One of Canada's main projects, the JURIST project, initially focused on encouraging participants to adopt simple performance measures, hoping that this would lead to the

³⁹² Dandurand, Y., Kittayarak, K., & MacPhail, A. (2015). *Justice Indicators and Criminal Justice Reform - A Reference Tool*. International Centre for Criminal Law Reform. <https://icclr.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Justice-Indicators-and-Criminal-Justice-Reform-April-2015.pdf?x20570>

development of more rigorous performance measures. The project seems to have encountered some resistance in that regard, but in the future some countries could lead the way. Trinidad and Tobago, for example, introduced a case management system that makes it possible to conduct a systemic analysis of parts of the criminal justice process. The Supreme Court of Judicature of Guyana committed, in its 5-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2029³⁹³, to applying global standards of court excellence as articulated by the International Consortium for Court Excellence,³⁹⁴ and hopefully implementing the indicators to measure progress toward those standards. Many courts and judicial institutions around the world are using them as the standard of relevance for improving their services.

One should note also that new projects involving the digitalization of court services and other data processing mechanisms for operational purposes also hold a potential for generating performance data. It will be important to try to capitalize on those opportunities as these projects are developed and implemented.

Very importantly, as was mentioned previously in this report, several countries have developed crime observatories, including a sophisticated one in Jamaica (as part of the Jamaican Planning Institute) and regional one for OECS countries. These are initiatives that Canada should support vigorously, possibly through a special initiative, as it could strengthen all other justice sector initiatives. The training of crime analysts and researchers as well as providing access to modern methods and software to support these functions are two other areas where Canada has a lot of expertise and could offer very valuable assistance. It may also be another way of advancing progress in terms of developing stronger performance measurement systems in some countries of the region.

Programming Opportunities

One of the conclusions of the JURIST project was that there is an entire range of areas where Canada could offer meaningful support. Interventions need to be more strategic. To do so, future interventions should be based on good system's data and a strategic planning process. In many areas what is critically needed is a whole of government approach. Only a

³⁹³ Supreme Court of Judicature of Guyana. (2023). *5-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2029*. The theme of the strategic plan developed with the support of the Government of Canada is: Pursuing Service Excellence through Investments in Human Resources, Management Systems and Technology.

³⁹⁴ International Secretariat for International Consortium for Court Excellence. (2020). *-Global Measures of Court Performance*. (3rd Edition).

few CARICOM countries have a comprehensive justice reform strategy. This is particularly problematic given their limited capacity to absorb and manage several ambitious projects concurrently. In the Eastern and Southern Caribbean, Canada and USAID have largely relied on a regional approach, rather than country specific initiatives. In fact, in specific areas such as anti-corruption initiatives, many countries express a preference for a regional approach. Given the Needham's Point Declaration and the Declaration of Heads of Government, one can easily argue that the priority areas for justice reforms and capacity building interventions have already been identified. Some of the review participants suggested that these declarations tend to address the symptoms rather than the causes of the criminal justice system's inefficiencies. They fall short of offering a comprehensive and strategic approach to improve the system's performance. A system's approach to these issues has been slow to emerge anywhere in the region. The Needham's Point Declaration itself posited that a "piece-meal and silos-working approach to criminal justice reforms will not effectively address the increasing levels and complexity of criminality and will not produce effective and sustainable improvements to the criminal justice system".

System-wide data are rarely available and performance measurement is still embryonic throughout the criminal justice systems of the region. When some performance data exist, they are rarely made public. Helping ODA eligible CARICOM countries develop a capacity to engage in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of system-wide justice reforms ought to be a guiding principle for Canada's future development assistance in that area. A starting point for such a process could be to support a comprehensive regional (OECS) study on the nature and age of cases that are part of the countries' case backlogs, case management practices and especially the charging (often by the police) and charge approval process, and the practice of plea discussion and agreement. This could include a review of best practices in plea bargaining within the region and in other common law countries.

Review participants suggested several areas where Canada may be able to support existing and planned justice reform activities, including:

- Support the adoption of system-wide performance indicators for the justice systems and the collection and analysis of performance data.
- Support the development and strengthening of crime observatories, including the regional observatory for OECS countries, including the training of crime analysts.

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- Support comprehensive reviews of the charging and charge approval processes and support the implementation of early plea negotiations and agreements schemes.
 - Support juvenile justice reforms, especially in countries that have already initiated the process.
 - Support the implementation of alternatives to pre-trial detention, including more effective bail and bail supervision programs. This is especially important in the case on young offenders.
 - Support the implementation of alternatives to the criminal justice process, such as mediation and restorative justice, including a review of why these alternatives, where they exist, often fail.
 - Support the implementation of alternatives to detention for default of fine payment (e.g. fine option programs).
 - Support the implementation of community-based sentences and support the development or strengthening of the mechanisms responsible for their management and supervision, such as a probation service.
 - Support the provision of assistance and protection to victims and witnesses of crime.

Strengthening Law Enforcement and Prosecution

The strengthening of law enforcement institutions, with reference to standardising policing procedures, case file standards, and supporting digital forensics investigations capabilities, is a priority for all CARICOM countries. Standardised case files improve the ability of the police and prosecutors to prosecute cases in a timely and efficient manner and ensure that a case can be presented coherently and professionally at trial. Standardising criminal case file management is expected to reduce delays in the hearing of criminal matters and increase public confidence in the criminal justice system. RSS is delivering training programs in support of that initiative, for example, through the National Case File Standards initiative of the US/UK Criminal Justice Reform Project.

Basic training is also important and is a need that is perhaps harder to address at the regional level. Review participants have identified a need for ongoing training in areas such as report

writing, conflict de-escalation, basic handling of exhibits and protection of the chain of custody of evidence, interviewing of child victims and witnesses, and other essential intervention and investigation skills. Such training is often lacking in many countries of the region. For example, in Saint Lucia 80% of officers have not received basic first-aid training.

There is an acute need for training on the evidentiary requirements of different types of offences, as well as the use of scientific evidence. The development of a forensic capacity has progressed, including a regional center of excellence in Saint Lucia (supported by the US).

Another area in which training is very much in demand is leadership development, an area in which the RCMP has offered training in the past including a recent training session exclusively for female officers. There also needs to be additional training on how to handle domestic violence, violence against children, and child victims and witnesses. Finally, in communities like Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago or Jamaica, where the police have embarked on community-based crime prevention initiatives, review participants frequently referred to the need for training in community policing, crime prevention, problem-oriented policing, and even in partnership policing.

There is some obvious merit in connecting prosecutor and police training, but this is apparently rarely done. Investigators and prosecutors do not always work very closely together and that can become a problem, especially for major cases investigation and prosecution. For example, early case resolution at the prosecution level is important, but is not possible without the police cooperation and early conclusion of their investigations. Furthermore, in many countries, the police are responsible for the prosecution of minor offences in the magistrates' courts.

The question of strengthening civilian governance and oversight of the police came up very frequently during the review, although it remains a delicate subject. For many, a perceived lack of police accountability is directly linked to the lack of public confidence in the whole justice system. Review participants who complained about the police's relative lawlessness in their country often doubted the government's willingness to tackle the issue. It was often noted that existing complaint mechanism (e.g., a police complaint authority) has very limited authority and means of investigation and, as result, rarely recommends that a prosecution be initiated. Many participants were curious about existing mechanisms for civilian

governance and oversight of the police in Canada, including mechanisms for dealing with alleged incidents of police misconduct, corruption and use of excessive force. A review of existing oversight and complaint mechanisms in CARICOM countries could be a great first step in advancing reforms and capacity building in this area. The RSS is trying to develop that idea and there has been some early discussion about conducting a review.

8.2 Measures to Counter Transnational Organized Crime

Canada can be strategic in supporting and developing key partners in the fight against transnational organized crime, various forms of trafficking, money laundering, financial crimes, and corruption. During the review, participants identified multiple priorities for international assistance in the fight against transnational organized crime and emerging serious crimes. These priorities included support for regional cooperation and capacity building initiatives, continued assistance in controlling various illicit markets, most notably firearms and illicit drugs, and human trafficking. Pointing at the particular border protection challenges their countries face, many review participants emphasized the key importance of maritime safety and security. They also singled out money laundering, financial crime, and cybercrime as areas where support from international partners would be especially critical. Finally, there is a growing concern about crime against the environment and crime related to various resources extraction activities.

For IMPACS, four priorities were identified by the Council of Ministers: (1) firearms; (2) cybersecurity; (3) maritime security; and (4) illicit trafficking, especially trafficking in persons. In addition, corruption was also identified as a priority by CARICOM Heads of Government. There is a clear expectation that Canada will continue to support the implementation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap and provide assistance to IMPACS and UNLIREC.

Several but not all CARICOM countries have developed and adopted organized crime legislation, in compliance with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the OAS Hemispheric Plan of Action against Transnational Organized Crime. However, in many instances, the implementation of such legislation and the execution of plans of action have been slow. In the absence of a clear and updated strategic plan at

the national level, it is not always clear what Canada or other international partners can do to assist individual countries develop their resilience to organized crime or mitigate its impact.

International cooperation is key to the success of any attempts to control transnational crimes and to mitigating their impact on people and communities, as well as on national development. RSS and IMPACS are the two main regional mechanisms that can support that kind of cooperation and Canada should continue to support their role in every way that it can. However, regional integration and regional cooperation are very much uneven.

The continued proliferation of illicit drugs and the related public corruption, as well as the never-ending cycle of gang violence are proof of the relative failure of existing law enforcement strategies to disrupt and counter illicit drug markets. The most promising disruption strategies are those targeting criminal networks, the key individuals within them and the flows of illicit funds.³⁹⁵ Unfortunately, these strategies are also the most difficult to execute. Moreover, the factors that enable criminal networks also deserve attention. Regional drug control responses may require a greater focus on targeting national and regional structural vulnerabilities that enable criminal networks and gangs to proliferate. It is worth noting that Canada chairs the working group for drug trafficking in Eastern Caribbean and is therefore well placed to identify opportunities to support sub-regional initiatives in that area.

Because illicit drug markets are complex and constantly changing, they also tend to be quite resilient. It is not clear what progress drug interdiction programs have achieved in the region in terms of controlling or disrupting that illicit market. CARICOM countries are already receiving various forms of assistance in that area. It was suggested that Canada should continue to support cargo control programs and continue or expand the support it offers through the Canadian Coastguard and the CBSA.

One of the priority areas of the region remains the fight against money laundering and financial crime. Assets tracking, seizure and recovery are important countermeasures to organized crime and corruption. As mentioned previously, several existing programs have included actions to build the capacity of CARICOM states to engage in and cooperate in that

³⁹⁵ Dandurand, Y. (2023). *Law Enforcement Strategies to Disrupt Illicit Drug Markets*. The Eastern & Southern Africa Commission on Drugs, May 2023.

area. Also, there have been some talks about establishing a regional legal entity to deal with financial crime, including money laundering and corruption. There are plans for a ministerial level dialogue on financial crime, corruption and money laundering in May 2024. As Canada is also examining the possibility of creating an independent Financial Crime Agency, these are discussions that can lead to further cooperation with CARICOM countries.

At the April Summit of CARICOM Heads of Government, the Declaration called for the Caribbean Arrest Warrant to be made operational. The Caribbean Arrest Warrant is very similar to the European Arrest Warrant which has been successfully implemented. The EU could provide some assistance in this area but has not yet received any specific request from CARICOM countries. The ratification of the treaty establishing that form of extradition has stalled and, as it is clearly an internal matter of political will, it seems that little can be done to advance the implementation of this mechanism.

At the operational level, it appears that Canadian law enforcement agencies generally encounter good cooperation from CARICOM countries and are eager to maintain constructive relationships with them. However, it was also acknowledged that these countries still have to earn the trust of others, not just because of their lack of capacity but also because of police corruption (e.g., seized and confiscated firearms or drugs are released into the public, or people under investigation are tipped off and witnesses disappear).

Training and Support for Capacity Building

The Caribbean Association of Police Commissioners recently adopted a strategic plan which emphasized a collaborative approach to training and development opportunities.

The training needs identified by review participants are numerous, including training on:

- Modern methods of investigation and the use of scientific evidence
- Major case management
- The use of electronic evidence
- Money laundering and financial crime investigations
- Assets tracing and criminal and civil forfeiture of assets and proceeds of crime
- Investigation and prosecution of criminal conspiracies

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- Cybercrime investigations and prosecutions
 - Protection of witnesses and collaborators of justice
 - Integrity (anti-corruption) enhancement measures

The CARICOM countries' needs for law enforcement capacity building and training are great and only likely to grow in complexity and sophistication. As was discussed in Section 6 of this report, many donors and international agencies are actively involved in delivering training and support in key areas (firearms control, drug control, human trafficking, maritime safety and security, financial investigations, etc.) and it seems that unnecessary duplications of efforts are generally avoided. There are some preliminary attempts to identify and address these needs more systematically and through regional cooperation. However, one gets the impression that some of the smaller countries of the region, those with less sophisticated law enforcement and prosecution agencies, are often left out and that the region is in need of a more strategic approach to law enforcement and prosecution capacity building.

Canada has frequently supported various forms of specialized law enforcement training to countries of the region, often through multi-lateral agencies (e.g., UNODC). Although such training is well received, Canada's contribution is not always very visible. Some of the Canadian agencies that offered law enforcement training in the region have acknowledged their limited capacity to meet the demand and the priorities they had to establish on the basis of Canada's own security interests. Canadian law enforcement and security agencies generally appreciated the opportunity to work with or through regional agencies such as IMPACS or RSS. It was also noted that the Canadian agencies involved in delivering assistance need to better coordinate their work, but that there is an Interdepartmental Capacity Development Working Group which can help coordinate, sequence, and make Canada's assistance more coherent.

The typically ad hoc fashion in which law enforcement training is delivered, either at the specific request of a country or as part of a global or hemispheric program, has its limitations. For example, one law enforcement expert involved in delivering training sessions observed: "It is always the same officers who get the training. Last year, we delivered a training on major case management, but none of the participants had ever managed a major case." Several review participants also noted that, even when the law now provides law enforcement with the tools they may need to successfully investigate and prosecute money

laundering and financial crimes, law enforcement agencies do not make effective use of these tools because of a lack of training. This is the case, for example, of the legal dispositions concerning proceeds of crime and civil assets forfeiture which are apparently seldom used.

On the other hand, the support offered by Canada through its various partner agencies is paying off in terms of helping these agencies achieve some of their own operational goals. The training provided can support future cooperation with Canada by helping build relationships of trust and reciprocity with recipient countries. In the most sensitive law enforcement cooperation areas, training participants can be adequately vetted (e.g., to prevent infiltration, leakages of information, divulgation of means and methods, etc.). Given the great importance most countries of the region attach, with good reasons, to maritime security and safety, it was suggested that GAC's current MOU with Canada Coast Guard could be expanded. It was also suggested that the training and capacity building offered by CBSA had great benefits for both Canada and receiving countries, especially in terms of controlling firearms and drug trafficking.

The idea that Canada, together with other international partners, should support the development of a regional law enforcement training centre for OECS countries was mentioned several times during the review. The Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation ³⁹⁶, which is supported by Canada, was sometimes given as an example of a successful similar initiative in Indonesia. Some review participants thought that a regional initiative of that nature would be more likely to support cooperation and collaboration among participating countries, and between them and their Canadian counterparts. It would also offer a greater visibility to Canada's assistance in that sector. However, some of the participants associated with IMPACS or RSS warned that there are several institutions already in the region and that such an initiative should be preceded by a proper needs assessment. For many people, the main question to be addressed is whether there would be sufficient buy-in by national governments to make the enterprise sustainable in the medium to long terms.

³⁹⁶ <https://jclec.org>

Responding to Emerging Crimes

Two forms of so-called emerging crimes have been identified as a major source of concern by review participants: environmental crime and cybercrime. It was noted that not a lot of attention had been paid until recently to environmental crime and that the threat had been largely unaddressed by governments of the region. Environmental crimes related to the mining and fisheries sectors are of particular concern in several Caribbean countries. UNODC has recently placed someone in Barbados to begin to look at the gaps in national laws. An assessment of scale of the needed response is currently being conducted by UNODC.

With respect to cybercrime and cyber-assisted crime, a Caribbean Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Action Plan was developed in 2010. The implementation of the action plan has not yet received the attention it deserves. The action plan needs to be updated and turned into a strategy. At the national level, the capacity to counter that type of criminality is very limited, especially the law enforcement capacity to investigate and prosecute cybercrimes. Jamaica is possibly the only CARICOM country that is developing a specialized prosecution team to counter cybercrime. Small training workshops have been held to support the implementation of the Action Plan. For instance, IMPACS recently had an intervention (and training) in several member states on cybercrime, financial crime and virtual assets and TOC. The plan otherwise seems to have received limited attention.

IMPACS has produced a Harmonized Legislative, Policy, Institutional and Regulatory Framework³⁹⁷ on cybercrime which gives consideration to the contextual reality of member countries and proffers an approach that underscores the importance of applying international best practices, transnational cooperation, balanced investigative procedures and a development cooperation approach to capacity building. Building on these imperatives, the Harmonized Framework features at its core the need for regionalism, harmonization and collectivism in the approach to combat cybercrime. The framework therefore highlights the

³⁹⁷ Implementation Agency for Crime and Security. (2020). *Harmonised Framework Document: Policy, Legislative, Institutional And Regulatory*.

need for intra-regional institutional cooperation among agencies, entities and development partners. Future initiatives should consult and align with the Harmonized Framework.

At a recent workshop in Grenada, there was a suggestion of pushing the implementation of the Budapest Convention (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs - State Department). One can expect interest to develop given the cyber-crime threats countries of the region are facing. The implementation of the Budapest Convention is an option for countries of the region and the EU is prepared to assist requesting countries.

At the same time, recent developments at the UN towards the adoption of a proposed Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes will also provide an impetus for further national and regional initiatives. Several international actors are involved in that area, including some that Canada may not consider as like-minded countries. The People's Republic of China, for example, is quite active in this sector in the Caribbean and some countries, for example Trinidad and Tobago, appear to have no problem getting all their equipment and security staff from the PRC.

If Canada wishes to support regional capacity building initiatives to counter cybercrime in CARICOM countries, it could design interventions to support the implementation of the CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan. Over the last four years or so, IMPACS has supported legislative reviews and provided a Legislative and Policy Guide, and several countries will need technical assistance to proceed with legislative amendments and capacity building. IMPACS is planning to assist five of these countries, but other countries will need help. IMPACS has also assisted in the training of prosecutors and developed a forensic evidence management platform to allow cybercrime information to be shared among CARICOM member states. Member states will need help in using the platform and dealing with threats. Some governments have been targets of cyber acts. IMPACS is also planning interventions to help countries of the region deal with cyber assets and cyber currencies.

Anti-Corruption Measures

According to the report of an Expert Advisory Group on Anti-Corruption, Transparency, and Integrity produced for the IDB, the Latin America and Caribbean region is currently at a

political and socioeconomic crossroads: “Whether and how it addresses the costly challenge of corruption and capture will be critical for its medium and longer-term prospects.”³⁹⁸ As mentioned previously in this report, corruption is a cross-cutting issue affecting all organized illicit markets.

Evidence of corruption deeply undermines the effectiveness and credibility of the justice system. Moreover, through violence and corruption criminal groups are able to create unfair advantages and buy power, access and impunity. Alliances between political, business and criminal actors break down the social contract, often resulting in the criminalization of governance and the undermining of democracy and the rule of law, violations of fundamental freedoms, and instability in international relations. Corruption drains badly needed resources from public services, administration and security and erodes trust in public institutions. It can facilitate organized crime, and the profits of crime may fuel corruption or money laundering. The relationship is circular and difficult to break.

Because of the increasingly transnational nature of corruption, CARICOM states should be encouraged to fully implement the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime³⁹⁹ and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption⁴⁰⁰. For example, article 14 (para 5) of the latter that states that “States Parties shall endeavour to develop and promote global, regional, sub-regional and bilateral cooperation among judicial, law enforcement and financial regulatory authorities in order to combat money-laundering”.

Coming out of the April Summit of the CARICOM Heads of Government, IMPACS was tasked to establish an entity to address the issue of corruption (Caribbean Task Force), bringing together the more than 18 regional organizations active in that area, including the RSS. IMPACS is in discussion with the CFATF to further define the role of the new entity. It appears that CARICOM members would prefer a regional approach to corruption, as it may be less risky politically. For example, in Guyana, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs,

³⁹⁸ Engel, E. et al. (2018). *Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Anti-Corruption, Transparency, and Integrity in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Inter-American Development Bank, p. 6. <https://publications.iadb.org/en/report-expert-advisory-group-anti-corruption-transparency-and-integrity-latin-america-and-caribbean>

³⁹⁹ All CARICOM countries have ratified the UNTOC convention.

⁴⁰⁰ As of October 2023, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were two of the only the 8 UN member states that have not ratified UNCAC.

Anil Nandlall, S.C., has publicly expressed a preference for a common, specific legislation in the Caribbean which addresses corruption, especially now that Guyana is an oil-producing nation, a sector which introduces novel challenges, risks and responsibilities.⁴⁰¹ Future programming assistance should therefore support this regional approach.

Since the launching of the CARICOM Platform for Anti-corruption (a UNODC initiative), there is a road map which identifies some of the priorities for action, including transparency in procurement and protection of whistleblowers. Individual country plans still must be developed. A methodology already exists for a systematic corruption risk assessment that could be conducted in countries that are willing to move forward with a sectoral risk assessment and the development of a comprehensive approach to fight corruption.

Some participants have also observed that the Needham's Point Declaration avoided referring to corruption in the judicial system. However, as one of the judicial officers consulted during the review noted, "anybody who is forthright ought to be talking about the problem of corruption within the justice system".

Additionally, it is important to note that several major international sports and other public events are being planned within the next several years in the region. Preparation for these events will involve substantial procurement and facility development projects, all of which can present significant opportunities for corruption. UNODC is planning an event based on the framework and training program it has already developed in that regard.⁴⁰²

8.3 Measures to Prevent Crime and Recidivism

Review participants from regional organizations noted that their members spend a lot of money on police and military, but much less on crime prevention and the social reintegration of offenders. That, some of them suggested, is very shortsighted. The Caribbean population has been found to be supportive of a multidimensional response to crime reduction, including

⁴⁰¹ AG wants common legislation for Caribbean to tackle corruption. (2021, September 5). *Guyana Chronicle*.
<https://guyanachronicle.com/2021/09/05/ag-wants-common-legislation-for-caribbean-to-tackle-corruption/>

⁴⁰² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2013). *The United Nations Convention against Corruption: A Strategy for Safeguarding against Corruption in Major Public Events*. United Nations.
https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2013/13-84527_Ebook.pdf

both suppression/deterrence, and crime prevention and community-based initiatives.⁴⁰³ The following discussion therefore opens with an elaboration on ‘multidimensional’ crime prevention approaches. It continues by highlighting recent studies and guides that provide evidence-based prevention approaches for the Caribbean, and programming opportunities to support current prevention strategies. Preventing specific types of crime are then discussed (gang violence, gender-based crime, and violence against children). This is followed by opportunities for rehabilitating offenders, school-based programming, and building community resiliency.

Multidimensional or Holistic Crime Prevention Strategies

Effective crime prevention strategies are frequently referenced in the present report as needing to be ‘multidimensional’ or ‘holistic’. The following expands on common dimensions referred to in comprehensive interventions.

Firstly, as touched upon in Section 6, ‘risk factors’ for crime involvement are present at the individual level, family level, community level, and beyond. Individual-level risk factors for offending include personal relationship factors. Young people face numerous personal, situational, psychological, social, economic, and cultural challenges. Negative experiences at school, lack of education, and problematic relationships with family, peers and social institutions can all make a young person more vulnerable to criminal involvement. Risk factors connected with relationships include family characteristics such as harsh or erratic parenting, family conflict and violence and abuse, family circumstances such as poverty and isolation, and relationships with friends and peers that can lead to risk-taking and law breaking.⁴⁰⁴ A craving for social identity, acceptance, respect, and a sense of belonging and safety can all push at-risk youth into social groups involved with crime and violence. In urban areas with high levels of economic deprivation or need, youth can be attracted to engage in crime for short-term economic gain and a sense of belonging.

⁴⁰³ Maguire, E., & Johnson, D. (2015). The structure of public opinion on crime policy: Evidence from seven Caribbean nations. *Punishment & Society*, 17(4), 502-530. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474515604385>

⁴⁰⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2010). *Handbook on the United Nations Crime Prevention Guidelines*, p. 11.

However, care must be taken not to overemphasize the role of individual risk factors in prevention programmes or to neglect the wider social and economic factors which are perceived as much more difficult to address. A well-planned prevention strategy will work to address both individual and social and economic issues. Aspects of this are discussed further below in ‘School-based Opportunities’ and ‘Building Community Resilience’.

Secondly, discussions about crime prevention sometimes distinguish between different levels of intervention: *primary crime prevention* (broad social interventions that promote the general well-being of individuals, and address people’s motivation to engage in criminal activity, target the social and economic factors that increase the risk of crime and victimization and, where feasible, address some of the root causes of crime); *secondary crime prevention* (supporting youth at risk of criminal involvement), and *tertiary crime prevention* (supporting individual desistance from crime and disengagement from criminal groups and preventing recidivism). Depending on their respective mandates and priorities, local organizations attach different levels of priority to those three levels of interventions. The tertiary level obviously requires greater coordination between service providers and police and criminal justice organizations. A comprehensive crime prevention strategy, whether at the community, city or national level, ought to include all three levels of intervention.⁴⁰⁵

Prevention approaches are most effective when based on an assessment of the problem affecting a particular community, reliable evidence on who is most at risk and who is most vulnerable to victimization, what causes are driving the violence, and what resources exist at the local level to address the problem. This type of assessment will necessitate action by – and communication between – multiple government ministries and agencies. That is, traditionally ‘crime’ oriented bodies such as law enforcement, judiciary and prisons will increasingly need to collaborate with public health services (for example, services regarding mental health, addiction, and parenting). Support for this coordinated, system-wide approach has been reiterated in multiple sources throughout the present report.

This is also to say that law enforcement and public health prevention approaches are not mutually exclusive. One specific area that requires further attention is how future crime prevention social interventions could integrate the police more explicitly in terms of planning,

⁴⁰⁵ UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/13, annex. Also, UNODC, *Handbook on the Crime Prevention Guidelines Making Them Work*, Criminal Justice Handbook Series, New York, 2010

communication, and coordination of some activities. Moreover, review participants often identified a need to better coordinate prevention and police responses to crime. Youth crime and youth violence are a priority for the Caribbean association of Police Commissioners and some police forces have youth clubs, sports training, and other modest community-based programs. Some countries, especially Jamaica, are exploring different approaches to community policing. However, although there is a willingness among many police forces of the region to engage more deeply in crime prevention initiatives (e.g., problem-oriented policing, youth outreach programs, participation in after-school programs, or attempts at partnership policing), their capacity to roll out such programs is still very limited. Some of the international donors consulted for the present review admitted that they did not have the capacity to “go deep into that area”. This is relatively new on national crime prevention agendas, and it is a matter that would require more of a whole of government approach. One would need to focus on concrete country initiatives with a lot of local ownership.

Finally, since crime and violence are often the product of opportunistic conditions rather than a result of entrenched social or economic or individual problems, situational crime prevention (e.g., crime prevention through environment design) may yield some appreciable crime reduction outcomes, especially for certain types of crime.⁴⁰⁶

Resources for Identifying Evidence-Based Crime Prevention Approaches

The following recent studies and guides offer valuable lessons for future programming on crime prevention in the Caribbean. Firstly, USAID has developed a Field Guide to support USAID officers and other practitioners working on citizen security and violence prevention.⁴⁰⁷ The Guide provides a conceptual framework for understanding crime, violence, and prevention as part of broader citizen security systems. It contains information about evidence-based interventions to prevent crime and violence and practical advice and tools on how to design, implement, measure, and evaluate projects that address crime and violence or citizen security. USAID has also funded an evidence review of the effect of

⁴⁰⁶ For example, Garis, L. & Maxim, P. (Eds.) (2016). *Designing Out Crime*. University of the Fraser Valley. <https://cjr.ufv.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Designing-Out-Crime.pdf>

⁴⁰⁷ Mizrahi, Y., Reisman, L., Cohan, L., & Costello, C. E. (2021). *Crime and Violence Prevention Field Guide*. United States Agency for International Development. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/PA00XGHG.pdf>

education programs on violence, crime, and related outcomes, a document that can guide violence prevention programming in and around the education sector.⁴⁰⁸

Another review commissioned by the USAID for the Central America Regional Security Initiative tried to identify what works in reducing community violence. The review found that a few interventions, such as focused deterrence and cognitive behavioral therapy, exhibited moderate to strong effects on crime and violence and were supported by substantial evidence. A few other interventions demonstrated either no or negative effects, while the vast majority of programmatic interventions exhibited weak or modest effects. The review identified six elements of effectiveness shared by the most impactful interventions, including maintaining a specific focus on those most at risk for violence; proactive efforts to prevent violence before it occurs whenever possible; increasing the perceived and actual legitimacy of strategies and institutions; careful attention to program implementation and fidelity; a well-defined and understood theory of change; and active engagement and partnership with critical stakeholders.⁴⁰⁹

The FDCO funded a review of the most promising strategies for reducing crime, violence, and conflict, conducted as part of Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and Innovations for Poverty Action's Governance, Crime and Conflict Initiative. The report is based on rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental research that helps to answer six questions: 1) What works in policing and building police capacity? 2) What works in justice provision, including criminal justice and corrections/prisons? 3) What works in shifting individuals' behaviors away from crime and violence in high-risks settings? 4) How do violent organizations make strategic choices between violent and non-violent action? 5) What works in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and post-conflict recovery? and, 6) What works in combating violence against women?⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ Bagby, E., Murray, N., Felix, E., Liuzzi, S., Alldredge, J. M., Ingwersen, N., Abarcar, P., & Aponte, A. (2021). *Evidence Review: The effect of education programs on violence, crime, and related outcomes*. United States Agency for International Development. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XGXS.pdf

⁴⁰⁹ Abt, T. & Winship, C. (2016). *What Works in Reducing Community Violence: A meta-review and field study for the northern triangle*. United States Agency for International Development. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/USAID-2016-What-Works-in-Reducing-Community-Violence-Final-Report.pdf>

⁴¹⁰ Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab. (2021). *Governance, Crime, and Conflict: Initiative Evidence Wrap-up: Lessons from randomized evaluations on managing and preventing crime, violence, and conflict*. UK: Foreign, Commonwealth and

In Jamaica, the final review of the Citizen Security and Justice Program (CSJP) III made several recommendations concerning future crime prevention and violence prevention programming in that country. It recommended deepening a public health model by developing a stronger framework for targeting and treating the highest-risk communities and individuals, combining individual-level interventions with interventions at the level of families/communities that build collective resiliency via formal/informal supports and other forms of social and human capital; and strengthening data generation and integration processes to support the monitoring and evaluation component of future projects, while ensuring the ongoing assessment of vectors of risk and resiliency, as well as outcomes associated with violence and victimization.

Supporting Existing Crime Prevention Strategies

The CARICOM Secretariat is presently developing a plan for the implementation of the Declaration of Heads of Government on Crime Prevention. Arising out the Regional Symposium to Address Violence as a Public Health Issue, a framework was developed and presented at the July sitting of the Conference of Heads of Government. Approved priority actions related to prevention, and the resultant key areas to be addressed, are: reducing and preventing violence in Member States by promoting the effective reintegration into societies of offenders and by reducing recidivism; the key areas to be addressed for this objective are: education, employment and livelihood opportunities, culture and sports, and drug trade related risks. CARICOM is looking for resources to conduct baseline assessments and an analysis of the use of non-custodial sentencing within the region to identify the gaps to develop prescriptions to close them. The Secretariat hopes to develop a monitoring and evaluation tool during the implementation of the Declaration, without adding too much to the reporting burden of member states.

A few countries of the region are leading the way by developing their own crime prevention strategy and/or developing an institutional capacity to provide national leadership in that area. Barbados has established a minister of state for crime prevention, but the other countries do not yet have an equivalent. However, Jamaica is presently establishing a

Development Office. https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/review-paper/GCCI-Evidence-Wrap-up_June-2021_5.pdf

Violence Prevention Centre whose future work could build on the country's Crime Monitoring and Oversight Committee and the evidence that is so crucial to create consensus around a plan of action. Jamaicans are awaiting the release in the coming months of the report of the National Violence Prevention Commission which is expected to provide a general blueprint for future crime prevention programming. Canada could usefully provide assistance to these and other crime prevention planning processes.

Preventing Gang Recruitment and Gang Violence

The factors that influence gang involvement are complex, varied, and interrelated. According to a 2017 study by Public Safety Canada, there are no risk factors that uniquely predict a high probability of gang membership; no one variable can account for such a complex phenomenon. Risk factors can include individual (internal) and social (external) risk factors, which make youth more vulnerable to gang involvement, and protective factors, which reduce the likelihood that a youth will become involved in a gang. Some of these community-level factors were explored in Section 5.2, which also outlined that cultural norms reify gang life. It is often the combination and layering of risk factors that can lead a youth to gang involvement.

There is limited research on how to disrupt youth's engagement and association with delinquent or violent groups, including youth gangs, and how to support an individual's disengagement from such a group. Clearly, some types of intervention are more effective than others in reducing gang recruitment and gang involvement.⁴¹¹ For example, well-conceived and well-implemented suppression tactics can be an effective supplement to other elements of a strategic response to gangs and gang crime, but they are only part of the solution. Intervention and prevention strategies must take the longer view, aiming to weaken the attraction of forming or joining a gang in the first place.⁴¹² Sports-based programs and street gang outreach programs may not by themselves produce appreciable crime reduction outcomes, but they may help engage the youth left behind by nearly all nonpunitive

⁴¹¹ Taylor, M. J., Nanney, J.T., Welch, D. Z., and Wamser-Nanney, R. A. (2016). The impact of sports participation on female gang involvement and delinquency, *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 39(3), 317–343.

⁴¹² Katz, C. M. (2015). An introduction to the Gang Problem in the Caribbean. In Harriott, A. & Katz, C.M. (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society*. The University of West Indies Press.

social institutions.⁴¹³ Such programs may bring the most harmed and marginalized youth into supportive relationships with their communities⁴¹⁴ and enlist them in effective intervention programs. However, some research also suggests that some interventions, when focused on gang members, “can have a boomerang effect and increase gang cohesion, leading to increased gang joining and violence.”⁴¹⁵

Further, some research suggests that sport-based programmes that are well structured, appropriately targeted, supported by mentoring and other individual interventions, and well supervised can support gang disengagement. They do so by exposing youth to positive role models, nurturing prosocial relationships, teaching them life skills, offering diversion and safety, and leading to meaningful reappraisals among youth.⁴¹⁶ There is also some support for the practice of recruiting and training people with a personal experience of desistance from crime or gang exiting and engaging them in various aspects of a prevention programme because of their experience and their knowledge of the nuances and complexities of these difficult transitions. Program staff and facilitators who have a personal knowledge of that transition may be able to build rapport with youth to build strong connections and trust.

Collaborative community programs can offer support to young people and others in terms of helping them decide against pursuing gang life or to exit from a gang. Such interventions typically focus on the individual and work to develop holistic approaches to intervention. That is a crime prevention area that requires further support, although it presents its own challenges. It is worth noting that Public Safety Canada currently manages a \$250 million national project, the *Building Safer Communities Fund*, to support municipalities and Indigenous governments in their efforts to address gun and gang prevalence. The project provides funding to put in place community led projects to combat gun and gang violence and address knowledge gaps concerning the impacts of interventions.⁴¹⁷ This initiative is

⁴¹³ Dandurand, Y. & Heidt. (2023). *Youth Crime Prevention and Sports*. Bristol University Press.

⁴¹⁴ Hureau, D. M., Braga, A. A., Lloyd, T., & Winshp, C. (2023). Streetwork at the Crossroads: An evaluation of a street gang outreach intervention and holistic appraisal of research evidence. *Criminology*, 61, 758-794.

⁴¹⁵ Katz, C. M., Cheon, H., Freemon, K., and Nuno, L. E. (2023). Delinquency, drug use, and gang membership in the English-speaking Caribbean. *Children and Youth Services Review* 144, Article 106758, p. 10.

⁴¹⁶ Berdychevsky, L., Stodolska, M., and Shinew, K. J. (2022). The roles of recreation in the prevention, intervention and rehabilitation programs addressing youth gang involvement and violence. *Leisure Sciences*, 44(3), 343-365.

⁴¹⁷ Public Safety Canada. (2023). *The Building Safer Communities Fund*. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/fndng-prgrms/bldng-sfr-cmmnts-fnd/trms-cndtns-en.aspx>

mobilizing an unparalleled level of gang prevention expertise which could be tapped to deliver gang prevention assistance in CARICOM countries.

At this point, it appears that existing programs (including USAID funded programs) typically do not address the specific issue of youth recruitment by criminal gangs or that of providing support to youth who wish to exit gangs (gang exiting programs). Getting gang members and associates to exit the gang lifestyle requires a lot of support and it requires very intensive interventions. Similarly, supporting young offenders through a process of desistance from crime is a complicated process which often involves a cognitive transformation or change in identity, whereby youth stop identifying as “offenders” and craft nonoffender identities or are able to identify a positive “future self”.⁴¹⁸ A shift towards a new identity is seen as playing a central role in almost all recent studies of desistance⁴¹⁹ and is considered a step in the journey towards social inclusion or social reintegration. Cognitive processes are important to desistance but are not necessarily sufficient to provide a path to sustained behavioural change. Access to opportunities to change and develop is crucial, as desistance research consistently shows that social relations play a role in either constraining, enabling, or sustaining desistance.⁴²⁰ Because desistance is complicated by ambivalence about change, social-relational support is critical, with the role of wider relational factors in supporting the desistance process deemed essential.⁴²¹

Wider relational factors can “cement the desistance process”.⁴²² Changes in social networks and relational dynamics, including changes in relationships/supports from parents and affiliation with offending peers, play a significant role in the change processes.⁴²³ The sense of belonging to a moral and political community or being accepted within a different social

⁴¹⁸ Dandurand, Y. & Heidt. (2023). *Youth Crime Prevention and Sports*. Bristol University Press.

⁴¹⁹ Villeneuve, M. P., F-Dufour, I., & Farrall, S. (2021). Assisted desistance in formal settings: A scoping review. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 60(1), 75-100.

⁴²⁰ Weaver, B. (2017). *Offending and Desistance: The importance of social relations*. Routledge.

⁴²¹ McNeill, F. (2021). Reducing reoffending and enabling reintegration. In UNAFEI, *Reducing Reoffending: Identifying Risks and Developing Solutions*. United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, 31-44.

⁴²² Albertson, K. & Hall, L. (2020). Building social capital to encourage desistance. In P. Ugwudike, et al, *The Routledge Companion to Rehabilitative Work in Criminal Justice* (pp.310-319). Routledge, p. 313.

⁴²³ Copp, J. E., Giordano, P. C., Longmore, M. A., & Manning W. D. (2020). Desistance from crime during the transition to adulthood: The influence of parents, peers, and shifts in identity. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 57(3), 294-332.

network can consolidate the behavioural changes and the shift to a nonoffending identity.⁴²⁴ Fundamentally, when considering how best to support youth desistance from crime, “it is important to recognize the complex nature of this change process”.⁴²⁵

Finally, two current initiatives should be monitored, and their upcoming results assessed when planning future programming. The USAID Latin America and Caribbean Learning and Rapid Response Initiative is presently funding a study of the impact of organized crime and gangs in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean region to document the extent of gangs, other crime networks, and illegal organizations. The study examines how criminal dynamics affect specific countries, what effects these activities may pose on sub-regions, and how this impacts illegal trafficking routes. A national study (in Trinidad and Tobago) has recently been completed as well, although its findings have not been released yet.

Preventing Gender-Based Crime

The *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Sanction and Elimination of Violence Against Women* (Convention of Belém do Pará) reaffirms every woman’s “right to be free from violence in both the public and private spheres” (Article 3). It defines violence against women as “any conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere” (Article 1). As a legally binding instrument, the Convention is unique in that it clearly delineates the State’s obligations to protect women’s right to a life without violence. Article 5 of the Convention states that:

“Every woman is entitled to the free and full exercise of her civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and may rely on the full protection of those rights as embodied in regional and international instruments on human rights. The States Parties recognize that violence against women prevents and nullifies the exercise of these rights.”

All CARICOM countries are parties to that Convention. Article 7 of the Convention articulates the obligations of States Parties with respect to their role in the protection of women’s right

⁴²⁴ McNeill, F. (2006). A desistance paradigm for offender management. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 6(1), 39–62.

⁴²⁵ Deuchar, R., Sogaard, T.F., Kolind, T., Thylstrup, B., & Wells, L. (2016). “When you’re boxing you don’t think so much”: pugilism, transitional masculinities and criminal desistance among young Danish gang members. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19(6): 725 – 742. p. 726.

to a life without violence. Specific obligations are listed that flow from States parties' formal undertakings to: refrain from committing acts of violence against women; demonstrate due diligence in preventing, investigating and punishing violence against women; reform existing laws, policies and administrative practices contributing to violence against women; and, ensure that women victims have access to restitution, reparations or other forms of just and effective remedies. The Convention also specifies, in Article 8, that a number of other programs and measures must be adopted to promote public education and awareness, to mobilize communities in the fight against violence against women and to offer specialized services and assistance to women victims.

Articles 7 and 8 can therefore be taken as guidance when assessing gaps in national measures to prevent gender-based violence. Additionally, the UN has adopted a set of Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.⁴²⁶ These model strategies have already proven themselves as a useful analytical framework for the evaluation of the Belém do Pará Convention.⁴²⁷

One of the main goals of Canada's Caribbean Development Program is to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Over the years Canada has offered specific assistance to Caribbean countries to enhance the prevention of gender-based violence and a number of significant lessons can be drawn from that experience.⁴²⁸

The implementation of a sexual assault court in Guyana, a potential model for other jurisdictions, and the development of the Revised Model Guidelines for Sexual Offence Cases in the Caribbean Region, by the Caribbean Court of Justice (as part of the JURIST Project), are seen as important achievements in the region. The Model Guidelines are important because they promote a comprehensive, collaborative and systemic approach towards

⁴²⁶ *Updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*, General Assembly resolution 65/228, annex.

⁴²⁷ Chin, V. & Dandurand, Y. (2001). *National Programs to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women in Ten Caribbean Countries. A Regional Analysis - Including a review of the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women*. A report prepared for the Inter American Commission of Women, Organization of American States.

⁴²⁸ See, for example, the evaluation of the Citizen Security and Justice Programme III (CSJP III). Rengifo, A. F. & Rees, D. (2021). *CSJP III Final Evaluation*. Ernst & Young Services Limited.

addressing the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of sexual assault cases. However, as emphasized by the Honourable Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders, the Court’s President, “the development of these Guidelines cannot be seen as the final goal. Success lies with their implementation.” This represents a timely opportunity for continued support, building on successes of JURIST.

UN Women is rolling out several measures to address domestic violence and intimate partner violence. These initiatives fully deserve continued support from Canada. It was suggested by some review participants that Canada should consider replicating in other Caribbean countries some of the gender-based crime prevention activities it is presently supporting in Guyana.

Preventing Violence against Children

Policy makers in CARICOM countries are just beginning to recognize the role of violence against children as a major factor in propagating violent modes of interaction. Children victims of violence, it is well known, are particularly prone to violence, either as a victim or a perpetrator, once they reached adulthood. The problem is a deep seated one that requires concerted and sustained actions. Nothing less than a whole of government approach supported by the population is likely to produce appreciable results.

Eliminating violence against children is one of the SDG targets. As part of their efforts to monitor progress towards the realization of the SDG, CARICOM countries are already monitoring the actions they are taking to prevent violence against children in its many forms.

With respect to the specific role of criminal justice institutions in preventing violence against children, the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice already provide a useful framework.⁴²⁹ The Model Strategies were developed to support a comprehensive, system-wide and strategic approach, in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, to effectively prevent and respond to violence against children.

⁴²⁹ *The United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*, United Nations, GA/RES/69/194

The complementary roles of the justice system on the one hand, and the child protection, social welfare, health and education sectors on the other, in creating a protective environment and in preventing and responding to violence against children are not consistently acknowledged in national policies and practices. However, experience shows that nothing less than a strategic, comprehensive and well thought out approach will succeed in mobilizing the full power and authority of the justice system to eradicate violence against children. Much has been learned, particularly since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, about the most effective strategies to achieve that goal. The UN Model Strategies bring that knowledge together with a clear understanding of the issues to propose a comprehensive action framework.⁴³⁰

Supporting the Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration of Offenders

The concept of “reintegration” generally refers to the social integration measures that are designed specifically to assist offenders who are being released from a penal institution and to help them face the challenges associated with their return to the community. This assistance involves both addressing the needs of the offender and managing the risk the offenders may pose to the community. Assisting the social integration of offenders is important from both the point of view of public safety and the point of view of protecting the rights of offenders.

There is a near total absence in the region of effective rehabilitation and social reintegration programs for offenders. In other words, there are essentially no significant crime prevention programs at the tertiary level. Yet, the rehabilitation of offenders and their successful reintegration into the community are among the fundamental objectives of criminal justice systems. Unsurprisingly, the recidivism rates for offenders who went through the penal system are very high. People arrested for minor crimes can spend years waiting for trial and then serve a sentence with no rehabilitation supports. They predictably face great difficulties in reintegrating into society or finding housing or employment, leading to more recidivism. In

⁴³⁰ Dandurand, Y. (2014). *Planning the Implementation of the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice – A Checklist*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

some instances, courts are ordering rehabilitation programs as part of a sentence, whether the programs exist or not.

In the rare cases where there are programs for rehabilitation or social reintegration (mostly for young offenders), there is no assessment process to help prison administrators develop a program plan or a post-release plan. In many instances the deplorable prison conditions simply do not allow any significant programming to take place. Prison management and prison population management are mostly deficient, due to a lack of resources, limited training, and poor information management systems (many of them are still manual). Further, most CARICOM countries have failed to develop adequate community corrections systems, such as probation, community services programs, or parole. Probation services, where they exist, suffer from a lack of resources and training (e.g., St. Lucia). In some countries, a parole system may exist on paper or in law, but it may not have been implemented in any significant manner (e.g., Barbados, Belize, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent).

Efforts to assist offenders' social integration must consider both the needs of the offenders, as well the risk they present in terms of the safety of the community. The primary objectives of social reintegration and prevention of recidivism can be supported by effective programming. As part of an aftercare strategy, different interventions can be delivered to assist offenders in reintegrating into their families and the community. These interventions must fit the individual needs and circumstances, and the choice of intervention should be based on a realistic assessment of such personal needs and challenges as well as personal strengths.

The social reintegration of young offenders can be facilitated by encouraging them to exercise agency in a pro-social direction. The transition can be supported by a combination of personal support to guide their identity shift and structural support to enable it.⁴³¹ In particular, the first few months after young people are released from institutional care can be critical. At that point in time, they find themselves without the structure, supervision or support that the institution provided. Too many youths return to their community with serious

⁴³¹ Hazel N, Goodfellow P, Liddle M, Bateman T and Pitts J (2017). *"Now all I care about is my future": Supporting the shift – Framework for the effective resettlement of young people leaving custody*. Nacro. Also: Hazel, N., and Bateman, T. (2020). Supporting children's resettlement (re-entry) after custody: beyond the risk paradigm. *Youth Justice*, 21(1), 71-89.

risks and needs that remain unaddressed, thus compromising their chances of successful reintegration. Young offenders are sometimes returning to families and communities that cannot accommodate them even under the best of circumstances.⁴³² Therefore, supportive interventions during that period are particularly important.

International support for offender rehabilitation and social reintegration programs in CARICOM countries has been extremely limited. This may be due in part to the lack of interest expressed by countries of the region or their unwillingness to invest in that area. As a result, rehabilitation programs in prisons and community-based alternatives to imprisonment are chronically weak where they exist at all. The absence of social reintegration programs is the most glaring gap in the crime prevention efforts of CARICOM countries. This is also an area where Canada has cumulated an impressive amount of expertise, both at the federal and provincial levels.

School-based Opportunities

In most national violence prevention plans, youth crime prevention is almost always identified as a first priority, including specific interventions within the education sector. Reform of the education systems to enable the social emotional development of children and youth, “in recognition that the social and emotional learning of the child is as important as technical and academic achievements”, was identified a crime prevention priority in the recent Declaration of the CARICOM Heads of Governments. Several international development partners have also linked education, school drop-out rates, and school violence to youth crime and violence. USAID, for example, positions education as a key youth crime prevention measure. The Jamaica Consensus Committee identified working with schools in high-risk communities (sometimes described as feeder schools for gangs) as one of eight main pillars for national violence prevention action. The National Violence Prevention Commission, in Jamaica, recognizes school violence as a serious issue, one which occurs within the wider cultural context of tolerance of violence. The Commission is likely to recommend safe schools programs. According to the country’s Prime Minister, the Commission will be recommending a ban on corporal punishment in schools. As demonstrated by these organizations, the whole

⁴³² Chin, V. & Dandurand, Y. (2018). UNODC’s *Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders*. United Nations.

area of education-based crime prevention programs therefore still represents a huge gap in crime prevention programming in the region.

Some review participants noted that school-based interventions should represent a continuum of support, but not the point of first contact for preventative interventions. Early interventions may take the form of social support offered to parents and families in high-risk areas, for example, related to non-violent parenting and conflict resolution. The local governance aspects of community resilience, discussed below, are integral to such pre-school support.

Building Community Resilience

At the community level, poverty, social conflict, poor urban planning, discrimination, exclusion, differential access to limited economic opportunities, and many other factors are associated with violence and crime. Corrupt or weak local institutions, inadequate infrastructure, poor or disorganized schools, poor housing and neighbourhood conditions, high unemployment, the presence of unchecked criminal groups, and easy access to drugs or small arms can all conspire to curtail a community's resilience to crime and violence. A more positive approach to crime prevention than those which emphasize risk factors only has been to try to build the resilience of cities, communities, and individuals to avoid and prevent crime and violence, despite negative circumstances. The approach entails identifying resiliency or protective factors that can be enhanced and facilitated to build individual and collective resilience to crime and violence.

Community resilience is a measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to prevent, respond to, withstand, or recover from adverse situations, including local crime and disorder, organized crime, and violence. It is related to the community's collective efficacy, ultimately based on the capacity and willingness of community members and their leaders to act for the common good. Communities have a varying ability to reaffirm social norms, protect and support their youth, maintain effective social controls, and mobilize local resources to prevent crime and violence.

State-centric approaches to building resilience to violence and organized crime must be complemented with community-based, context-specific responses at the local level. Local

communities are key elements of the necessary response to the destabilising impacts of organised crime and gang violence. Community-based interventions are therefore key to building resilience against crime and violence and mitigating their impact. Program activities may include: supporting counter-crime activists (and journalists) who are standing up to local gang figures and corruption; empowering young people through sports, the arts, and other extra-curricular activities; seeking justice for victims of crime and violence and their families; supporting the effective reintegration of offenders locally.⁴³³

However, in CARICOM countries as elsewhere, there remains a gap in the stakeholders' understanding of the elements of community resilience to crime and violence and the best means to promote it. Several internationally funded projects in the region have used traditional community development methods to enhance community resilience to violence and crime, but their impact to date is likely to have been minimal. However, useful lessons have been learned.

One such lesson is that the identification of vulnerable areas or vulnerable communities can provide a basis for targeted responses. Victimization surveys, for instance, support targeted geographical responses. Their findings suggest concentrating both suppression and prevention initiatives in specific areas where more crimes occur, but also where low social cohesion and high neighbourhood disorder are concentrated.⁴³⁴ Focusing attention on highly localized problems by developing community resilience can significantly reduce violence and property crime without necessarily displacing crime to other areas.

The crime prevention goals of any intervention must be quite specific and the logic behind it evidence-based and well articulated. General community development interventions may otherwise not have significant crime prevention outcomes. For instance, the Jamaica Inner City Basic Services for the Poor Project, a US\$ 32.8 million project funded by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund and the World Bank, from 2006-2013⁴³⁵, showed how basic

⁴³³ One can find examples of program activities in: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. (n.d.). *Resilience Fund: Supporting community responses to organized crime*. <https://resiliencefund.globalinitiative.net/>.

⁴³⁴ Sutton, H. & Ruprah, I. (2017). *Restoring Paradise in the Caribbean: Combatting Violence with Numbers*. Inter-American Development Bank. <https://publications.iadb.org/en/restoring-paradise-caribbean-combatting-violence-numbers>

⁴³⁵ Jamaica Social Investment Fund, *Inner City Basic Services for the Poor Project*. <https://www.jsif.org/content/inner-city-basic-services-poor-project-icbbsp>

infrastructure, quality of life, public perception of safety and community capacity can be improved by a comprehensive community development intervention, at least temporarily, without necessarily having a measurable impact on crime. One component of that project facilitated the delivery of violence prevention services, including mediation and conflict resolution, alternative livelihoods and skills development, family support programmes such as Bridge Jamaica, youth education and recreation, and community-based organization capacity building. However, the crime prevention impact of these activities, although not measured directly, was revealed as both quite modest and somewhat temporary. A performance assessment of the project concluded that: “community services for enhancing public safety and community capacity yielded positive feedback from beneficiaries at project completion, but these activities have since been gradually wound up for lack of resources and support.”⁴³⁶

Recent studies have identified other best practices to promote community resilience. They include:

- Targeting public corruption as a key element of building state legitimacy and promoting community resilience to violence and organized crime.
- Addressing context-specific obstacles to community resilience, commonly including the lack of coordination among resilience actors and the lack of public awareness regarding the local impact of illicit markets.
- Strengthening local governance, including traditional governance mechanisms, and leadership.
- Supporting better relationships and cooperation among state institutions, local governance mechanisms and local resilience actors.⁴³⁷

It is necessary to support local governance, including traditional or informal governance mechanisms and leadership, by building capacity, providing resources and, when necessary,

⁴³⁶ IEG (2019). *Project Performance Assessment Report. Report No. 135268. Inner City Basic Services for the Poor Project (ICBSP)*. https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/reports/ppar_jamaicahousing.pdf

⁴³⁷ Dandurand, Y., Bird Ruiz Benitez de Lugo, L., Maduekem K., & Zombre, O. (2022). *Building Resilience to Organised Crime: A Policy Review*. Economic Community of West African States Commission. <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/OCWAR-T-pb-1.pdf>

offering communities some effective protection. Incremental interventions are needed to create relationships and coalitions among local leaders and resilience actors and to support concrete action.⁴³⁸ In that respect recent studies have also emphasized the important role of women and women leadership in building community resilience against violence and crime.⁴³⁹ Women's participation in local governance structures and decision making is frequently related to a community's ability to mobilise itself to address a pressing issue. In many communities around the world, women have been identified as playing a central role in building community resilience to organised crime, gun and gang violence. Women changemakers can interrupt entrenched cycles of violence and reclaim physical spaces from criminal governance.⁴⁴⁰

The ways women lead, especially at the community level and specifically in under-served communities, warrants further inquiry and should inspire new approaches to building community resilience based on women empowerment. For example, against the backdrop of increased violence in Trinidad and Tobago, a study examined armed violence and leadership in relation to women's security, community safety, and national development. The survey inquired into the role of women in reducing, facilitating or preventing armed violence in communities in East Port of Spain.⁴⁴¹ The survey measured self-reported participation in criminal offending and victimization, neighbourhood disorder, the presence of gangs, perceptions of safety and fear of crime, youth violence and delinquency, and collective efficacy. It recommended greater support for women's organizations that target women as secondary victims of gun violence and women community leaders for programme planning and capacity strengthening.

Finally, the private sector and the local business community can also be a valuable ally in strengthening resilience and reducing levels of violence locally. Civil society groups can also

⁴³⁸ Idem, p. 5.

⁴³⁹ Dandurand, Y., Bird Ruiz Benitez de Lugo, L., Maduekem K., & Zombre, O. (2022). *Building Resilience to Organised Crime. Paper No. 1*. Economic Community of West African States Commission. <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/OCWAR-T-Paper-01.pdf>

⁴⁴⁰ Bird, L. (2021). *Rethinking Resilience: The Role of Women in Community Responses to Organised Crime*. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

⁴⁴¹ Mutota, F., McFee, D., & Williams, D. (2018). *A Pilot Study on the Role of Women in Communities: The Case of East Port of Spain*. A Project of The Women's Institute for Alternative Development. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/tt/A-Pilot-Study-on-the-Role-of-Women-in-Communities.pdf>

help build community resilience by analyzing the situation, raising awareness, providing local leadership and mobilizing key actors. This is an area where Canada could support innovative community-based crime prevention programs if it can identify strong community-based partners.

9. Summary of Recommendations

This report is not a comprehensive needs assessment. It is meant, more modestly, to identify gaps between the criminal justice and crime prevention priorities identified by CARICOM countries and their present and planned activities to address these priorities. In the process the review identified opportunities for Canada and international development partners to provide concrete assistance, whether at the national or regional levels, to help CARICOM countries achieve their justice system enhancement and crime prevention goals.

Based on the priorities already formulated by CARICOM countries and consultations with national and regional stakeholders, three broad areas have been identified where meaningful assistance could be provided. This is not to say that nothing is presently happening in these “gap areas”, but rather that existing initiatives are in need of support, funding, scaling up, evaluation, or other forms of international assistance. The three areas are: (1) measures to strengthen the criminal justice system’s responses to crime and deter or reduce it; (2) measures to control transnational organized crime, emerging crimes, and corruption; and (3) measures to prevent violence and crime, including at the school and community levels, and measures to prevent recidivism and reintegrate offenders. Recommendations are made in each of those areas.

Enhancing the Criminal Justice Response

- Support the adoption of a systems approach to justice reforms, including by helping build in interested countries a national capacity to develop, proceed with, and implement comprehensive justice system reforms.
- Help countries strengthen their law enforcement and prosecution institutions through a programming mechanism that facilitates timely consideration and responses to individual requests for assistance.

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- Help countries provide adequate training to police officers, especially with respect to modern methods of investigations and the use of scientific evidence, including by supporting RSS law enforcement training initiatives. Some priority areas include leadership training and ongoing training in areas such as report writing, conflict de-escalation, basic handling of exhibits and protection of the chain of custody of evidence, interviewing of child victims and witnesses, and other essential intervention and investigation skills.
 - Help countries strengthen the civilian governance and oversight of the police, including mechanisms for dealing with alleged incidents of police misconduct, corruption or use of excessive force. A review by RSS of existing oversight and complaint mechanisms in CARICOM countries by RSS could be supported as a first step in advancing reforms and capacity building in that area.
 - Help countries develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address delays and case backlogs, and generally improve the efficiency of their criminal justice system. This support could include:
 - Encouraging urgent action to address the current impact of the criminal case backlogs. For the planning of future assistance, it would be useful to support a comprehensive regional study on the nature and age of cases that are part of the countries' case backlogs, case flow and case management practices, especially the charging and charge approval process, and the present practice of plea discussion and agreement.
 - Supporting the adoption of a different approach to bail consideration at the Magistrate and High Courts.
 - Supporting initiatives to improve case management methods and processes, including through the use of technology, and to abolish or replace preliminary inquiries.
 - Supporting capacity building to ensure the timely completion of police investigations and to improve case filing systems.
 - Supporting initiatives to improve criminal procedure law and streamline the charging process, including the charge screening and approval process and pre-charge consultations between police and prosecutors.

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- Supporting projects to increase access of accused individuals to legal representation, including at early stages of proceedings, and supporting the further development of public defender programs.
 - Promoting the early resolution of cases through the introduction of plea discussion and plea agreement. Although not a panacea, plea discussion and fast track procedures can be developed or further developed to improve the efficiency of the criminal justice process and reduce the workload and costs of several of the agencies and institutions involved in criminal proceedings. In most instances, such innovations require changes in criminal procedure law, an area where countries of the region have been notoriously slow. Funding a review of best practices in plea bargaining within the region and in other common law countries would help countries of the region move forward with effective reforms in that area.
- Help countries increase the support and protection provided to victims and witnesses of crime, especially vulnerable victims and including special measures for witnesses and victims with mental illness or disability issues.
 - Help countries develop witness protection mechanisms and protocols.
 - Support the implementation of diversion programs and alternatives to prosecution, such as restorative justice and mediation programs, including a review of the impact of existing programs and how they could be improved.
 - Continue to support the establishment of specialized courts.
 - Support the implementation of alternatives to imprisonment, especially by establishing or strengthening community-based sentences like probation orders and community services orders and supporting the development or strengthening of the mechanisms responsible for their management, such as a probation service. This may include supporting a CARICOM Secretariat initiative to conduct baseline assessments and an analysis of the use of non-custodial sentencing within the region.
 - Support the implementation of alternatives to detention for default of fine payment (e.g., fine option programs).
 - Support prison reforms and rehabilitation and social reintegration programs for offenders, most critically programs for juvenile offenders.

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- Support the creation or implementation of early supervised release programs for incarcerated offenders.
 - Support youth justice reforms, including existing reform initiatives that require continued support, including in Jamaica. Countries of the region can be encouraged to follow Jamaica's example and supported to engage in comprehensive juvenile justice reforms.
 - Support capacity building and training initiatives for civil society organizations and practitioners who must play an important role in developing and delivering diversion, reintegration and alternatives to incarceration programs for youth.
 - Support the adoption of system-wide performance indicators for the justice system and the collection and analysis of performance data. System performance measurement and monitoring tools are essential to successful justice reforms and capacity building initiatives. Several countries of the region are engaged in digitalizing court services and other data processing mechanisms for operational purposes. Assistance should capitalize on the new capacity of these operational systems to generate performance data and eventually to encourage a greater transparency of the justice system.
 - Support the development and strengthening of crime observatories, including the regional observatory for OECS countries, as well as the training of crime analysts.

Controlling Transnational Organized Crime, Emerging Crimes, and Corruption

- Continue to support the implementation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap and the roles played by IMPACS and UNLIREC.
- Continue to provide support to RSS and IMPACS in their efforts to promote international cooperation against various forms of transnational crime and mitigate their impact on people and communities.
- Identify specific opportunities at the sub-regional level for Canada to support anti-drug trafficking initiatives in Eastern Caribbean countries.
- Continue to support cargo control programs.
- Expand the support delivered through the Canadian Coastguard and CBSA.

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- Explore the possibility of supporting the establishment of a regional legal entity to deal with financial crime, including money laundering and corruption.
 - Continue to explore and advance, in consultation with other international partners, the possible development of a regional law enforcement training centre for OECS countries. The CARICOM countries' needs for law enforcement capacity building and training are great and only likely to grow in complexity and sophistication. A more strategic approach to capacity building should be encouraged.
 - Consider offering supporting regional capacity building initiatives to counter cybercrime, including the implementation of the CARICOM Cyber Security and Cybercrime Action Plan. IMPACS could be supported as it facilitates legislative reviews and offers technical assistance for the implementation of legislative reforms and of the recently developed forensic evidence management platform to facilitate cybercrime information sharing among CARICOM member states.

Preventing Violence, Crime, and Recidivism

- Support the execution of the plan that is being developed by the CARICOM Secretariat for the implementation of the Declaration of Heads of Government on Crime Prevention, especially its monitoring and evaluation components.
- Provide technical and financial assistance to CARICOM countries interested in developing a comprehensive national crime prevention strategy or needing assistance with other crime prevention planning and evaluation exercises.
- Provide technical assistance to help develop, implement and evaluate youth crime and gang prevention strategies and programs. This is an area where Canada could support innovative community-based crime prevention programs if it can identify strong community-based partners.
- Work with interested parties to help them develop evidence-based safe schools and positive youth development programs in schools in targeted communities, including education and sport-based programs.
- Support the implementation of the key recommendations of the National Violence Prevention Commission, in Jamaica, especially programs and initiatives targeting schools in high-risk communities, including safe school programs.

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- Continue to support UN Women in rolling out measures to address domestic violence and intimate partner violence.
 - Support the implementation of the Revised Model Guidelines for Sexual Offence Cases in the Caribbean Region (developed by the Caribbean Court of Justice).
 - Reinforce the role of law enforcement and criminal justice institutions in preventing violence against children by supporting national efforts to implement of the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
 - Develop a programmatic approach for extending financial and other supports to at risk communities that are taking action to increase their resilience to crime and violence (especially in countries not included in existing EU and USAID programs).

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Appendix 1: List of People Interviewed

Canada

Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program in the Caribbean

- *Patrick Seagsworth*, Deputy Director (Ottawa)
- *Erin Yantzi*, Senior Program Officer (Ottawa)

Caribbean Regional Development Program (Ottawa)

- *Dave Weber*, Deputy Director Policy, CRDP (Ottawa)
- *Shafiqah Muhamad Nor*, Senior Policy Analyst, CRDP (Ottawa)
- *Olga Mardak*, CRDP (Ottawa)
- *Charlotte Macintyre*, CRDP (Ottawa)

In Canadian Missions

- *Abebech Assefa*, Head of Cooperation, Barbados
- *Michele Gibson*, Senior Development Officer, Barbados
- *Tariq Williams*, Senior Development Officer, Guyana
- *Deborah Duperly-Pinks*, Senior Development Officer, Jamaica
- *Jessica Birks*, Counsellor, High Commission of Canada, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago
- *Hugo Boilard*, Liaison Officer, Program Manager, RCMP, High Commission of Canada in Barbados
- *Miriam van Nie*, Counsellor, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Head of FPDS

Other Canadian Agencies

- *Stephan King*, Manager, Internal Capacity Building Division, Maritime Security and Intelligence Branch, Canadian Coast Guard
- *Phil Crouch*, RCMP
- *Vicky Jean*, RCMP
- *Pier-Luc Beauséjour*, CBSA Liaison Officer, Dominican Republic

Development Partners

EUROPEAN UNION

- *Dr. Florian Lütticken*, EU Caribbean Partnership for Governance, Security and Human Development, Delegation of The European Union to Barbados, The Eastern Caribbean States, OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM
- *Alessandro Tedesco*, Crime and Justice Programmes, Delegation of The European Union to Barbados, The Eastern Caribbean States, OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM

INTER AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (IDB)

- *Benjamin Roseth* (Ben), Modernization of the State Specialist, Corruption Specialist
- *Nathalie Alvarado*
- *Rodrigo Serrano*, Senior Specialist, Urban Safety and Justice

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS)

- *Gastón Schulmeister*, Director, Department against Transnational Organized Crime (DTOC)
- *Michael Bejos*, Department Against Transnational Organized Crime (DTOC)
- *Roberto C, Valenzuela Zelaya*, Cargo Control Program
- *Anna Paula Uchoa*, Chief, Section for the Prevention of Violence and Crime at the Department of Public Security
- *Jane Piazer*, Specialist, Projects on crime and violence prevention
- *Pier De Luca*, Project Manager, Program for the Assistance and Control of Firearms and Munitions

UNITED KINGDOM – FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (FCDO)

- *Oliver Blake*, Jamaica Development Representative, Head of Jamaica Political and Development Team and Senior Governance Adviser (Caribbean)
- *Antonette Grant*, Regional Governance Adviser, Eastern Caribbean
- *Sharon Weber*, Governance Advisor (Jamaica)
- *Sirah Abraham*, Criminal Justice Advisor
- *Frances (Fran) Collier*

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM - Barbados and Eastern Caribbean

- *Jason LaCorbinière*, Program Analyst for Poverty, Governance, and M&E
- *Christalle Gemon* (PACE – EU), Head of Experimentation. International Development Specialist

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME - Regional Office for Central America and the Caribbean (UNODC ROPAN)

- *Sylvie Bertrand*, Regional Representative, Central America and the Caribbean

UNITED STATES - USAID

- *Chloe Noble*, General Development Specialist, USAID/Eastern and Southern Caribbean
- *Aurore Dorelien*, Deputy Office Chief, General Development, USAID/ESC
- *Mervyn Farroe*, Regional Representative, USAID/ESC
- *Machel A. Stewart*, Youth Crime and Violence Prevention specialist (USAID/Jamaica)
- *Sharon Ramsaran*, Program Management Specialist (Rule of Law), USAID/ESC

UNITED STATES – INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT (INL)

- *Reggie Singh*, Section Head, US Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados

UN WOMEN

- *Tonni Brodber*, UN Women Multi Country Office - Caribbean Representative

Regional Organizations

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN COMMISSIONERS OF POLICE

-
- Commissioner Atlee Rodney, President
 - Marcia Manning, General Secretary

CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS (CAJO)

- *Hon. Justice Peter Jamadar* (CCJ), Chair of CAJO
- *Hon. Justice Francis Belle*, Member of CAJO

CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE (CCJ)

- *Hon. Adrian Saunders*, Chief Justice, Caribbean Court of Justice
- *Judge Winston Anderson*, Chair of CCJ Academy for Law

CARICOM

- *Alison Drayton*, Assistant Secretary General, Directorate of Human and Social Development, CARICOM Secretariat

CARICOM IMPACS - Implementation Agency for Crime and Security

- *Lt. Col. Micheal Jones*, Executive Director, IMPACS
- *Tonya Ayow*, Assistant Director, IMPACS
- *Nadine Bushell*, Assistant Director, Projects, IMPACS
- *Sherwin Toyne-Stephenson*, Programme Manager for Crime and Security
- *Rufus Ferdinand*, Deputy Director/Deputy Chief Operations Officer of the Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC)

EASTERN CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM (RSS)

- *Commodore Errington R. Shurland*, Executive Director, Commander of the RSS
- *Graham Archer*, Deputy Executive Director of RSS
- *Major Kerry Waterman*, Director of Policing
- *Rhea Reed-Bowen*, Director, Strategic Services and International Affairs

EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT

- *Dame Janice M. Pereira*, Chief Justice, ECSC
- *Gregory Gerard*, Court Administrator, ECSC

Researchers and Academic Institutions

University of West Indies

- *Dr. Herbert Gayle*, Lecturer, Social Anthropology, Specialist on gang violence
- *Dr. Randy Seepersad*, Department of Behavioural Sciences, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago

The Institute of Criminal Justice and Security (ICJS) of The University of the West Indies (UWI).

- *Dr. Tres-Ann Kremer*, Director

-
- *Tarik Weekes*, Research Fellow

CARICOM Countries

Antigua and Barbuda

- *Atlee P. Rodney*, Commissioner, Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda
- *Lt Col Edward H. Croft*, Director, Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy
- *Marlon Proctor*, Investigation, Financial Crime Department, ONDC
- *Dr. John J. Swift*, Manager Anti-Drug Strategy
- *Marcia Edwards*, Manager, Drug Intelligence Unit, ONDC
- *Franklin Daley*, Assistant Director, Operations, ONDC

Barbados

- *Cheryl Willoughby*, Director, Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit, Office of the Attorney General.
- *Tameshia Howell*, Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit, Office of the Attorney General
- *Cherisse King*, Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit, Office of the Attorney General
- *Melanie Banfield*, Barbados Crime Observatory, Office of the Attorney General
- *Andrew Pilgrim*, Defence Counsel

Belize

- *Hon. Anthony G. Sylvestre*, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

Guyana

- *Hon. Madame Justice Roxane George*, Chief Justice of Guyana
- *Shalimar Ali-Hack*, Director of Public Prosecutions
- *Nigel Hughes*, Defence Counsel
- *Lisa Thompson*, Justice Education Society of British Columbia, Project Director, GAC funded project, Strengthening Justice for Women, Girls, and Indigenous Peoples in Guyana
- *Hon. Frank Anthoni*, Minister of Health.

Jamaica

- *Hon. Mr. Justice Brian Sykes*, Chief Justice
- *Paula Llewellyn*, Director of Public Prosecutions (Ministry of Justice)
- *Claudette Thompson*, Senior Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions (Ministry of Justice)
- *Prof. Maureen Samms-Vaughan*, Chairperson, National Violence Prevention Commission
- The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MOFPS).
 - *Barbara Scott*, Deputy Director General, External Cooperation Management and Project Development
 - *Jenese Edmondson*, Project Economist

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- *Angela Sayle*
 - *Charles Clayton*, Programme Director, Community Renewal Programme
 - *Charmaine Muirhead*, Community Development Specialist
 - *Janelle Cox*, Chief Information Officer
 - *Lloyd W. Distant Jr.*, Crime Monitoring and Oversight Committee
 - *Dr. Deana Ashley*, Executive Director, Violence Prevention Alliance
 - *Kellie Magnus*, Country Lead, Fight for Peace

Saint Lucia

- *Mr. Cuthbert Henry*, Deputy Director of Parole and Probation Services

St Kitts and Nevis

- *Hon. Garth L. Wilkin*, Attorney-General & Minister of Justice & Legal Affairs
- *James Sutton*, Commissioner of Police, The Royal St. Christopher-Nevis Police Force

St Vincent and the Grenadines

- *Sejilla McDowall*, Director of Public Prosecutions
- *Kesley Cambridge*, Child Development Division, Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Youth, Housing and Informal Human Settlement

Trinidad and Tobago

- *Hon. Mr. Justice Mark Mohammed*, Appeal Court
- *Sophia Chote*, Defence Counsel
- *L. Nana Oye Hesse-Bayne*, President, Caribbean Women in Leadership

Other

- *John Furlonge*, JURIST, Regional Project Coordinator

Appendix 2: National Development and/or Security Plans

	Country	Plans / Notes
Active	Barbados	<p>Barbados Ministry of Financial and Economic Affairs. (2005). <i>National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2005–2025: Global Excellence, Barbadian Traditions</i>. https://extranet.who.int/mindbank/item/2272</p> <p>*The plan may no longer be in use, as there is no recent evidence of efforts to monitor and assess the plan.</p> <p>Objectives pertaining to crime are under ‘Law and order’:</p> <p>1.1) To Improve the Efficiency of the Justice System.</p> <p>1.2) To Effectively Manage New Trends in Crime and Law Enforcement</p> <p>1.3) To Reduce the Incidence and Prevalence of Crime and Violent Crime In Particular.</p> <p>1.4) To Arrest the Growth of the Illegal Drug Culture, Illegal Drug Trafficking and Abuse.</p> <p>1.5) To Adequately Outfit and Modernise the Agencies Responsible for Law and Order</p>
	Belize	<p>Belize Ministry of Economic Development. (2010). <i>Horizon 2023, National Development Framework for Belize 2010 - 2030</i>. https://med.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Horizon2030PreparationandImplementationProcess.pdf</p> <p>Two goals pertain to crime:</p> <p>2) To eradicate corruption.</p> <p>6) To strengthen law enforcement and access to justice through improving police investigative capabilities, accountability, and relationship with communities, and by addressing broader social issues that impact crime.</p>

Ministry of Home Affairs. (2018). *National Security and Defence Strategy 2018 - 2021*. <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.bz/national-security-defense-strategy/>

Belize also produced this defence strategy, which built on Horizon 2030 and proposed strategies to counter both local and transnational crime. Consultations for a new National Security and Defence Strategy are underway (see below).

Dominica Dominica Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, Climate Resilience and Social Security. (2020). *National Resilience Development Strategy 2030*. <https://finance.gov.dm/national-development-strategies/strategies/file/31-national-resilience-development-strategy-2030>

'Law and order' is identified as a cross-cutting area in the plan, with very briefly described goals of improving training, infrastructure and equipment for law enforcement. The plan also links improving social capital and community ties with crime reduction.

Grenada Grenada Ministry of Finance, Planning, Economic, and Physical Development. (2019). *National Sustainable Development Plan 2020 - 2035*. <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/GRANADA-NSDP20202035.pdf>

The plan mentions that Grenada has particularly low crime rates, but includes brief mention of the goal to enhance safety through community policing and neighbourhood watch programmes, reinforcing security forces, implementing youth-at-risk programmes, and enhancing prison rehabilitation programmes.

Jamaica Planning Institute of Jamaica. (2009). *Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan (NDP)*. <https://www.vision2030.gov.jm/>

This is the country's first long-term strategic development plan, in which the economic, social, environmental and governance aspects of national development are integrated. Goal 2 of the plan (Jamaican Society is Secure, Cohesive and Just) pertains to crime. Time-bound targets to meet this goal are detailed in the Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF) 2021-2024, below.

Planning Institute of Jamaica. (2022). *Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework (MTF) 2021-2024*. <https://www.pioj.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Medium-Term-Socio-Economic-Policy-Framework-MTF-2021-2024.pdf>

Two National Outcomes pertain to crime:

5) Security and Safety

5-1: Strengthen the capacity of communities to participate in creating a safe and secure society.

5-2: Reform and modernize the law enforcement system

5-3: Improve the Security of the Border and Territorial Waters

5-4: Strengthen the anti-crime capability of law enforcement agencies

5-5: Strengthen the Management, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Clients of Correctional Services

6) Effective Governance

6-1: Strengthen the process of citizen participation in governance

6-2: Reform the Justice System

Each of these strategies are accompanied by multiple, fairly specific action items.

Saint Kitts
and Nevis

Saint Kitts and Nevis Ministry of National Security (2021). *National Security Strategy*. https://www.sknis.gov.kn/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NATIONAL-SECURITY-STRATEGY_JANUARY-2021-1.pdf

Goals are detailed in the following areas: taking the profit out of crime, eradicating corruption, properly equipping law enforcement, incorporating private security guard companies in the National Security Architecture, improving border security, improving intelligence infrastructure, utilizing community policing and social interventions, eradicating human trafficking, strengthening the criminal justice system, improving human capital, providing rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities, and upholding obligations to regional organizations.

These are accompanied by fairly precise action items for the specific government body responsible, with timelines until 2025.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. (2013). *National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) 2013 - 2025*. <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/SanVicenteYlasgranadinascompleto.pdf>

Crime-related objectives are under Goal 3, 'Promoting Good Governance and Increasing the Effectiveness of Public Administration':

3.1) To enhance participatory democracy, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of public goods and services.

3.2) To develop and maintain a peaceful, safe and secure environment.

3.3) To lift the quality of the judicial and legal system and to enhance public confidence in it.

3.4) To enhance the role of civil society in the maintenance of democracy.

3.5) To widen and deepen diplomatic relations.

The plan includes more detailed interventions under each.

Other goals are not explicitly crime-focussed but aim to improve the economic and social wellbeing of the population, including through reducing youth unemployment.

Suriname Suriname Ministry of Finance and Planning. (2021). *Multi-Annual Development Plan 2022-2026 of the Republic Suriname*. <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/MOP-2022-2026-Volledig-FINAL-DNA-approved-Engels.pdf>

Four points pertain to crime:

6.5) Surveillance against Illegality and Crime.

6.6) Public Administration, which includes action items to reduce corruption.

		<p>6.22) Social Protection, which includes the strategic action item to implement a counter violence against children program.</p> <p>6.23) Security, including action items to enhance investigative powers of law enforcement, improve surveillance through drones, reduce youth crime, reduce corruption, implement counter-violence against children and women programs, equip the department of cyber crime, and introduce resocialization programs for detainees.</p> <p>Other points not explicitly linked to crime tackle poverty reduction.</p>
In process	Trinidad and Tobago	<p>Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Planning and Development. (2016). <i>Vision 2030: The National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago 2016-2030</i>. https://www.planning.gov.tt/content/vision-2030</p> <p>The strategy includes short, medium and long-term goals, with specific actions given for the short-term goals. These goals are:</p> <p>4.1) Promote independence of the Judiciary.</p> <p>4.2) Ensure equity in the administration of the criminal justice system (including introducing a remand court and office to adjudicate juvenile offences).</p> <p>4.3) Reduce the burden on the courts system.</p> <p>4.4) Strengthen national security structures.</p> <p>4.6) Increase the crime detection rate.</p> <p>4.7) Develop closer coordination and collaboration between the law enforcement agencies and the defence force.</p> <p>4.8) Promote integrity in law enforcement.</p> <p>4.9) Forge strategic alliance with international security and public safety (pertaining to transnational crime).</p>
	Bahamas	<p>Bahamas National Development Plan Secretariat. (2016). <i>Working Draft of the National Development Plan of the Bahamas for Public Consultation</i>. Office of the Prime Minister.</p>

https://www.vision2040bahamas.org/media/uploads/Draft_National_Development_Plan_01.12.2016_for_public_release.pdf.

Two goals pertain to crime:

3) Enhancing rule of law, including by reducing inequalities, detecting youth at risk at an early age, and increasing community participation in creating safe neighbourhoods.

4) Administrative justice, including strengthening police, prisons, courts and the Office of the Attorney General, and establishing a national “zero-tolerance” strategy for violent crimes.

The plan is being developed in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank.

Belize Consultations for a new National Security and Defence Strategy 2022 - 2027 are underway.⁴⁴²

Saint Lucia An updated Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS) 2021 – 2026 will soon replace the recently expired 2020 - 2023 strategy.⁴⁴³

Saint Lucia Department of Economic Development, Transport and Civil Aviation. (2020). *Medium Term Development Strategy 2020-2023, Nou Tout Ansanm A.R.I.S.E.*

<https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/Saint%20Lucia%20MTDS%202020-2023.pdf>

⁴⁴² Government of Belize Press Office. (2022, January 11). *Stakeholder Consultations on the Development of the National Security and Defence Strategy 2022-2027*. <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/stakeholder-consultations-on-the-development-of-the-national-security-and-defence-strategy-2022-2027/>

⁴⁴³ Regional Observatory on planning for Development. (n.d.). *Medium Term Development Strategy 2020 - 2023 of St. Lucia*. <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en/plans/medium-term-development-strategy-2020-2023-st-lucia>; Government of Saint Lucia. (2022, November 18). *Saint Lucia's MTDS presented at the UN Development Partners Coordination Meeting*. <https://www.govt.lc/news/saint-lucia-s-mtds-presented-at-the-un-development-partners-coordination-meeting#:~:text=SAINT%20LUCIA'S%20MEDIUM%20TERM%20DEVELOPMENT,IN%20THE%20PROVISION%20OF%20ASSISTANCE>.

The recently expired plan included four strategies to reduce serious crime, recidivism, and investigation and prosecution backlogs:

- 1) Enhance crime detection and patrol systems.
- 2) Increased community involvement in crime fighting.
- 3) Improved investigation and prosecution.
- 4) Enhanced rehabilitation, including enriching rehabilitation for juveniles.

The four strategies included a detailed and measurable goal matrix.

Saint Lucia also has a long-term National Vision Plan, but crime is not addressed in it.

Inactive

Antigua and Barbuda

Antigua and Barbuda Ministry of Finance and Corporate Governance. (2015). *Medium-Term Development Strategy 2016 to 2020*. https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/antigua_barbuda_medium_term_development_strategy.pdf

Guyana

Guyana Ministry of Finance. (n.d.). *National Development Strategy*. <https://finance.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/nds.pdf>

Montserrat

Montserrat Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (2010). *Sustainable Development Plan 2008 - 2020*. <https://www.gov.ms/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Montserrat-SDP-2008-to-2020.pdf>

