

# Understanding and Combatting Crime in Guyana

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## Abstract

Over the past decade, Guyana has recorded impressive economic growth. Many argue that the country's economic future looks even brighter thanks to the recent massive oil discovery. But its development potential is hindered by many factors, including high levels of crime and violence tied to low levels of interpersonal trust and social cohesion and low trust in criminal justice institutions. Important related factors include high tolerance for the use of violence to solve problems in the home and the community. These issues can be successfully addressed by promoting a better balance between crime suppression and prevention programmes. However, for such programmes to be successful, the country needs data that are consistent, reliable, and detailed. Specifically, this means data that are collected frequently and are disaggregated according to critical demographics, such as gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic stratum, and neighbourhood. *Resources should be directed towards (1) acquiring an adequate quality and quantity of data that will ensure greater success in preventative programmes to increase the country's return on investment, (2) promote more preventative programmes and conduct rigorous monitoring and evaluation to identify the effects, and (3) improve the capacity and performance of the criminal justice system by improving police investigation capabilities and training on community relations, improved case management for the courts, and increased use of alternative sentencing based on clear rules.*

JEL Codes: I39, J10, J19, K14, K49

Keywords: Crime, government, private sector, GDP, justice system, Guyana

## I. Introduction

**Guyana's development path is marked by both great potential and huge obstacles.** With a sizeable oil find in 2015 and other natural endowments, Guyana is resource-rich but extremely vulnerable to terms of trade shocks. A 90 percent literacy rate provides Guyana with a solid foundation for strengthening its human capital, but problems of inequality in access to health care, education, housing, and social protection persist. Political uncertainty has negatively impacted business and consumer confidence, causing Guyana to miss its target economic growth rate in 2015 by 0.4 percent,<sup>1</sup> as well as its initial 2016 target by 1 percent.<sup>2</sup> Gold mining operations are expanding significantly, while there is a severe deficit in adequate infrastructure. However, even more concerning to citizens than the poor road networks and ailing bridges is pervasive crime.<sup>3</sup> **Security, crime, and violence were considered by nearly one in four 4 Guyanese (22 percent) to be the most pressing issue facing their country in 2016.**<sup>4</sup> In recent years, the number of individuals who identified crime as the most important problem increased more significantly in Guyana than anywhere else in the LAC region.<sup>5</sup> Nearly 30 percent of the population believes that violence in their neighborhood has stayed the same or increased in the last year.<sup>6</sup>

This brief examines what we know from the existing crime data available in Guyana and some of the possible drivers of crime, including social tolerance for violence and a fragile criminal justice system. On one hand, it is important to analyse the profile and dynamics of crime of Guyana and its effects on the country—be they societal, private, or public—based on existing information. In the short term, this can aid in policymaking for improved citizen security. On the other hand, it is imperative to take stock of what further data are still needed to improve our understanding of the problem and to measure the effect of interventions. Unfortunately, the lack of reliable, comprehensive, and continuously collected data still severely hinders efforts to understand the dimensions of crime and violence in Guyana and design relevant policies. We then examine the financial and economic costs associated with crime, such as lower economic growth, which adds additional economic burdens to the government and the private sector. Finally, we look at trust in criminal justice institutions, their capacity, and efficiency—all of which are cause for concern.

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<sup>1</sup> Inter-American Development Bank Quarterly Bulletin 2016. <https://publications.iadb.org/handle/11319/7497>

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Finance 2017 Budget speech indicates that the initial projection for economic growth in 2016 was 4.4 percent, which was revised downwards to 4 percent. IMF Article IV 2017 estimates growth in 2016 of 3.3 percent.

<sup>3</sup> The Latin American Public Opinion Poll (LAPOP) shows that security was the main concern after unemployment and the economy (2008) and corruption (2010). In 2016, 22 percent of individuals responded that a security-related issue was their main concern.

<sup>4</sup> LAPOP 2016 dataset.

<sup>5</sup> Between 2012 and 2014, the increase in the number of citizens citing security as the most important problem was higher in Guyana (21 percentage points) than in 26 of 28 other countries in surveyed by LAPOP (Hinton and Montalvo, 2014).

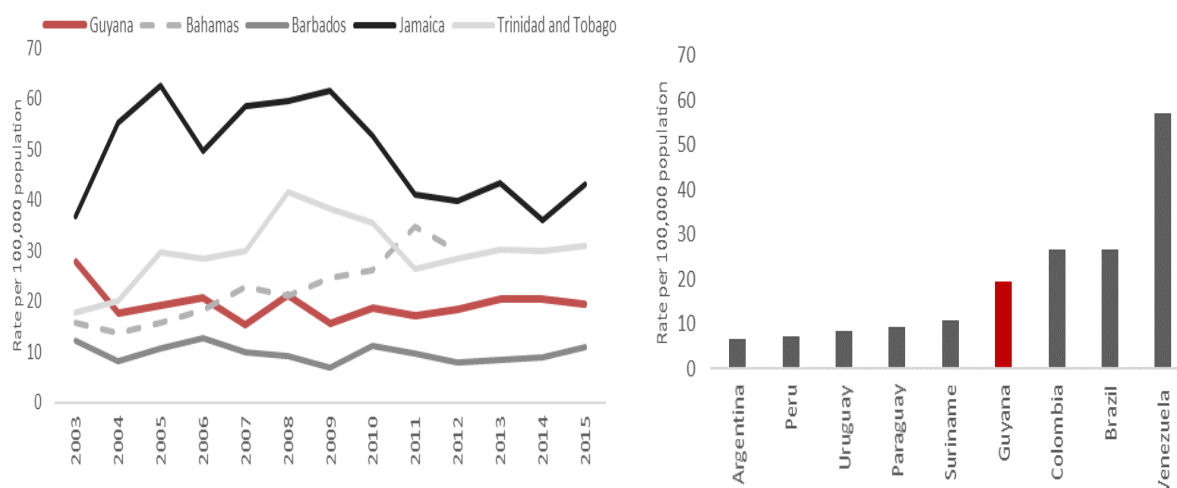
<sup>6</sup> LAPOP 2016 dataset.

## II. Measuring and Understanding Crime and Violence

### *Homicide*

Homicide is the most visible and, generally, most reliably reported form of violent crime.<sup>7</sup> **At 19.4 per 100,000 in 2015, Guyana's reported homicide rate is relatively high and above the global average (6.2 per 100,000). Although comparable to the rest of the Caribbean, Guyana still has the fourth highest rate in South America (behind Venezuela, Brazil, and Colombia)** (see Figure 1). Rates reported by the police in UN Crime Trends Surveys (UNODC) nearly doubled from 2000 to 2013 (from 9.9/100,000 to 19.5/100,000). According to recent police reports, this number continued to climb in 2014 and 2015.<sup>8</sup> Given data limitations and lack of empirical studies, it is difficult to determine the underlying drivers of this increase.

**Figure 1 - Homicide Rates for (a) Select Caribbean and (b) South American Countries 2003–2015**



Source: UNODC Global Homicide Data 2016.

**The national reported robbery rate (191/100,000) and burglary rate (278/100,000) significantly exceed global averages and have continued to climb in recent years** (see Figure 2).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, actual rates are likely far higher because crime is generally underreported in areas where trust in the police is low. Trust in the police in Guyana is the lowest anywhere in

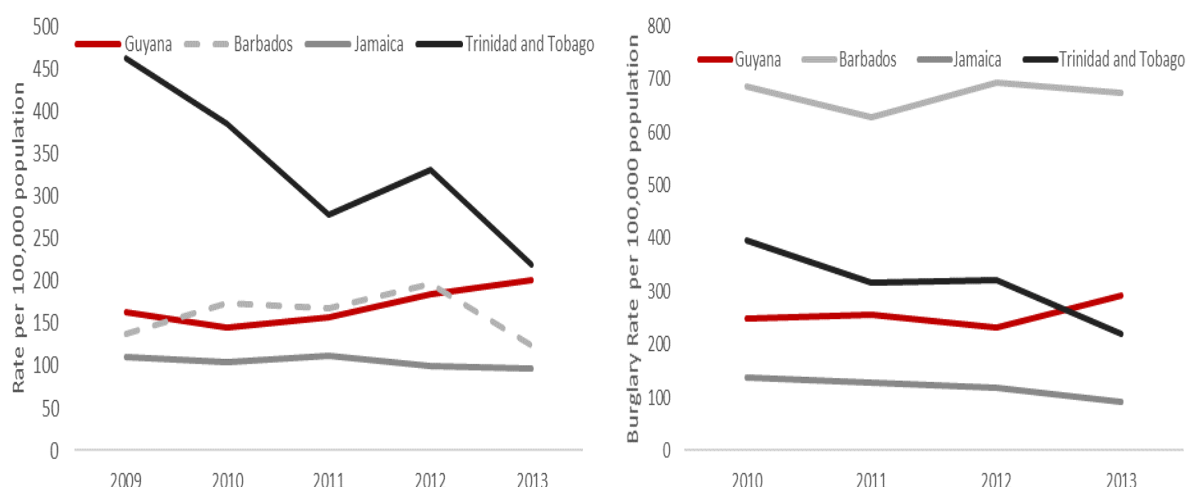
<sup>7</sup> Given that most countries have a legal requirement that all deaths be registered, police or public health systems capture homicide data fairly accurately.

<sup>8</sup> Guyana Police Force, Press Release - Crime and Traffic Statistics Update May 2015. <http://guyanapoliceforce.gy/police/media-folder/press-releases/crime-and-traffic-statistics>.

<sup>9</sup> 2012 UNODC global burglary and robbery rates were 137.5/100,000 and 201/100,000, respectively.

the LAC region.<sup>10</sup> Official crime statistics are also prone to errors in police recording processes and therefore do not permit valid comparisons of levels of crime over time and between countries. Crime victimisation surveys are widely regarded as a complementary, and in some ways a superior, source of data. Unfortunately, consistent and comprehensive national crime victimisation surveys have not been implemented in Guyana.<sup>11</sup> Despite recent efforts to generate better victimisation survey data in the Caribbean,<sup>12</sup> data collection in Guyana remains very limited.

**Figure 2: (a) Robbery Rate 2009–2013 and (b) Burglary Rate 2010–2012 for Select Caribbean Countries**



Source: UNODC Global Homicide data 2016.

### III. Social Tolerance of Violence

**Exposure to violence and social tolerance for violence are high in Guyana.** In 2016, 30 percent of Guyanese reported having witnessed a serious attack or shooting resulting in severe injury or death in their lifetime. One in five reported having lost someone close to them to

<sup>10</sup> Using LAPOP data from 2014, question B18 (To what extent do you trust the Guyana Police Force?) was recoded from 0-100, where 0=the least trust; 100=most trust. Trust in the police in Guyana, at a score of 35.3, was lower than all 27 other countries surveyed in the region (the average score for Latin American countries was 47 and the Caribbean average was 51). "The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas, 2014: Democratic Governance across 10 Years of the AmericasBarometer." Available at: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/ab2014/AB2014\\_Comparative\\_Report\\_English\\_V3\\_revised\\_011315\\_W.pdf](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/ab2014/AB2014_Comparative_Report_English_V3_revised_011315_W.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> The Safe Neighborhood Survey conducted in 2006, 2011, and 2013 contains several questions on victimisation. However, only the 2011 survey was nationally representative. Due to small sample sizes, only the most prevalent types of crime are likely representative of actual victimisation, and answers to follow-up questions may not be reliable. See Vriniotis, Mary. VICTIMISATION SURVEYS 101: Recommendations for Funding and Implementing a Victimisation Survey, Inter-American Development Bank Technical Note (Forthcoming).

<sup>12</sup> The Caribbean Crime Victimisation Survey Module, attached to the Latin American Public Opinion Poll (LAPOP), was conducted in 2014/2015 in five Caribbean countries. The Government of Guyana denied permission for the survey to be conducted in Guyana with an adequate sample size, so no regional or internationally comparable crime data are available for the country.

violence.<sup>13</sup> In the 2011 Safe Neighborhoods Survey, 28 percent of respondents stated that they had threatened to seriously harm someone, had assaulted someone, or used someone else to harm someone. Twenty-nine percent agreed that a person has the right to kill to defend the family (27 percent in the case of defending home or property).

**There is a relatively high tolerance for violence against women and corporal punishment of children in Guyana.** Not only is violence in the home a serious threat to the human rights of women and children, but there is strong evidence that violence and aggression are learnt in the home when children are abused and witness abuse of family members. International literature suggests that children who experience or witness violence are more likely than those who do not to perpetrate violence later in life (Capaldi and Clark, 1998; Capaldi, et al., 2003; Fulu et al., 2013; Kishor and Johnson, 2004). For example, child survivors of abuse are more likely later in life to commit violence against their peers (Logan, Leeb, and Barker, 2009), to bully others, and to engage in teen dating violence (Duke et al., 2010), child or elder abuse, intimate partner violence (APA, 1996), and sexual violence (Jewkes, 2012). They also often require ongoing medical treatment, and are sometimes unable to remain employed due to psychological<sup>14</sup> and physical problems related to their abuse. Violent discipline has also been found to be more common in households affected by intimate partner violence than in households that are not (Bott et al., 2012).

**In Guyana, tolerance of beating one's wife if she is unfaithful (48 percent) (see Figure 3a) was the highest in the Americas.**<sup>15</sup> Seventy-two percent of respondents reported believing it is necessary to physically punish their children, with 7.4 percent believing that physical punishment should be used very frequently or always. Moreover, 82.4 percent reported that their parents used physical punishment with them, with 18.7 percent of them reporting that physical punishment was used frequently or always (see Figure 3b).<sup>16</sup> Further, an examination of self-reported victimisation by intimate partner (Figure 3c) shows that Guyana has the highest rate for all categories regarding being threatened by a spouse (31 percent), insulted (20 percent), experienced violence (18 percent) or being injured (16 percent). However, these percentages are still likely to be far under-representative of actual prevalence, given that surveys on crime do not

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<sup>13</sup> LAPOP dataset 2016. The questions in the survey were: In your lifetime, have you ever witnessed a serious attack or beating in which another person was badly injured or killed? In your lifetime, has anyone you felt very close to been killed by violence?

<sup>14</sup> Psychological problems include PTSD, substance abuse, and borderline personality disorder. Medrano et al., 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Numbers are from 2014 when all countries were last surveyed.

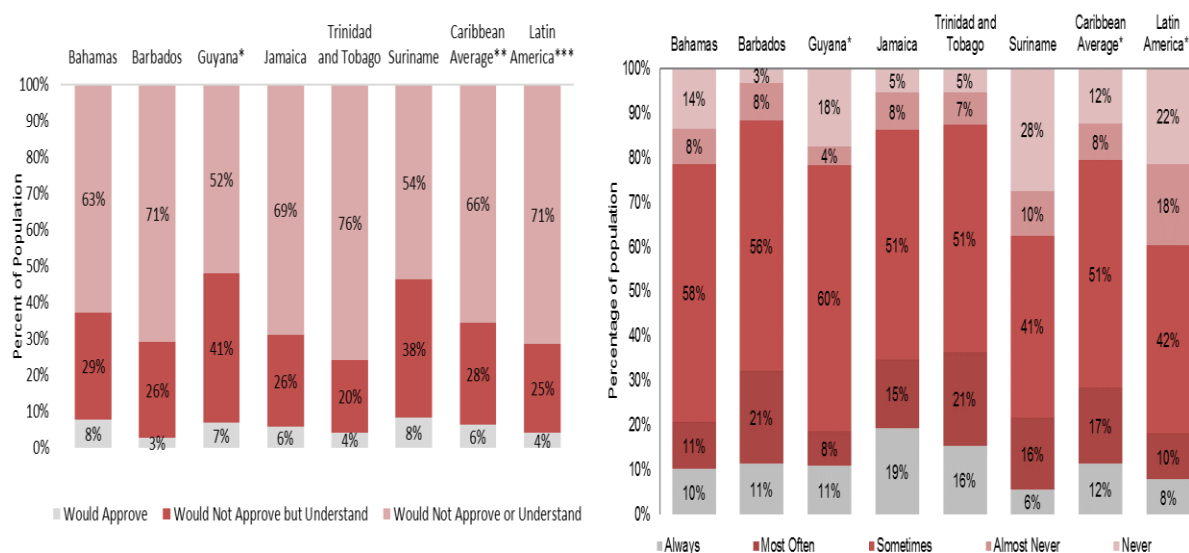
<sup>16</sup> Calculated using LAPOP data 2016 questions: VOL207n. Do you think that to correct a child who misbehaves it is necessary to hit or physically punish them? VOL208n. When you were a child, would your parents or guardians hit or physically punish you in some way to correct your misbehavior?



take the extra steps needed in terms of survey design and implementation to address the barriers to reporting intimate partner violence.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 3 – Tolerance of Violence in the Home**

(a) Tolerance of Wife Beating if Unfaithful (b) When you were a child, would your parents or guardians hit or physically punish you in some way to correct your misbehavior?



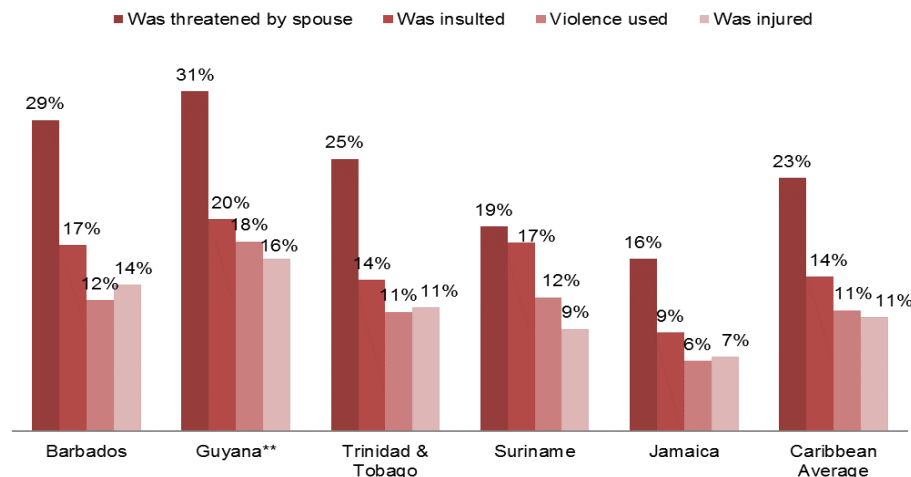
Source: Authors' analysis of data from the 2014/2015 Latin American Public Opinion Project Survey.

\*The Caribbean average includes Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, The Bahamas, and Barbados.

\*\*The Latin American average includes Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic.

<sup>17</sup> According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in its Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence Against Women 2013, "Surveys on violence against women are most effective when conducted as dedicated surveys, that is, surveys designed primarily, if not exclusively, to gather detailed information on the extent of different forms of violence against women." (United Nations 2013, 6)

(c) Self-reported victimisation by intimate partners for females, by type



Source: Authors' analysis using data from the United Nations Development Programme 2010 Citizen Security Survey.

Source: LAPOP merged dataset 2014/ 2016. Questions DVW2, VOL208n.

\*Guyana data is 2016 while other countries are for latest date available (2014)

\*\*Caribbean average includes: Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Bahamas, Barbados.

\*\*\*Latin American Average includes: Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Venezuela, Dominican Republic.

#### IV. Costs of Crime<sup>18</sup>

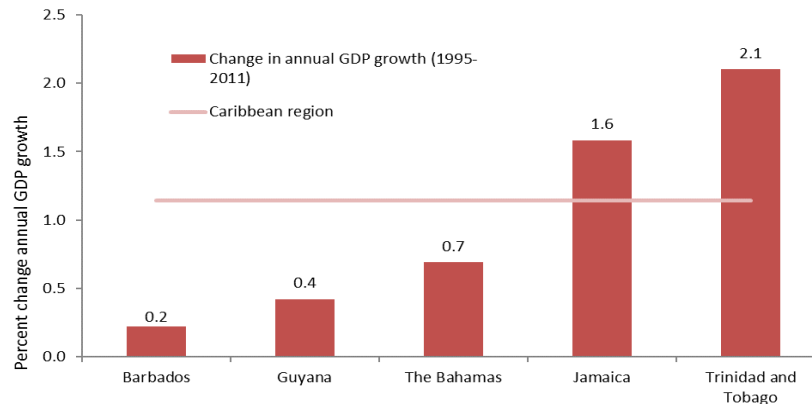
**High crime rates are known to impede growth by deterring foreign investment, stem development by diverting scare resources towards security, and contribute to migration of the highest skilled professionals.** Using panel regression of homicide rates<sup>19</sup> and GDP,<sup>20</sup> we project that if the change in homicide rates in Guyana had been the same as the global average, from 1995–2011 (years of most data), GDP growth could have been an estimated 0.4 percent higher per year (see Figure 4). With lower crime and violence, more of these resources could have been invested in much-needed development projects.

<sup>18</sup> Estimates for the public costs of crime were derived from the National Budget estimates. Estimates for the private costs of crime were derived from the PROTEqIN survey conducted in 2013, which gave the first firm-level insights into the Caribbean private sector. The IDB conducted a survey on Crime and Victimization in five of the six Caribbean countries, but unfortunately permission was not granted for it to be conducted in Guyana. This survey has provided significant insights into crime and enabled the costs of victimisation to be estimated in the countries in which it was conducted. Additionally, many countries include questions on private household expenditure for security and cost of victimisation from violence (i.e. hospitalisation, labour hours lost, etc.) on household expenditure or labour force surveys. No such survey was identified in Guyana.

<sup>19</sup> UNODC Crime Trends Data, 2014

<sup>20</sup> World Bank Indicators.

**Figure 4: Change in GDP Growth**



Source: Sutton and Ruprah (2017).

### **Public Expenditure on Security**

A significant portion of the national budget (approximately 2 percent of GDP in 2015<sup>21</sup>) is estimated to be spent on citizen security.<sup>22</sup> This is comparable to the what is spent on the health sector and more than a third of what is spent on education. Using the methodology by Jaitman and Torre (2017), we examined the public costs of security incurred by the government, which includes the administration of justice, prisons and police.<sup>23</sup> The study found that the Caribbean region generally has higher government expenditure on security than other the Latin American countries and 6 developed countries for which the methodology was applied (Jaitman and Torre 2017). Compared to the 17 Latin American and Caribbean countries analyzed, had Guyana been included in the study it would have the second highest government expenditure as a percentage of GDP – just after Jamaica which tops the list at 2.43. Caribbean countries, including Guyana, have some of the lowest expenditure on administration of justice and the highest expenditure on police compared to the rest of the LAC region. With regards to the administration of justice not all costs in the security sector are directly related to criminal activities, as there are family court issues, traffic violations, etc. Therefore, an upper limit of 30 percent was used to estimate the cost of the administration of justice which is about 0.08 percent of GDP. A range of 50–100 percent of

<sup>21</sup> This includes expenditure on Administration of Justice, Police Force and Prisons only.

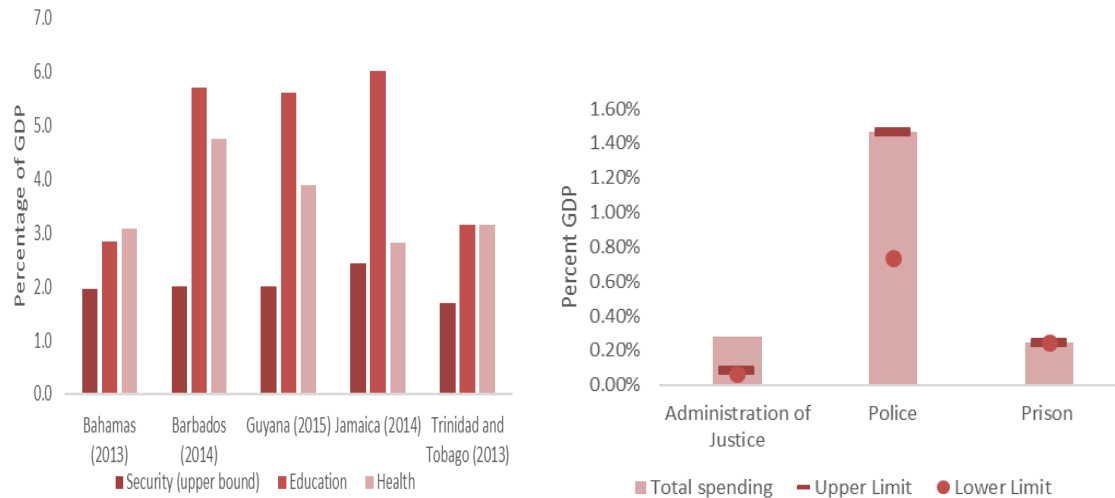
<sup>22</sup> Numbers are based on calculations from the National Budget. Alternatively, according to the UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report 2012, Guyana's expenditure on security as a percentage of the national budget was broken down as follows: 4.78 percent on law enforcement, 0.2 percent on prevention, 0.69 percent on justice and 0.88 percent on corrections.

<sup>23</sup> Jaitman and Torre, 2017.

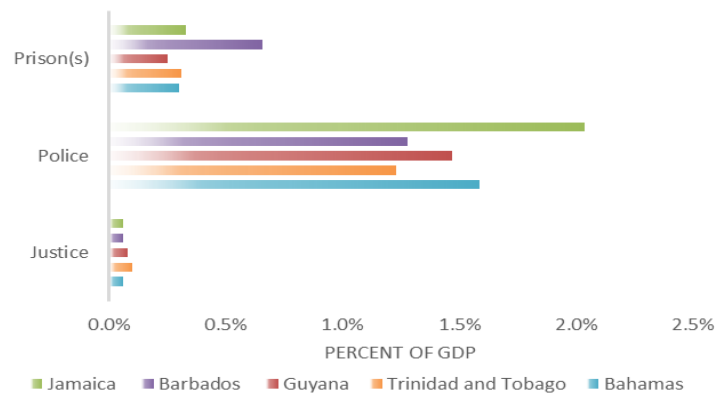
total costs for police was estimated at 1.5 percent and 0.7 percent of GDP; and 100 percent of total costs for prisons which is 0.25 percent of GDP.

**Figure 5: Public expenditure on security**

(a) Expenditure on security v. health and Education (b) Guyana's expenditure on combatting crime



(c) Expenditure on crime by five Caribbean Countries

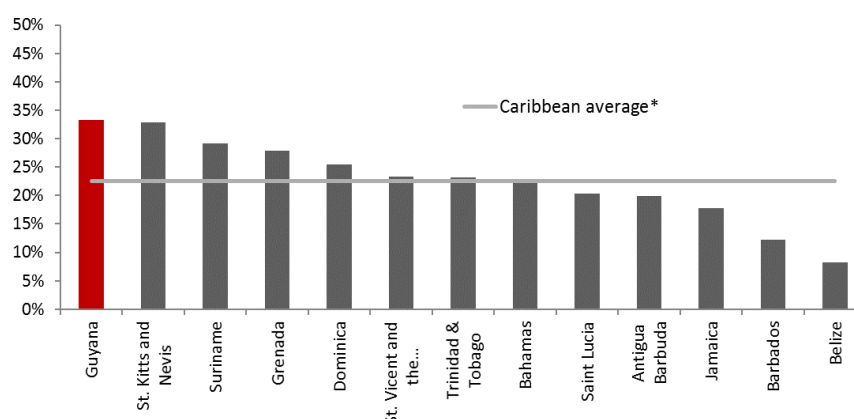


Source: Authors' calculations for Guyana using Budget estimates, Ministry of Finance. For other Caribbean countries, see Jaitman and Torre (2017).

## Private Sector Costs

**Crime and violence are also costly to the private sector.** Guyanese firms are the most vulnerable to crime, with 33 percent reported being the victim of a crime in 2014/2015 compared to the Caribbean average of 23 percent (Figure 6). Firms in Guyana are also the most affected in the Caribbean by the cost of security, with 70 percent of firms needing to contract security services (compared to the global average of 55.6 percent and Caribbean average of 68 percent).<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 6 - Prevalence of Firm Victimisation**



Source: PROTEQIN survey of firms 2013/2014 dataset.

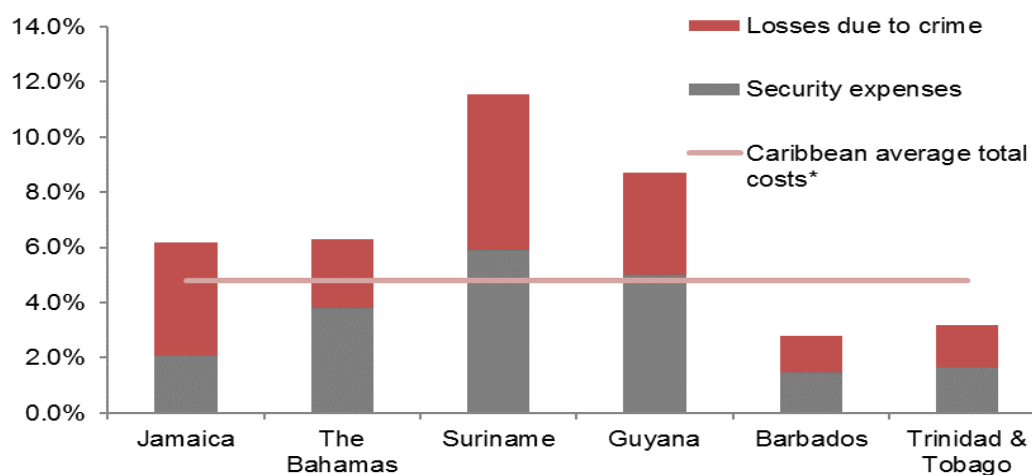
\*Caribbean average is the unweighted average of the 13 countries.

In addition to large payments for security, private firms also report high incidence of theft and vandalism and significant related losses. In 2014, 33 percent of Guyanese private firms reported losses due to crime amounting to 3.7 percent of total annual sales. Overall, Guyanese firms spent 8.7 percent of annual sales on security-related expenses.<sup>25</sup> This diversion of resources can significantly impact a firm's opportunity for growth and negatively affect the Guyanese economy.

<sup>24</sup> Productivity, Technology, Innovation in the Caribbean (PROTEqIN) survey of Caribbean firms (2014). The PROTEqIN is a comprehensive and international comparable firm level dataset covering 14 Caribbean territories.

<sup>25</sup> This is the sum of the percentage of total annual sales paid for security (5 percent) and the percentage of total annual sales in losses (3.7 percent). PROTEqIN survey (2014).

**Figure 7 - Crime Related Costs as a Percentage of Annual Sales**



Source: PROTEQIN survey of firms 2013/2014 dataset.

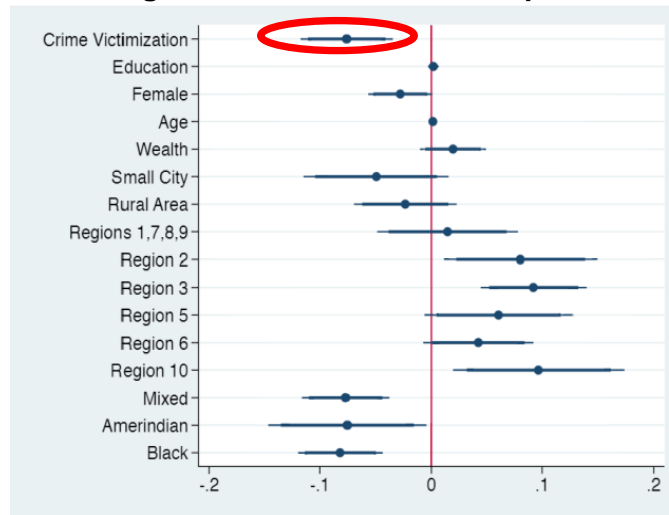
\*Caribbean average is the unweighted average of the thirteen countries.

**Finally, crime and violence can be detrimental to the development of social capital and the integrity of social cohesion by directly undermining interpersonal trust.<sup>26</sup>** Crime and insecurity are strongly and negatively correlated with interpersonal trust in Guyana (Figure 8). Insecurity and strained community relations can lead to a reduction of participation in community and civic life. This dynamic can also fuel and be aggravated by erosion of trust in institutions, particularly law enforcement.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Numerous studies have linked violence and social capital formation. For an overview see: Cuesta Jose A, Alda Erik, Lamas Jorge. 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Corbacho, Philipp, and Ruiz-Vega (2012).

**Figure 8 – Regression Correlates of Interpersonal Trust\***



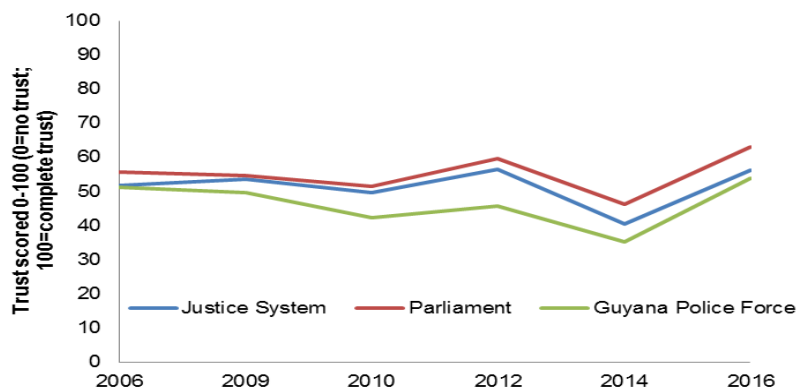
Source: Authors' elaboration with LAPOP dataset 2016.

\* Determinants to the left of the red line have negative impacts on interpersonal trust, while those to the right have positive impacts on interpersonal trust. Determinants with confidence intervals that do not cross the red line are considered significant. Base categories: Region 4 and Indo-Guyanese.

## V. Capacity and Trust in the Criminal Justice System

High levels of crime and violence can also fuel and be aggravated by low trust in public institutions, particularly the criminal justice system. Trust in institutions reached an all-time low in Guyana in 2014, but then saw a significant increase in early 2016 (see Figure 9).

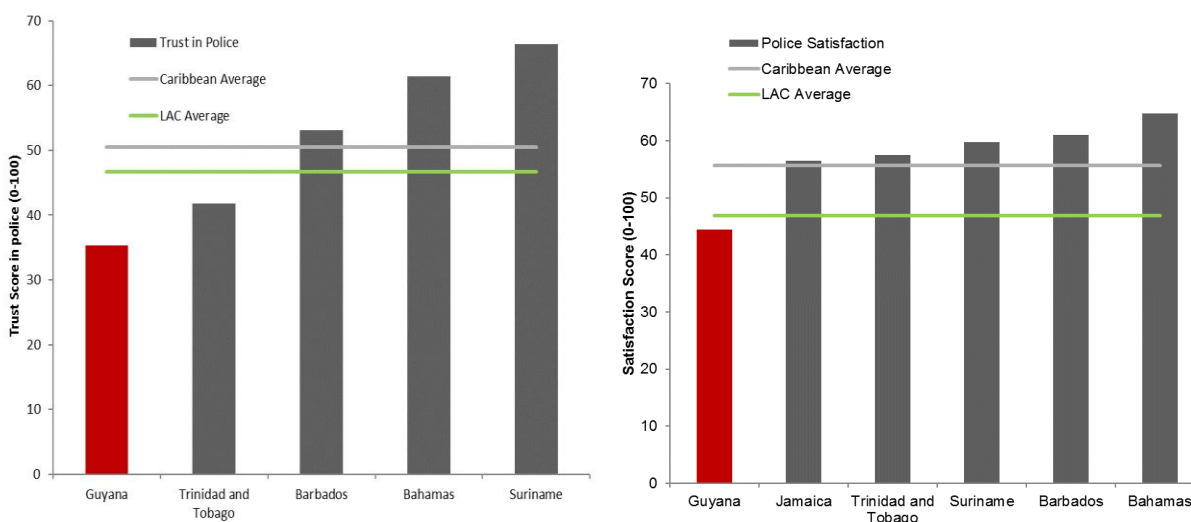
**Figure 9 – Trust score in Guyanese Institutions, 2006–2016**



Source: Latin American Public Opinion Poll 2006–2016.

In 2014, the Guyanese Police Force (GPF) was the least trusted institution in Guyana<sup>28</sup> and had the lowest trust score of any police force in the Americas (Figure 10). Trust in the police among Afro-Guyanese is particularly low (see Figure 8). Although trust in the police increased in early 2016, it remains to be seen if this is a sign not only of hope in new political leadership, but also in genuinely improved community-police relations. Poor treatment of citizens by police, the perception of lack of respect for citizens' rights,<sup>29</sup> and lack of instruction to engage with the population<sup>30</sup> are all structural problems that are not easily resolved from one political administration to another. There is a need to have further disaggregation (by age, gender, location, ethnicity, etc.) of crime data to aid analysis. Such information about both victims and offenders can aid policymakers in understanding where and how to target interventions. Unfortunately, police forces in the Caribbean region do not always collect this information. When it is collected, it is often not done so in a systematic way and/or is not analyzed for crime prevention and suppression. Additionally, most of the crime data available for Guyana are collected in coastal regions, with little to no data available on the hinterland regions. An IDB survey on Crime and Violence in Indigenous Peoples' Communities, expected to commence shortly, will provide insights into crime patterns in indigenous communities.

**Figure 10 – Trust and Police Satisfaction for Caribbean Countries**



Source: LAPOP 2014 merged dataset.

Average scores for each country were recorded on a scale of 0–100, based on responses on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (a lot).

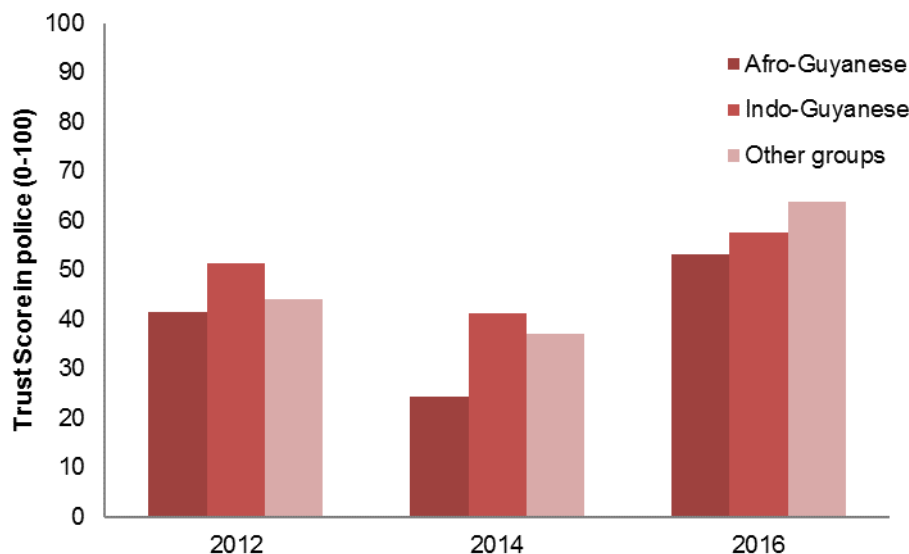
<sup>28</sup> In the LAPOP 2014 survey, trust in institutions was measured on a scale of 0-100. The average score for the following institutions were: Evangelical Church 60.2, Defense Forces 58.0, Catholic Church 45.1, Parliament 46.3, Executive 45.5, Justice System 40.4, Political Parties 38.6, Police 35.4.

<sup>29</sup> Only 17.2 percent of people believed that the police had respect for citizens' rights in 2010. UNDP (2012) Caribbean Human Development Report, p. 103.

<sup>30</sup> GPF Strategic Plan 2011-2015 identifies the need for police training in community policing, outreach programmes, and improving police-public relations.



**Figure 11 – Trust in Police among Ethnic Groups, 2012-2016**



Source: LAPOP dataset Guyana 2012–2016.

**Low trust in the police and the justice system may also be linked to low performance and efficiency.** In 2014, the GPF had the longest response time in the region other than Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.<sup>31</sup> In 2016, 44 percent of the population said that the police would take at least an hour to respond to a call, and 3.3 percent reported that there were no police in their neighbourhood. This is an improvement over 2014,<sup>32</sup> but still far from sufficient. Understaffing, lack of proper training, and tense relations with the community contribute to the GPF's limited ability to investigate.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, a small judiciary makes it difficult for Guyanese courts to adjudicate in a timely fashion. Guyana has approximately 3.5 judges and magistrates per 100,000 inhabitants—a ratio far lower than that of other judiciaries in the region.<sup>34</sup> Prisons operate at over 33 percent capacity,<sup>35</sup> and 36 percent of the prisoners are pre-trial detainees<sup>36</sup> owing to a backlog with more cases filed than decided.

<sup>31</sup> AmericasBarometer 2015. See: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/IO923en.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> LAPOP 2014. Forty-six percent responded that police took more than an hour, and 12 percent reported there were no police in their neighborhood

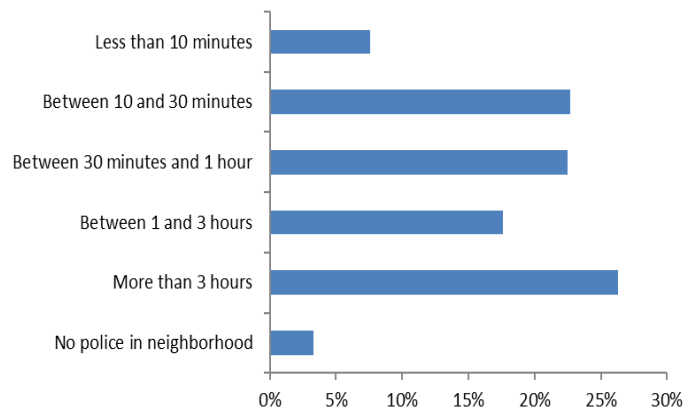
<sup>33</sup> 2012 clearance rates for homicides, robberies, and burglaries were 56 percent, 20 percent, and 18 percent, respectively

<sup>34</sup> Trinidad and Tobago, for instance, has 6.3 judges per 100,000 inhabitants; the Dominican Republic has 7.0; and Saint Kitts and Nevis has 15.0. IDB (2006). Project Concept Document: Modernisation of the Justice Administration System (GY-L1009). <http://www.iadb.org/document.cfm?id=707419>

<sup>35</sup> According to the European Committee on Crime Problems, severe overcrowding is defined as a situation in which the planned capacity of a prison or prison system is exceeded by more than 20 percent.

<sup>36</sup> Data are from World Prison Brief, International Center for Prison Studies, 2016.

**Figure 12 – Perceived Police Response Time**



Source: Latin American Public Opinion Poll 2016.

## **VI. Conclusion and Policy Implications**

Guyana's high levels of mistrust in institutions and violence within communities are extremely damaging to Guyana's development. To amend this, focus should be placed on the following four important areas:

### **1. Reliable, comprehensive, and continuously collected crime data**

Police records only show a partial picture of crime and violence. Alternative data collection methods have been developed, such as the Safe Neighbourhoods Survey (2006, 2011, 2013), but they are still not conducted regularly or with consistent nationally representative samples. Existing police crime data are not disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic stratum, neighbourhood, or other factors necessary for analyzing correlation and causation. Data from victimisation surveys would help address underreporting in police records. Furthermore, evidence suggests that data on domestic and sexual violence should be collected separately from victimisation surveys.<sup>37</sup> Through the Citizen Security Program, the IDB has supported the Guyana Crime Observatory; however, their data are not currently available publicly online or integrated with broader Ministry of Home Affairs data systems.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, no survey data are publicly available on household expenditure on security, or on the consequences of being a victim of violence (e.g., hospitalisation, labour hours lost, etc.). This makes it difficult to understand the magnitude

<sup>37</sup> World Health Organisation. 2001. "Putting women first: Ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women." [http://www.who.int/gender/documents/violence/who\\_fch\\_gwh\\_01.1/en/](http://www.who.int/gender/documents/violence/who_fch_gwh_01.1/en/)

<sup>38</sup> Existing data collected by the Observatory does not systematically include the location, the date and time, the gender and occupation of the victim and perpetrators in each incident.

of the costs of crime borne by private citizens. Such data can easily be collected by adding questions to regular household surveys (e.g., surveys of household expenditure, living conditions surveys, census, and labour force surveys). Moreover, public safety and the pursuit of knowledge are best served by open and timely availability of datasets and data analyses from a variety of perspectives. Thus, making crime and survey data available to researchers, nongovernmental organisations, and civil society is in the public interest.

## **2. Investment in, and evaluation of the results of violence prevention programmes which target social tolerance for violence, dispute resolution, and violence in the home**

International research shows that preventative measures can be more cost-effective than coping with violence after it has occurred.<sup>39</sup> This is especially relevant given the challenges facing the criminal justice system, including lack of police capacity, long court backlogs, and an overcrowded prison system. Investing more in prevention could help to alleviate this overburdened system. While more attention has been paid to prevention in recent years, most public spending is still allocated to crime suppression. For every dollar spent on security, only 4 cents are spent on prevention.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, preventative approaches have generally not been monitored and evaluated in such a way that allows assessment of their adherence to evidence-based models, or enables any firm conclusions to be drawn about their direct impact on crime and violence.<sup>41</sup>

## **3. Building the capacity of the police and criminal justice system**

While some steps have been taken to modernize the GPF, improving police crime prevention and investigation capabilities continue to be critical areas of focus. As identified in the Guyana Police Force Strategic Plan 2011–2015, it is necessary to implement police training on community policing, outreach programs, and improving police-public relations, as well as investigatory capacity. Significant improvements have been made. For example, the Integrated Crime Information System has been implemented and is operational in seven police division offices and a range of other criminal justice institutions, allowing real-time information exchange between GPF and other departments and

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<sup>39</sup> WHO (2009).

<sup>40</sup> According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2012, of the 5.9 percent of the national budget spent on security, 0.26 percent was on prevention (p.145).

<sup>41</sup> Summary of Citizen Security Programme (GY0071; 1752/SF-GY)

agencies.<sup>42</sup> However, it is not available at the 72 police district offices, and only seven staff are qualified to analyze the data.<sup>43</sup> Large investments were made in police facilities, infrastructure, and new trainings,<sup>44</sup> but larger institutional reforms (e.g., organisational structure changes, regulations regarding recruitment, promotion, and retirement) have not been achieved. Given the levels of mistrust in the police, community policing remains a critical area for improvement. Additionally, reducing court backlogs and pre-trial detention are critical to foster a more efficient and fairer criminal justice system. This can be done through improved court management (e.g., more efficient proceedings, complete paperwork by prosecutors, more efficient assignment of judges' time), diversion of low level offenses, and alternative sentencing (i.e., restorative justice)

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<sup>42</sup> These include: four correctional facilities, Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit, GPHC, MOHA, DPP's Chambers, Magistrate Court, Guyana Prison Service, and Guyana Revenue Authority. See Summary of Citizen Security Programme (GY0071; 1752/SF-GY).

<sup>43</sup> IDB (2014) Proposal for Operation Development: Guyana Citizen Security Strengthening Programme (GY-L1042).

<sup>44</sup> Eighteen Police Stations were rehabilitated; a forensic crime laboratory, a training facility, a data center, and police training classroom were completed. See IDB (2014) Proposal for Operation Development: Guyana Citizen Security Strengthening Programme (GY-L1042).

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